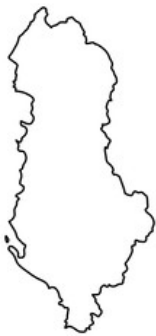


CIVIL SERVANTS MOBILITY PROGRAM 2023

ALBANIA, MOLDOVA, UKRAINE



STUDY VISITS CSMP 2023

CZECH REPUBLIC	03 – 09 September 2023 (Ukraine) 01 – 06 October 2023 (Albania) 20 – 24 November 2023 (Moldova)
HUNGARY	04 – 10 June 2023 (Albania)
POLAND	22 – 27 October 2023 (Moldova) 19 – 24 November 2023 (Ukraine)
SLOVAKIA	19 – 24 November 2023 (Ukraine) 28 November – 1 December 2023 (Moldova) 04 – 08 December 2023 (Albania)

REPORT

The Civil Servants Mobility Program (CSMP) is the **experience sharing instrument** for civil servants from the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries. The main objective of the CSMP is to share the experience and the best practices through organizing of the **study visits in the V4 countries**. The visits are focused on the past and recent experience in the **implementation of the sectoral reforms and harmonization of the national legislation with the EU legislation** with a specific focus on the very concrete topic of the visit. Representatives of the governments and their agencies, public institutions, as well as regional and/or local government participate in study visits.

At the same time, this instrument contributes to **strengthening personal capacities** of the state and public administration and local self-government in partner countries. It also serves as the **networking tool**, widening and deepening the contacts of V4 civil servants and experts with representatives of state bodies and institutions in partner countries. As a rather flexible instrument, it responds to the specific requirements of the partner countries and adjusts program of the individual study stays accordingly.

The study visits have helped to open or develop an expert dialogue of partner institutions and organizations. Personal meetings of experts during study visits and sharing of professional experience helped to initiate **long-term formal and informal partnerships** across the state administration, public administration, territorial self-government, as well as non-governmental, academic and private sectors in V4 and partner countries.

In 2023, the full program was prepared for **2023 edition** and Think Visegrad platform partners hosted civil servants and experts from **Albania, Moldova and Ukraine**. The ongoing Russian war of aggression in Ukraine that started on February 24, 2022 that has direct consequences for Visegrad region, had also an impact on organization of the study visits for Ukrainian participants in Hungary. Since the **Ukrainian study visit to Hungary** was supposed to be carried out in conjunction with the study visit of **Moldovan** participants, both visits were due to organizational issues postponed to 2024. Due to the organizational issues on side of participants from **Albania** (due to the objective circumstances) the study trip to Poland of the group of high-level stakeholders dealing with the multimodal transport infrastructure planning and development with special focus on ports and terminals is also to be organized in 2024.

Notwithstanding the fact, that Russian war of aggression in Ukraine significantly influenced the 2023 edition and brought certain organizational challenges, CSMP proved to *be an important instrument of the V4 experience and know-how sharing* from integration and reform processes. It was once again shown that the Think Visegrad platform is able to

provide a wide range of expertise since nearly all of the participating groups had different thematic focus.

In 2023, Think Visegrad partners hosted **56** civil servants and experts: **26 Ukrainian** civil servants and experts, **15** civil servants from **Albania** and **15** from **Moldova**.

Ukrainian civil servants used the study trips to discuss energy efficiency and use of renewables and reconstruction of Ukraine – towns and municipalities in Slovakia, the implementation of sectoral reforms and the harmonization of the national legislation with the EU in Poland, and the visit to the Czech Republic on EU integration, economic development, and institutional transformation.

The **civil servants from Albania** focused in Hungary on topic of EU agricultural policy and sharing Hungary's experience concerning its EU accession process. The group in Slovakia concentrated the issues of the waste and waste management and the visit to the Czech Republic focused on gaining insights regarding critical raw materials, natural resources, supply chain disruptions, and sustainability in mining and processing on cyber criminality.

The delegations from **Moldova** carried out meetings in the Czech Republic that revolved around the transposition of EU directives into national legislation, the National Action Plan of the Czech Republic in relation to hybrid threats, cyber terrorism and security issues of the future. In Slovakia, the issues of food safety and phytosanitary and veterinary services were in the center of discussion. And the purpose of the visit to Poland was two-fold, the first was to familiarize participants with the organization of the Polish anti-crisis response and management system (both at the central and local government levels), including introducing them to institutions involved in anticipating threats and developing methods to protect against them. The second goal was to share experience in internal control (including anti-corruption) at the MIA, as well as in subordinate formations such as the Police and the Border Guard Service.

PART 1 – CZECH REPUBLIC

UKRAINE 2023_PRAGUE_3 – 9 September 2023

Participants

Valentyn Mazurko	Chief Consultant of the Main Department of Expert and Analytical Support of the Directorate for Economic Policy, Office of the President of Ukraine
Svitlana Mishura	Deputy Head of the General Legal Department, Verhovna Rada of Ukraine
Volodymyr Volkodav	Secretary, Unit for Trade, Economic and Sectoral Cooperation, Directorate-General for the EU and NATO, MFA of Ukraine
Oleksandr Akulenko	State Expert of the Expert group on agrarian policy, consumer rights protection and technical regulation, Government Office for Coordination on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration
Oleksandra Chubinidze	Chief specialist of the expert group of coordination and communication of the European integration policy monitoring the implementation of the Association Agreement Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine

The study trip for the high-level delegation from Ukraine was organized in Prague by **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**. The primary objective of this study visit was to foster an exchange of experiences and promote networking among civil servants from Ukraine, facilitating a deeper understanding of Czech practices in various areas, with a particular focus on EU integration, economic development, and institutional transformation. The delegation members represented various Ukrainian government offices and were eager to learn from the Czech experience.

On Monday, September 4th, the delegation commenced the visit with a meeting at the Prague Creative Center with Mr **Jiří Jílek** and Ms **Lenka Geidt** from the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, EU Coordination and Enlargement Unit. The meeting focused on EU policies and enlargement. This was followed by a meeting with Mr **Štěpán Černý**, Director General of the Section for European Affairs at the **Office of the Government of the Czech Republic**, which provided valuable insights into European affairs and governance. The day concluded with a meeting with Mr **Kryštof Kruliš** and Mr **Pavel Havlíček**, analysts from the **Association for International Affairs**, discussing various economic and policy matters.

On Tuesday, the delegation met with Mr **Petr Zahradník**, Member of the **National Economic Council of the Government of the Czech Republic**, at the Prague Creative Center. The discussion revolved around EU affairs and economic matters. This was followed by a meeting with Ms **Eva Horelová**, Head of the Political Section of the **Representation of the European Commission in the Czech Republic**. The day ended with a meeting with Ms

Dagmar Kuchtová, Mr **Miroslav Hažer** and Mr **Lukáš Martin**, representatives of the **Union of Industry and Transport of the Czech Republic**, focusing on industrial and transport-related topics.

On September 6th, the civil servants from Ukraine met with Ms **Kateřina Nohelová**, Head of the EU Programs Coordination Unit at the **Ministry of Regional Development**, where EU programs and regional development were discussed. This was followed a meeting with representatives of the **Czech Governmental Envoy for the Reconstruction of Ukraine** and a meeting with Ms **Jitka Savin**, Head of the Unit of European Affairs at the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**, who provided insights into industrial and trade-related EU affairs. The day ended with Ms **Monika Štěpánová**, Director of the Regional Development and International Relations Department at the **Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic**.

The following day, the delegation had a productive meeting with Mr **Stanislav Němec**, Director of EU Affairs and Foreign Trade Cooperation Division at the **Ministry of Agriculture** of the Czech Republic. This was followed by a meeting with Mr **Václav Lidl**, Head of the East Europe, West Balkans and Central Asia Division at the **Ministry of Industry and Trade** of the Czech Republic, where they explored economic cooperation. The day ended with a meeting with Mr **Zdeněk Beránek**, foreign policy advisor to the Speaker of the **Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic**.

The study visit's final working day continued with the meeting with Ms **Markéta Přenosilová**, Founder of **CzechStartup** and Europe Startup Ambassador, who provided insights into the startup ecosystem. After this, they had a meeting with Mr **René Samek**, Director of the Innovation Department at **CzechInvest**, and Mr **Jarolím Antal**, Director for the Centre for European Studies at the **Prague University of Economics and Business**. The program concluded with a city tour of Prague, allowing the delegation to appreciate the cultural and historical aspects of the city.

Feedback

In conclusion, the Civil Servant Mobility Program Study Visit to Prague was a success, providing valuable insights and fostering collaboration between Ukrainian and Czech civil servants. The delegation departed with a deeper understanding of EU integration, economic development, and institutional transformation, which will undoubtedly benefit their work in Ukraine. The relationships built during this visit have the potential to strengthen future cooperation between the two nations.

ALBANIA 2023_PRAGUE_01 – 06 October 2023

Participants

Mehmet Hasalami	Director of Development Programs in the Field of Mining and Industry, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Enxhi Dervishi	specialist at the Directory of Development Programs in the Field of Mining and Industry, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Aurel Doma	specialist at the Directory of Development Programs in the Field of Mining and Industry, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Enxhi Koduzi	specialist at the Directory of Development Programs in the Field of Mining and Industry, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy
Murat Rreshka	Head of Sector, National Agency of Natural Resources

The study trip for a delegation from Albania was organized in Prague by **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**. The main focus of the program was on gaining insights from the Czech experience regarding critical raw materials, natural resources, supply chain disruptions, and sustainability in mining and processing.

On Monday the delegation participated in a meeting with Ms **Rebeka Hengalová** and Ms **Tatiana Mindekova**, representatives of the Climate Team of **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**. In the afternoon, the experts met with Mr **Pavel Kavina**, former Director General of the State Mineral Policy Department in the **Ministry of Industry and Trade**.

The second day of the study trip, the delegation split into two groups. **Mehmet Hasalami** and **Enxhi Dervishi** attended the conference **Raw Materials Security of Visegrad Group Countries and Western Balkan Countries** organized at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The rest participated in parallel meetings, including sessions with Mr **Filip Šebok**, Research Fellow at **Association for International Affairs**, and Mr **Martin Holý**, Director of the **Geology Department**.

On Wednesday, experts consulted with Mr **Jiří Zachariáš**, expert of the Institute of Geochemistry, Mineralogy, and Mineral Resources at **Charles University**. Later they continued to the **Czech Mining Office**, where they met the representatives of the institution led by Mr **Ladislav Šouša** and Ms **Marcela Blahutová**. The day ended with a city tour of Prague.

The following day, the delegation visited the **Chvaletice Manganese Project**. The delegation met with Mr **Jan Votava**, Managing Director, who had an introductory presentation. Later we all visited the demonstration plant and had a tour of the tailing site.

The study trip was completed on a last day with the visit to the Department of Mineralogy and Petrology of the **Museum of Natural History**.

Feedback:

The study visits provided valuable insights into the Czech experience regarding critical materials, supply chain disruptions, and sustainable mining. The diverse meetings, the conference and the field visits offered the Albanian delegation a comprehensive understanding of lessons learned over the decades, especially in the context of recent crises like the Covid-19 pandemic and the War in Ukraine. The connections established during this week will contribute to fostering collaboration between the two countries in their common efforts toward a digital and green future.

MOLDOVA 2023_PRAGUE_20 – 24 November 2023

Participants

Alexandru Stratilă	Head of the Legal Directorate at the Ministry of Defense
Elena Țarălungă	Head of Public Policy Coordination and European Integration Directorate, Ministry of Defense
Tatiana Anaton	Senior Consultant at the Defense Policy and Planning Directorate, Ministry of Defense
Anna Tripac	Senior Consultant at the Financial Resources Planning Directorate Ministry of Defense
Maria Șaramet	Superior Staff Officer, Military Information Agency, Ministry of Defense

The study trip for a delegation from Moldova was organized in Prague by **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**. Primarily, the goal was to provide the participants with the knowledge stemming from the Czech experience. The meetings revolved around the transposition of EU directives into national legislation, the National Action Plan of the Czech Republic in relation to hybrid threats, cyber terrorism and security issues of the future. The meetings also touched upon the Czech experience of enlargement of CSDP missions and operations, as well as the European Peace Facility (EPF) mechanism with a special emphasis on the frameworks for allied cooperation.

On the first day met with Ms **Dominika Vondráčková** and Mr **Aleš Vašíček** from the **Ministry of Defence**, Defence Policy Department, Bilateral Relations Unit, followed by Mr **Josef Opluštil**, from the NATO Cooperation Unit. After lunch, Lt. **Vystrčil** and cpt. **Fučík** from the Cyber and Information Operations Command of **Army of the Czech Republic** had a presentation about hybrid threats.

The second day of the study trip started with the meeting with Ms **Adéla Šelepová** from the **Ministry of Defence**, EU Defence Cooperation Unit, followed by a meeting with Mr **Pavel Drlík** and Ms **Barbora Roubalová** from the Security Policy Department and former Ambassador to Romania and Moldova Mr **Jaromír Plíšek**. After lunch, the meetings in the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs included discussions with Ms **Nikola Nekvindová**, Head of StratCom Unit, Communication Dpt., and Ms **Iveta Býčková**, Security Policy Dpt. This was followed by meetings with Mr **Jakub Novák**, NATO Unit, Security Policy Dpt., Mr **Petr Tůma**, Head of CSDP Unit, Security Policy Dpt, Mr **Petr Švepeš**, Supranational Threats Unit, CFSP Dpt., Mr **Michal Sedláček**, Head of Institutions Unit, EU Politics Dpt. The day ended with a tour of the historic parts of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs with **Mr Ivan Dubovický**, Head of Embassies Coordination Unit, Communication Dpt.

On Wednesday the group visited the **CBRN Defence Unit** in Liberec. The delegation had meetings with Maj. **David Izing** and Col. **Martin Fokt**. This was followed by a presentation of the facilities and equipment.

On Thursday, the delegation met with Mr **Pavel Vinkler**, Head of Countering Hybrid Interference Unit and Mr **Boris Leštinský**, **Ministry of Defence**, Crisis Management Department, Ex. Head of National Movement Coordination Centre – NATO Host Nation Support. The day ended with a guided tour in the **Military Museum** in Žižkov.

On the last day of their working visit, experts had a meeting with Mr **Rudolf Štědrý**, **Ministry of Defense**, Director of the Crisis Management Department and Mr **Radim Samek**, Ministry of Defense, Deputy head of Defence Policy Department, followed by meetings with Mr **Filip Žáček**, Ministry of Defense, Office of Director General and Mr **Jan Jireš** Director General for Defence Policy and Strategy Division. The last meetings were with experts Mr **Vojtěch Bahenský**, from the **Association for International Affairs** and Ms **Asya Metodieva** from the **Institute for International Relations in Prague**.

Feedback:

Overall, the program of this study trip and the meetings received very positive feedback from the delegation from Moldova. Each of the visitors was satisfied with the prepared agenda, which was prepared according to their needs and requirements for gaining new experience. The group got to know their counterparts in the Czech Republic and exchange their experiences and ideas, allowing them to build a base for future cooperation between the countries. Each participant evaluated the program of the study visit and its organization with excellent feedback. The evaluation included the accommodation facility, breakfast and accompanying free-time program.

PART 2 – HUNGARY

ALBANIA 2023_BUDAPEST_04 – 10 June 2023

Participants

Irfan Tarelli	General Director of the General Directorate for Development in the Field of Agriculture and Rural Development at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Elda Tahiraj	Head of the Sector of Economic Analyses, Statistics and Implementation of Priorities at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Arlinda Dedi	Head of Programming, Drafting and Harmonization of Regulatory Acts Unit at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Sidorela Prenga	Specialist in the Sector of Production and Marketing Standards at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Kamela Braho	Executive Assistant of the Department of Policy and EU Integration at the Prime Minister's Office

The main topic of the study visit for civil servants from Albania, that was organized by the **Hungarian Institute of International Affairs** revolved around EU agricultural policy and sharing Hungary's experiences concerning its EU accession process.

The week-long study program started on Monday at the **Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary**. Representatives from the departments dealing with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Hungarian agricultural policy and rural development delivered comprehensive lectures about the role of agriculture in Hungary and the use of EU funds. Mr **István Madarász**, Head of Unit for Agricultural Strategy Coordination highlighted the share of agriculture in employment and its increasing tendency, and the CAP strategic plans for Hungary connected with the practice of how the planning process looks like in the country. He also introduced the new CAP (2023–2027) and its pillars by pointing out how much of its budget is allocated to different support programs. The meeting continued with the presentation of the rural and development policy in Hungary. Mr **Viktor Nagy**, officer responsible for the issues of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development explained that agricultural and rural investments are predominant and support for young farmers and foresters is also increased. Monday continued with a business lunch where the delegation exchanged thoughts with Mr **György Raskó**, agricultural economist and former State Secretary. During the meeting, participants reviewed the useful experiences of the Hungarian agricultural economy, the challenges after EU accession and the Hungarian responses to them.

Tuesday started at the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade** of Hungary, where Mr **László Dux**, Head of the Western Balkans Department gave a presentation about Hungary's foreign policy towards the Western Balkans. He acknowledged that although the EU

accession process of the Western Balkans is slow, Hungary is trying to push it as much as possible. Mr **Attila Fodor**, Deputy Head of Department summarized Hungarian–Albanian bilateral relations by highlighting that Hungary’s focus is on economic cooperation with companies such as OTP, 4iG, and WizzAir. The meeting concluded with prospects for the future as Hungary will hold the EU Presidency in the second half of 2024.

The day continued at the **Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (HCA)**, where the group was welcomed by Strategic and Rural Development Expert Ms **Brigitta Balogh** and Knowledge Transfer Expert Ms **Ágnes Jakab**. Ms. Balogh first introduced the structure of the HCA, pointed out the key elements of the new act which established the current format of the HCA and also explained the scope of their activities. In the second presentation, Ms. Jakab introduced the Hungarian farm advisory system. First, she elaborated on the actors in the system and their tasks, then on the necessary conditions for becoming a farm advisor in Hungary.

The last meeting on Tuesday took place at the **Western Balkans Green Center (WBGC)** where Managing Director Mr **Gábor Szántó** and Senior Advisor Ms **Orsolya Nagy** welcomed the delegation. They introduced the Center and explained the importance of the Western Balkans’ green transition to Hungary. Ms. Nagy presented the WBGC grant program and its target countries and sectors, and introduced the national climate adaptation program which is a new division within the Center. Lastly, Ms. Nagy presented the WBGC’s projects conducted in Albania, mostly focusing on water and wastewater management.

On Wednesday morning, the delegation visited the **Hungarian State Treasury (HST)** meeting its representatives. During the meeting, they introduced the group to the scope of the HST’s activities in the field of agricultural policy, the institutional structure and the system of relations with the different ministries. The participants of the delegation showed a particular interest in the Treasury's internal IT system and its institutional structure.

On Wednesday afternoon, **KPMG** Hungary welcomed the delegation. Director Ms **Dóra Huzsvai** introduced the organization as the certifying body, the firm’s activities related to the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund to Rural Development (EAFRD), its legal framework and how implementation works in practice. The delegation showed particular interest in the presentation of manager Ms **Andrea Bara** (and junior manager Ms **Judit Kalmár**) who explained where KPMG is positioned in the organizational structure of the institutions dealing with agricultural policy in Hungary and how the Single Audit Approach is implemented.

The day ended with a cultural excursion to the **Hungarian parliament**.

The next day, the group paid a visit to the **Somodi Fruit-growing Estate** in the vicinity of Kecskemét. Mr **Ferenc Somodi**, owner of the Estate talked about the 30-year history of the family farm as well as how grants from the EU helped him to further develop the estate. The delegation learned more about the EU School Program for Fruit, Vegetables, and Milk in which the Estate participates. The group also had a tour around the facilities and the

apple orchard and got to know more about the complex situation of farms and village lives in Hungary.

Friday kicked off with a visit to the **Centre for Agricultural Research** where the delegation was welcomed by Managing Director Mr **Pál Goda**. In his presentation, Mr. Goda highlighted the 70-year history of the Centre, including the concept of a data-driven agricultural policy. The main tasks of the Centre-policy-making support and data collection-were elaborated on in great details. Mr. Goda explained the two main pillars of their work that include data collection in the agricultural sector as well as policy analysis and consultancy for various customers (ministries, international organizations, banks). The Centre also pays a special attention to monitoring the environmental impacts of agricultural production systems and to societal challenges in rural economies. Director Mr **Csaba Pesti** introduced the Market Price Information System (MPIS) which is, given the high level of food inflation, the most important information and data system for Hungary. After explaining the current EU regulations concerning the system, the practical usage of the MPIS were showcased. Lastly, Deputy Director Mr **Szilárd Keszthelyi** highlighted the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) and explained how sensitive datasets are being collected and processed through the system.

On Friday afternoon, the group paid a visit to the **Herman Ottó Institute**. Executive Director Mr **Péter Bozzay** explained the three main goals of the Institute: 1) environmental protection; 2) nature conservation and 3) rural development. Ms **Barbara Bezzegh**, Director of International Projects Directorate showcased the Institute's ongoing international projects and pilot activities, including the LIFE programme and HungAIRy for improving air quality. International Coordination Ms **Anikó Bíró** explained the essence of the Hungarian National Rural Network and the role of digitalization in rural development. Head of Department Ms **Eszter Nyári** explained how the operation of the Herman Ottó Institute contributes to environmental protection, including air quality protection as well as environmental noise and vibration protection.

After the presentations, the group participated in a guided tour to the famous rose garden led by Senior Researcher Mr **Gábor Boronkay** from the **Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences**.

PART 3 – POLAND

MOLDOVA 2023_WARSAW_22 – 27 October 2023

Participants

Artur Ciorbă	Deputy Head of the of the Internal Protection and Anti-Corruption Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova
Vasile Moisei	Head of Section, Anticorruption Directorate of Internal Protection and Anti-Corruption Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova
Constantin Culicovschi	Deputy Head of the Operational Coordination and Monitoring Directorate of the Operational Management Inspectorate, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova
Aurel Baciu	Head of the Operational Evaluation and Organizational Control Department of the Operational Management, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova
Ala Hmeliov	Head of the Institutional Management Directorate of the Operational Management Inspectorate, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova

The goal of the study organized by **Centre for Eastern Studies** visit was focused on two objectives. The first was to familiarize participants with the organization of the Polish anti-crisis response and management system (both at the central and local government levels), including introducing them to institutions involved in anticipating threats and developing methods to protect against them. The second goal was to share experience in internal control (including anti-corruption) at the MIA, as well as in subordinate formations such as the Police and the Border Guard Service. The desire to learn about the Polish practice in these two areas was signaled by the Moldovan side during the preparation of the project. Both the creation of an integrated emergency response system (which Moldova plans to do in the near future) and the ability to effectively monitor the quality and integrity of the services (police, border guards, MIA) are key issues for building an efficient state apparatus and reforming public institutions, in line with the Association Agreement with the EU signed by Moldova in 2014 and the EU accession negotiations that Moldova intends to start following the acquisition of candidate state status in 2022. Both issues are also extremely important in view of the growing threat from Russia.

The goal was also to establish relationships that may lead to cooperation in the future, further exchange of experiences or creating joint projects. Invaluable organizational assistance in the implementation of the project was provided by the Polish Solidarity Fund in Moldova.

At the beginning of the study visit, the Moldova delegation met with experts of the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** (PISM). participants completed some formalities and familiarized themselves with certain technical and logistical issues related to their visit.

Afterwards, representatives of the Moldovan participants proceeded for a series of meetings at the Polish **Ministry of Interior and Administration**. The first was a meeting with the Deputy Director of the Department for International Affairs and Migration, Ms **Aleksandra Suska-Mentel**, during which they got acquainted with the work of the ministry (and the aforementioned department in particular). Then, after a lunch break, workshop-type meetings began, where program participants were able to exchange experiences and ask detailed questions to representatives of the Internal Supervision Inspector's Office and the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management of the Polish MIA for the next 2.5 hours. The meetings were attended by representatives (including managers) of the Civil Protection Division, Emergency Management Division and Disaster Recovery Division of the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management, among others. Following meeting on the agenda was a visit to the **Government Security Center (RCB)**. Our guests were welcomed by Ms **Beata Janowczyk**, Deputy Director of the RCB, as well as a number of staff from other departments operating within the center, including: RCB Analysis and Response Office, RCB Office of Logistics and Finance and RCB Office of Civil Planning and Critical Infrastructure Protection. During the more than two-hour meeting, program participants became familiar with the RCB's operation, its place in the nationwide emergency response system, its relationship with crisis centers at the voivodship and local government levels, etc. They also learned how the RCB forecasts threats, how it organizes activities to prevent crises and limit their effects, etc.

During the second day of their stay in Poland, the two participants went to meetings at the **State Police Headquarters**, where they were able to learn about the work of internal control institutions, including anti-corruption (within police structures), information security, etc. Some of the meetings were also devoted to issues of threat prevention. Among the experts and civil servants who received guests from Moldova were employees and executives of the following units: Police Internal Affairs Bureau, Operations Department, Operational Support and Technology Department and Information Protection Bureau. They also met with the Counsellor for Prevention and Protection. In parallel, the second group continued with workshop meetings at the MIA (with representatives of the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management and the Department of Control).

On the third day, members of the delegation held a series of meetings at the **Internal Affairs Bureau of the Border Guards (at the Border Guard headquarters)**. In addition to the topics of internal control and anti-corruption measures, they also took part in a workshop on border protection. Representatives of the Moldovan MIA also went to the Department of Security and Crisis Management of the **Mazovian Voivodeship Marshal's Office** in Warsaw. There they were received by Ms **Paulina Abramczyk** (director of the department) and Mr **Mariusz Sepelowski** (deputy director). During the three-hour meeting, they learned in detail about the organization and functioning of the Provincial Security

Center, its role in the system of national crisis response, the 987 emergency number, and about forecasting and how to report potential threats to the provincial authorities

On the fourth day, program participants were able to learn about the functioning of the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** (PISM) and the **Center for Eastern Studies** (OSW). Analytical institutions of this type do not function in Moldova. Meanwhile, as they also deal with, among other things, forecasting and warning national authorities against potential threats of an international nature, their activities also attracted the interest of the Moldovan guests. Mr **Lukasz Kulesa**, Deputy Head of the Research and Analysis Office, talked about the functioning of PISM, while the specifics of OSW were explained by Deputy Director Mr **Jakub Jakóbowski** and Senior Analyst for Moldova and Romania, Mr **Kamil Całus**. The participants' questions concerned the process of analytical consultancy by Institute for public institutions in international affairs. After the meeting at the think tanks, the guests went to meet with representatives of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. They were received by Mr **Tomasz Orłowski**, Deputy Director of the Eastern Department of the MFA, and the desk-officer responsible for Moldovan issues, Ambassador Mr **Marek Całka**. After the official part, the guests went on a tour of the **Warsaw Uprising Museum**, and a gala dinner.

The last point of the visit, was a meeting with representatives of **Solidarity Fund PL**, where participants discussed plans for further bilateral cooperation, follow-up study and expert visits and technical support programs for Moldovan partners. The Solidarity Fund (subordinate to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) has been operating in Moldova for more than 10 years, implementing many development projects there, supporting the process of strengthening the competencies of administrative personnel and supporting the country's European integration process.

Feedback:

In a conversation with the coordinator, the program participants expressed satisfaction with the meetings held and stressed the great importance of benefiting from Poland's experience in issues that interested them. They also emphasized the need to continue cooperation – both in the field of crisis management (including, first and foremost, the creation of appropriate institutions) and the development of effective internal control instruments that translate into better functioning of the MIA, police or other services, and increase their resilience.

Representatives of the Moldovan side are interested in maintaining further contacts with the institutions they visited during their stay in Poland. It is especially about the possibility of using Polish experience and know-how, as well as the possibility of implementing joint projects in the future in the field of strengthening the effectiveness of administration.

A key problem for the Moldovan administration remains a shortage of manpower. The number of people employed by individual ministries is often too small to effectively

implement new projects, including the creation of new institutions under those ministries. This is largely related to the underfunding of the administration, and uncompetitive (vis-à-vis the private sector) salaries. In this case, help is needed from the EU, which not only can support the Moldovan side by sending experts or experienced officials there, but is also able to support the Moldovan budget, which would allow salaries for civil servants to be raised.

UKRAINE_WARSAW_19 – 24 November 2023

Participants

Nataliia Rieznikova	Counsellor of Justice and Home Affairs Unit, Department General for the EU and NATO Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Oleksandr Nikolaiev	Deputy Director of the Department - Head of the European Integration Division of the Department of International Cooperation and European Integration, Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development
Oleg Radchenko	Head of the Unit for International Law Issues of the Management of Constitutional Legislation and State Construction of the Main Legal Department, Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada
Oleksandra Husak	Head of Expert Group for European Integration, Directorate for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Ministry of Education and Science
Khrystyna Skora	Chief Specialist of the Expert Group on Political Criteria, Justice, Fundamental Rights and Public Administration of Government Office for Coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Secretariat of Cabinet of Ministers
Anastasiia Ulasevych	Chief of Expert Group on Justice and Criminal Justice of the Directorate for Justice and Criminal Justice, Ministry of Justice
Oleksii Kosharnyi	Deputy Head of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department – Head of European Integration Unit, Ministry of Finance
Inna Samoilenko	Deputy Head of the Bilateral Negotiations Unit, Division of Regional and Preferential Trade Agreements, Department for Trade Agreements and Export Development, Ministry of Economy
Ihor Baranetskyi	Deputy Head of Unit, Department for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Office of the President of Ukraine

The study visit was organized by the **Polish Institute of International Affairs** (PISM). The program of the stay opened with a session with Ms **Jolanta Szymańska**, head of the EU Program at PISM, and Mr **Daniel Szeligowski**, head of Eastern Europe Program at PISM. Both familiarized the participants with the foundations of Polish foreign policy, including

the context of Poland's membership in the EU. Additionally, Daniel Szeligowski delivered a lecture on the challenges related to Ukraine's accession to the EU and the Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernization.

The meeting at the **European Commission Representation in Poland** with Mr **Jan Truszczyński**, former ambassador of Poland to the EU and chief negotiator of Poland's accession to the EU, was devoted to the experience of Polish membership negotiations with the EU. The session was joined also on-line by Mr **Georg Ziegler** from **DG NEAR Support Group for Ukraine**. The discussion touched upon several issues related to the Polish membership negotiations experience and its applicability to the Ukrainian case.

Tuesday started with the visit to the **Polish Parliament** which included a meeting with Mr **Leszek Kieniewicz**, director of the Office for international and EU Affairs of the Chancellery of the Senate. The discussion was primarily devoted to the legal issues that arise from the EU integration, such as regulatory approximation, legal harmonization, the activities of the national parliaments in this respect.

The session with Mr **Leszek Jesień**, former **chief negotiator** of the Poland's accession to the EU, addressed a broad range of issues connected to the negotiation procedure, accession talks, and preparing for the EU membership.

On Wednesday, the group visited the **City Hall of Warsaw** and met with Mr **Paweł Sajnog** from the European Funds and Development Policy Office. The topic of the discussion was role of the self-government in the EU integration, as well as the EU structural and development funds.

The following day, Ukrainian delegation participated in the visit to the **College of Europe in Natolin** where they had meetings with Ms **Ewa Ośniecka-Tamecka**, Vice-Rector of the College of Europe, former Chairman of the Committee for European Integration and Mr **Marek Tabor**, former official of the Office of the Committee for European Integration. The talks were devoted to the institutional architecture of the Polish membership negotiations with the EU and lessons learned during this period, which could currently be applied to the institutional background in Ukraine.

Following meeting with Mr **Jarosław Pietras**, former diplomat and **Polish Minister for European Union Affairs**, concerned both the Polish experience of the EU accession process and the state of the discussion on enlargement in the EU.

On the last day of the study visit, a special meeting was held in the **Polish Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy**, with the presence of a series of high-ranking officials. The discussion was devoted to the EU development policy, the structural funds, the institutional and legal issues of the EU local development.

The meeting with Ms **Danuta Huebner**, former Polish Minister for European Affairs and then **the first Polish Commissioner** after the accession to the EU was devoted to the Polish

experience of the negation of accession to the EU and the ongoing discussion on the internal reform of the EU.

The meeting with Mr **Bogdan Zawadewicz**, Head of Geopolitical Risk Analysis in the Polish Development Bank focused on challenges related to modernization of Ukraine.

The cultural program of the study visit included the Picasso exhibition at the National Museum and the Nowosielski exhibition at the Zachęta National Gallery of Art.

PART 4 – SLOVAKIA

UKRAINE 2023_BRATISLAVA_19 – 24 November 2023

Participants

Halyna Dzhulai	Deputy Mayor, City of Novoyavorivsk, Lviv Oblast
Roman Furda	Mayor, City of Krasne, Lviv Oblast
Volodymyr Shtogryn	Deputy Mayor, City of Rohatyn, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast
Ivan Dragun	Deputy Mayor, City of Burshtyn, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast
Vasyl Nemesh	Head of the Dept for economic development, trade and investments, City of Tyachiv, Zakarpatya Oblast
Svyatoslav Pavlyuk	Executive Director, Association of Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine
Andriy Kyrchiv	Programs and Projects Coordinator, Association of Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine

The main focus of the study visit of five civil servants in Slovakia organized by the **Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association** was the issue of the *Energy efficiency and use of renewables and reconstruction of Ukraine – towns and municipalities*. During the meetings, members of the group – representatives of small towns of Ukraine and member towns of Association of Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine – made acquaintance of the institutional and legislative framework and the governance in the field, concrete projects and measures and the current activities of the respective institutions, including their competencies and interaction.

The official working program for the expert group from Ukraine was organized into the five working days and combined various meetings in order for the experts to discuss and share partners' experience, i.e. towns, companies, agencies and the first-hand knowledge of processes in practice. The program of the study trip thus consisted of series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the cities, companies, NGOs.

The team of Ukrainian experts was officially briefed and received by the **SFPA's** Executive Director Ms **Jitka Ivančíková**, RC SFPA's analyst of Economic and Development Policy Program Mr **Peter Brezáni** Project Coordinator Ms **Barbora Legényová** upon arrival during the orientation meeting. The program and agenda were discussed.

On Monday, November 20, the study trip commenced with a transfer to the venue of the 17th Central European Energy Conference. Participants were oriented to the conference's central themes and key speakers. At the venue, a productive meeting with Mr **Ján Magyar** of the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency covered the topic of energy efficiency in public buildings and presentations of successful reconstruction projects. Discussion revolved

around measures administration may take in public building to use energy more efficiently. possibilities for regional and local administration involvement.

Participants then had the opportunity to network and share insights during a luncheon at the conference venue with conference participants (representatives of cities, municipalities included)

In the afternoon, participants took part in the conference panel discussion. Under the chairmanship of Aaron Fishbone, the conference panel explored alternative transport modes in urban areas. Esteemed speakers, including Mr **Serhii Morhunov** – Mayor of Vinitsya and Mr **Matúš Vallo** – Mayor of Bratislava, shared valuable perspectives on this critical issue. The fossil fuel vehicle is the least economically efficient, most environmentally unsustainable and energy dependent mode of transportation, yet registrations of older second-hand fossil vehicles have been on the rise over the past decade. To reduce the vehicle footprint in urban areas and gain public acceptance for measures like low emission zones, beyond awareness of health benefits, there must be viable – convenient and economic – alternative transportation modes available. Cities across the region should begin discussing how to strengthen public support for new measures improving quality of life in cities.

The panel discussion was followed by the roundtable with **representatives of small towns** from **Ukraine** (CSMP participants), **Czech Republic and Slovakia** entitled Regional Resilience: advancing climate and energy policies in Europe. Investing in renewable energy sources is a strategic move for regions, allowing them to diminish their reliance on centralized, fossil fuel-based power generation. Additionally, regional renewable energy projects can give a significant boost to local economies. The objective of this roundtable was to provide a platform for insightful discussions on regional approaches to climate and energy policies; to explore best practices and put forward policy recommendations that can bolster the effectiveness of energy and climate policies in the region. It also delved into the challenges and opportunities tied to energy transition and the pursuit of climate neutrality at the regional and municipal levels and cast a spotlight on the various financial tools provided by the European Union that foster and strengthen cooperation among regions and municipalities.

The day concluded with a meeting with the Building Testing and Research Institute's director Ms **Zuzana Sternová** focusing on a pilot project for the deep and complex reconstruction of an apartment building in Bratislava-Devínska Nová Ves. Beside the presentation of the project itself, she also presented a step-by-step process of building reconstruction.

On Tuesday, November 21 participants visited the International Visegrad Fund, gaining insights into its role and operations from Ms **Maja Wawrzyk**, Deputy Executive Director.

The program continued with the meeting of renowned energy expert and former Minister of Economy / Energy of the Slovak Republic, Mr **Karel Hirman** who also served as energy advisor in Ukraine. The discussion covered vast issues related to Slovak experience with projects and programs on reconstruction and building of the new energy infrastructure in cities and its variations, reconstruction processes in Ukraine, renovation of its energy infrastructure, necessity to adopt standards at the level of towns and implement them in practice and presentation of examples that might be used in Ukraine.

A networking luncheon allowed participants to digest the day's discussions and exchange thoughts. The first afternoon meeting with Mr **Alexander Duleba** head of the Eastern Europe program and analyst of the Energy Policy program in Slovak Foreign Policy Association, as well as former advisor to the PM Heger covered topics of regional cooperation programs in communal energy, presentation of existing projects and their impact as well as political aspect of such cooperation and possible participation of Slovak companies at reconstruction of Ukraine. The day concluded with the meeting of the former SFPA energy analyst Ms **Alžbeta Gavalcová** who discussed the financing opportunities for reconstruction and modernization projects and programs.

On Wednesday, November 22, the field visits to facilities of company **DT EnergieTech** to discuss the use of biomass in small towns' heating plants. The trip included the visit to **DT Termonova**, a.s. in town of Nová Dubnica to Central District Heating supply and Heating Plant – combined production of electricity and heat from wood chips. It was followed by the visit to **biomass boiler room** in town of Nemšová, producing the heat and hot water from wooden pellets for school in Nemšová and **DT Forest**, a.s. in town of Dubnica nad Váhom (company producing wood chips from wood waste and its distribution). The presentations and Q/As was facilitated by the sales and project manager of the company Mr **Radoslav Kňazúr**. The day ended with a transfer to Kežmarok.

On Thursday, November 23 the CSMP participants visited the city of Kežmarok and were received by the Vice-Mayor of the city Mr **Jozef Matia**, who presented the city as well as energy policy and investment into communal infrastructure. In his presentation he focused mainly on 3 aspects – geothermal well, combined boiler houses in the city and compost site. The presentation was followed by the site visits to these facilities. The compost site. its establishment, operation and education of citizens was presented by the director of the city company Verejnoprospešné služby mesta Kežmarok (Generally beneficial services of City of Kežmarok) Ms **Viola Phánková** and the officer responsible for waste management and environment Mr **Miroslav Fudaly**. The presentation of the communal waste sorting line. The group then moved to the combined biomass/gas boiler station of city of Kežmarok and to the geothermal well and connected boiler station. The presentation about the nuances of this matter were presented by the director of the city's company Stavbytherm, Mr **Marián Bešenej**.

The second half of the day was dedicated to public lighting and visit to the company OSVO comp in Prešov and meetings with the leadership of the company headed by the director Ms **Alžbeta Bindasová**. The participants discussed the issue of quality of infrastructure, hardware and software and its relations to security, operability and reliability of the lighting system, reduction of installed power and ensuring the light comfort in the exterior art the same time and significant reduction of costs.

On Friday, November 24, the trip concluded with two meetings that were of interest of participants. The first meeting was with the director of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Ms **Iveta Hricíková** who presented the process of full reconstruction of the Plant with visit to every facility and operational unit.

The trip and the day were concluded with the visit to Terebišovská energetická where the group was received by the director Mr **Miroslav Mražík** who presented to participants combined boiler station – wood chips and straws, which was particularly interested for participants, as Ukraine is rich in straws. The trip was also particularly important, as the company did all the investments and renovations from their own budget, not using any grants and/or other subsidies.

Feedback:

Delegation from Ukraine highly positively assessed the structure of the program, the meetings and their information value as well as quality of experts. They especially praised the fact, that SFPA used demand-driven approach and all of the meetings were organized upon the request of participants. The participants of the visit confirmed in an interview with the coordinator that Slovak experience is very useful as we had a very similar technical starting point, in other words, they could see it would be possible.

All participants were interested in maintaining further contacts with the institutions they visited during their stay, discussing the options of the joint activities and projects. Participants of the study visit are also interested in strengthening partnerships and cooperation between cities and companies they visited.

MOLDOVA 2023_BRATISLAVA_28 November – 1 December 2023

Participants

Mihail Jereghi
Corneliu Gutu

Deputy Director General, National Food Safety Agency (ANSA)
Chief of the Section for Control of Sanitary and Veterinary
Authorized Establishments, ANSA

Marina Dintiu	Head of Department for Food Safety of Non-Animal Origin Products, ANSA
Tudor Orbu	Deputy Head, Food Safety Territorial Subdivision Ungheni/Nisporeni/Calarasi, ANSA
Serghei Balacci	Principal Consultant of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Food Safety of Animal Origin, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry

The main focus of the study visit of five civil servants in Slovakia organized by the **Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association** was the issue of the *Food safety and phytosanitary and veterinary services*. During the meetings, members of the group – representatives of the National Agency for Food Safety and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry – made acquaintance of the institutional and legislative framework and the governance in the field, concrete projects (at municipal level) and measures and the current activities of the respective institutions, including their competencies and interaction.

The official working program for the expert group from Moldova was organized into the four working days (due to the snow storm in Moldova and their cancelled flight on Sunday) and combined various meetings in order for the experts to discuss and share partners' experience and the first-hand knowledge of processes in practice. The program of the study trip thus consisted of series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the state institutions.

The team of Moldovan experts was officially briefed and received by the **SFPA's** Executive Director Ms **Jitka Ivančíková**, RC SFPA's analyst of Economic and Development Policy Program Mr **Peter Brezáni** and Project Coordinator Ms **Barbora Legényová** upon arrival during the orientation meeting. The program and agenda were discussed.

On Tuesday, November 28, the study trip commenced with a transfer to the State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic (ŠVPS SR). Participants were welcomed by the Director of ŠVPS SR Mr **Jozef Bíreš**. After the welcome, the all-day program at the ŠVPS SR continued with discussions with representatives of numerous departments focusing on the topic of the role of the State Veterinary and Food Administration of the Slovak Republic in the field of food safety. Ms **Martina Ihnátová**, Head of Feed Control, Ecology and Veterinary Pharmacy Department and Mr **Fridolín Pokorný**, Head of Hygiene of Products of Animal Origin Department talk about feeds, organic farming, veterinary pharmacy and products of animal origin and the European legislation implemented by Slovakia in this field.

After lunch, the discussions continued on the topic of products of plant origin, laboratory diagnostics and alert system covered by Ms **Zuzana Fischerová**, Head of Control of Plant Products Department and Ms **Marta Bedriová**, Head of Laboratory Diagnostics, Rapid Alert

System and Certification Department. Each presentation concluded with the time for participant's questions. Since Moldova is going through the process of harmonizing its national legislation with European legislation, the participants asked many questions in order to clarify the ambiguities arising from this process and to get recommendations from their Slovak colleagues.

At the end of the day before their departure from the venue, the participants had a chance for an expert networking session with Mr **Jozef Bireš**.

On Wednesday, November 29 participants spent the day at the premises of the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic (ÚVZ SR), where they were welcomed by Ms **Marianna Podobová**, Expert from International Relations Department, Ms **Dagmar Némethová**, Deputy Chief and the Head of the Section of International Relations and Communication and their colleagues from five other departments.

Insights into the role of ÚVZ in the field of food safety and the overview of the way the institutions works was given by Mr **Tomáš Vlčko**, Expert from the Department of Nutrition Hygiene, Food Safety and Cosmetic Products and Ms **Eva Fitzová**, the Regional Hygienist and General Secretary of the Office. After the first two presentations, the experts from Moldova and Slovakia held a joint photo session which was followed by an opportunity to talk over the coffee during a short break.

The day continued with the presentation on FCM from Ms **Milada Syčová**, Head of the National Reference Center for Materials Coming into Contact with Food, who joined the meeting online from Regional Office of Public Health in Poprad. The questions from the participants, of which there were quite a few, were answered after the presentations also by Mr. **Hamar**, Expert from Department of Nutrition Hygiene from ÚVZ SR.

The Head of the International Relations Department, Ms **Lucia Paulíková**, brought a chronicle which was signed by the participants upon their departure to lunch. In the evening, the participants from Moldova learned something more about the history of the city of Bratislava and visited some of its cultural sites during the guided tour of the city.

Participants from Moldova learned more about the cooperation between the ÚVZ SR and ŠVPS SR, about how their competences are divided and discussed best practices regarding the execution of the law of the European Union.

Thursday, November 30 commenced with an engaging field trip to Zeleninárska s. r. o. in Kostolná pri Dunaji, where the delegation met with the Production Director Mr **Miroslav Petruť**. Participants listened a short presentation about the company – its history, the scope of its production and methods used in vegetable processing and had a chance to see

the software the company is using for tracing its products from the field to the consumer's table.

After the presentation, the experts from Moldova participated in the tour of production halls, where they could see the machines used for sorting, washing, and packaging of vegetables as well as the methods used for quality control. During the tour, Mr Petru answered all of participant's questions and gave many interesting details about the production process.

After the lunch, participants transferred to the next meeting at the Central Control and Testing Institute in Agriculture (ÚKSUP) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. The delegation was received by Ms **Štefánia Buschbacher**, Director General of ÚKSUP. Ms Buschbacher gave a short presentation about the ÚKSUP and introduced her colleagues who then gave a brief presentations about their departments.

Various responsibilities and tasks of ÚKSUP were presented by representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture of the SR – Ms **Denisa Petrakovičová**, Director General of Food Industry and Trade Section and Ms **Jana Vargová**, Director General of Agriculture Section, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the SR. Their insights were followed by the presentations from ÚKSUP representatives – Ms **Ivana Kurhajcová**, Head of Department of Plant Protection and Ms **Gabriela Tóthová**, Head of The Department of Organic Production. Moldovan delegation learned more about the laboratories and responsibilities of the department of molecular biology, about the protection of plants and pest species in Slovakia and the EU and about increasingly popular organic production.

The visit to the ÚKSUP was concluding with long Q&A section with many practical questions from experts from Moldova. Their Slovak counterparts shared their experience and challenges faced with implementing EU legislation and offered best practices and recommendations.

The last meeting of the study visit took place on **Friday, December 1** at the headquarters of the Visegrad Fund in Bratislava. Moldovan experts met with the Visegrad Fund's Executive Director, Amb. **Petr Mareš** and Mr **Jiří Sýkora**, Chief of the Cabinet, gained insight of the Fund's projects and were presented with opportunities for a possible future cooperation. Delegation also shared their feedback on the week in Bratislava and meetings they attended.

Feedback:

The delegation was very positive about the structure of the meetings and their contribution to their future work. They appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity to clarify some of the uncertainties they had encountered in their work in relation to the

harmonization of their national legislation with European legislation. They also found the choice of institutions useful, as it was the Slovak counterpart of the institutions represented by the study visit participants. The similarity of their work and the problems they encountered was also evident in the fact that after the presentations by the host institutions, the participants asked many questions and usually led a long discussion. At the same time, they expressed interest in establishing contacts with the institutions with a view to future cooperation and further consultation. The participants found Slovak experience very useful.

ALBANIA 2023_BRATISLAVA_4 – 8 December 2023

Participants

Enkeleda Shkurta	Head of Information Sector, GIS and Environmental Registers
Enxhi Oga	Specialist of Information Sector, GIS and Environmental Registers
Sidorela Spahiu	Specialist of Chemicals Sector
Amilda Haka	Specialist of Environmental Permit Sector
Eriola Peshtani	Specialist of Monitoring Sector of Environmental Permits and Environmental Impact Assessment

The main focus of the study visit of five civil servants in Slovakia organized by the **Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association** was the issue of the *Waste and Waste Management*. During the meetings, members of the group – representatives of the National Environmental Agency – made acquaintance of the institutional and legislative framework and the governance in the field, concrete projects and measures and the current activities of the respective institutions, including their competencies and interaction.

The official working program for the expert group from Albania was organized into the five working days and combined various meetings in order for the experts to discuss and share partners' experience and the first-hand knowledge of processes in practice. The program of the study trip thus consisted of series of meetings with leading representatives and experts of the state institutions, NGOs and private sector.

The team of Albanian experts was officially briefed and received by the **SFPA's** Executive Director Ms **Jitka Ivančíková**, RC SFPA's analyst of Economic and Development Policy Program Mr **Peter Brezáni** and Project Coordinator Ms **Barbora Legényová** upon arrival during the orientation meeting. The program and agenda were discussed.

On Monday, December 4 the study trip commenced with a transfer to the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. Participants were welcomed by the Director General of the **Directorate of Climate Change and Air Protection** Mr **Milan Zvara** and Ms **Daniela**

Godová from the Department of Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation. Mr Zvara talked about the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and how this policy is implemented in Slovakia and shared more information about the Information System of Waste Management (ISOH). The second part of the visit to the Ministry of the Environment continued with the meeting with representatives of the Directorate of Circular Economy. Experts were welcomed by Ms **Eleonóra Šuplatová**, Director General, who talked about the responsibilities of the directorate and answered expert's questions regarding landfills in Slovakia. The meeting was also attended by Ms **Paula Mičová** from the Department of the Circular Economy and her colleagues from the Waste Management Department, Mr **Lubomír Ďuračka**, Mr **Michal Patassi** and Ms **Simona Cuprik**.

After lunch, the participants transferred to the main building of the Ministry of Environment to meet the representatives of the Ministry's Institute of Environmental Policy. Presentation about the Institute and detailed data on waste generation in Slovakia were shared by the representatives of the Analytical Unit – Director General, Mr **Ján Dráb** and Director of the Department Ms **Stella Košíková**.

On Tuesday, December 5 participants visited the waste management company OLO. The program at OLO started with a presentation about the company and statistics regarding the waste management in Bratislava. After the presentation, the participants were given an excursion of the company facilities (incineration site and separation line). Later on, they transferred to the biggest collection yard in Slovakia, where they could see what kind of waste is accepted by OLO company. The day was concluded with the visit to KOLO – reuse center run by OLO.

On Wednesday, December 6 participants visited the producer responsibility company (PRO) NATUR-PACK, which safeguards that manufacturers of packaging and non-packaging products, electrical equipment, batteries and accumulators fulfill their obligations under the Waste Act. Albanian experts were welcomed by Mr **Michal Sebň**, **Director of NATUR-PACK**, who advised the Albanian team to devote themselves to their own waste analyzes from the very beginning, because data from the field is extremely important for argumentation at all levels, from municipalities to the government to collection companies or the lay public. He also explained how the extended producer responsibility system works in Slovakia and share some challenges they are facing in this field. Mr **Marek Brinzík**, Director of the Communications and Marketing Department then introduced company's activities in the field of working with the general public via creation informational videos and publishing informational publications on how to recycle waste.

Study visit continued with a meeting at Sensoneo on Thursday, November 7. Participants discussed data analysis of waste management with Mr **Martin Basila**, Director of the company. Mr Basila introduced the Sensoneo and their foreign locations and provided more details about the solutions the company offers. Mr **Tomáš Vincze**, Director of the

Waste Management Division, talked about management of waste from the factories and presented the radar sensors used in trash bins which are designed by the Sensoneo and used in several countries. The presentations were followed by the discussion about the waste management in Albania and possible future cooperation.

The day continued with the meeting at Institute of Circular Economy (INCIEN), where the delegation was welcomed by Ms **Veronika Hagovská**, Expert on circular economy. In her presentation, Mr Hagovská talked about the Institute and how they work with the Slovak government, about the difference between the linear and circular economy and the concept of circular economy and waste management, provided data regarding its implementation in Slovakia and other countries, and shared useful studies and papers which can be helpful for the Albanian experts in their future work at the NEA.

After the meetings, the delegation had the chance to learn something more about the history of Bratislava during the guided city tour of the Bratislava castle and other landmarks.

On Friday, December 8 the delegation visited the Visegrad Fund for the last debriefing meeting before returning back home. Experts from Albania were welcomed by the Deputy Executive Director Ms **Maja Wawrzyk**, Chief of Cabinet, Mr **Jiří Sýkora** and Project Managers, Ms **Kateřina Šrámková** and Ms **Karolina Janik**. The meeting commenced with the presentation of Visegrad Fund's activities and grants schemes and concluded with the discussion on delegation's experience with the visit.

Feedback:

The delegation was very positive about the structure of the meetings and their contribution to their future work. They appreciated the fact that they had the opportunity to meet with the organizations operating the same field, who shared their experience, recommendations and good practices in the field of waste management. They found the choice of institutions useful and expressed interest in establishing contacts. The participants benefited from learning more about the waste separation and process of incineration of waste and the impact of unit-based pricing on waste production as these are topics they are planning to deal with in their home country. According to participants the objective of the visit was achieved as they got a complete overview of the entire cycle of integrated waste management and all the points they wanted to discuss were covered. The participants found Slovak experience very useful.