



**ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE  
REGIONAL SECRETARIAT LIAISON OFFICE**

**NARRATIVE REPORT**

February – June 2004

Starting with February 2004 the SPAI Regional Secretariat Liaison Office is operational and undertaking its first steps in implementing *SPAI strategy for 2003 and beyond*. The establishment of the RSLO is the first step in a process of **conveying leadership of the SPAI to the countries of the region** and a mechanism to jointly develop a new vision of the Initiative. The RSLO will serve as a concrete and visible commitment of the regional states to the continuing, concerted and coordinated fight against corruption in SEE.

In this light, the RSLO is responsible for designing and implementing a comprehensive work program aiming to contribute to the capacity of the SPAI countries to fight corruption according to the international anti-corruption standards.

During the first months of existence the Office in Sarajevo focused its activities on implementing the strategic objectives of SPAI and in refining its own strategic mission and vision. The present report is describing the steps undertaken both on programmatic and capacity development areas.

## **FEBRUARY**

During February and March, CEELI and the RSLO focused on setting up the office, including registering the RSLO as an international diplomatic mission; establishing financial accounts and procedures; purchasing equipment; completing a proposal and budget for funds transferred from CEELI.

### **Administrative configuration and endowment**

It was signed the Advocacy Sub-grant Agreement between The American Bar Association on behalf of the Central And East European Law Initiative (CEELI) through The Fund For Justice and Education and Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Regional Secretariat Liaison Office for Anti-Corruption Project – 2 February – 30 April 2004;

It was drafted the Memorandum of Understanding between CEE Regional Institution-Building Advisor (RIBA) Program and Regional Secretariat Liaison Office (RSLO);



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The SPAI RSLO office was established within the facilities provided by the BiH Government – room 105, Ministry of Defense Building;

The procurement procedure for the necessary IT equipment was finalized (Computers, printers, fax etc.);

Communication lines are in place (telephone, fax, e-mail etc.).

#### **SPAI Friends of the Chair Meeting Held in Brussels**

On February 20, the SPAI Friends of the Chair met in Brussels to discuss various SPAI activities, including those of the RSLO.

CEELI's Deputy Coordinator of Anti-Corruption programs Jennifer Gauck provided an update of CEELI's coordination with Mr. Brkic and the RSLO, including progress on establishing the office, procuring equipment, and beginning institution-building trainings. Mr. Brkic presented ideas for the draft workplan of the RSLO; CEELI, the OECD, the COE and the Chair commented upon these ideas. The Chair then asked that the RSLO have a draft workplan within a month's time; the draft has since been completed and distributed to the Friends of the Chair and other RSLO stakeholders.

Following the Friends of the Chair meeting, CEELI worked with the RSLO and with donors to develop work plan goals and communicate the progress CEELI and Mr. Brkic have made in establishing the RSLO as a functioning entity.

#### **MARCH**

##### **Financial resources**

Based on the above mentioned Advocacy Sub grant Agreement, SPAI RSLO received 50.339 USD, on **5 of March 2004**. This amount is provided by the approved budget covering the interval between 2 February and 30 April 2004.

##### **Human resources**

Starting with **15 of March 2004** SPAI RSLO is working at full capacity:

- Josip Brkić - executive secretary, starting with 1 March 2004;
- Cornel – Virgiliu Calinescu - anticorruption expert, starting with 15 March 2004;
- Nedzma Džananović - administrative assistant, starting 15 March 2004.



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**Bilateral meetings**

On March 4, CEELI Executive Director Betsy Andersen and CEE Director Rob Leventhal met with Mr. Brkic to discuss the goals and plans of the RSLO, while Ms. Gauck met with Heather Goldman and Susan Kutor from USAID in Budapest to update them about the RSLO's future activities

**Training for the RSLO staff**

In mid-March, CEELI's Regional Institution Building Advisor (RIBA) began assisting the RSLO in developing financial management and grant reporting mechanisms, fundraising skills, and a strategic action plan.

On 16 March 2004, it was organized the first workshop for the RSLO staff on „Basic Financial Management and Grant Financial Reporting“. Topics addressed were:

- Overview of the Advocacy Subgrant to SPAI RSLO;
- Cash Management;
- Advocacy Subgrant Budget;
- Generally Accepted Accounting Principles;
- Basic Financial Procedures for Advocacy Subgrant;
- Financial Reporting for Advocacy Subgrant;
- BiH Financial and Administrative Regulations.
- Operational Issues.

**SPAI RSLO Draft Workplan**

The draft workplan produced by RSLO describes the current status of the RSLO, its financial resources, its human resources, and its objectives; a matrix within the workplan details activities and deadlines for each objective, as well as progress or completion made thus far.

After having been circulated among the Friends of the Chair, the revised version included comments and suggestions submitted until 21 April 2004 by the OECD and ABA CEELI. The document was analyzed during the 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting of the SPAI, held in Sveti Stefan, Montenegro, 5-6 May 2004. All the activities listed within the Work plan were approved with specific instructions for the SPAI RSLO to redraft de document in order to incorporate the additional comments and suggestions made by the Steering Group Members.

In addition to the draft workplan, the RSLO has also produced two concept papers for workshops on UN Convention against corruption and investigating



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high corruption cases, tentatively scheduled for June and October. The concept paper details the projects necessity, objectives, and outcomes, as well as a draft agenda, items for budget consideration, and proposed list of participants.

**Roundtable in Tirana on Lessons learned in Anticorruption Policy**

On 30 of March 2004, the SPAI RSLO Executive Secretary attended in Tirana, Albania, the roundtable on **Lessons learned in Anticorruption Policy** – a study developed within a project initiated by the SOROS FOUNDATIONS NETWORK, in cooperation with the CENTER FOR POLICY STUDIES AT CEU. The research project aims to study good practice in the areas of anticorruption policies and projects in four South East European countries – Albania, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Macedonia. The research findings were publicly debated within a roundtable workshop, organized in **March 2004**, in Tirana, Albania.

**APRIL**

**Preparations for the 7<sup>th</sup> SPAI Steering Group Meeting**

SPAI RSLO focused the activities on the preparation of the **7<sup>th</sup> SPAI Steering Group Meeting**. In this respect RSLO ensured the SPAI Secretariat functions by:

- elaborating the draft agenda and additional documents related to the Steering Group Meeting;
- sending invitations and centralizing the registration forms;
- incorporating within the Draft SPAI RSLO work plan additional comments and suggestions received from ABA CEELI and OECD;
- maintaining permanent contact with the co-organizer - Anticorruption Initiative Agency of the Republic of Montenegro.

**Bilateral meetings**

**USAID.** On 16 of April 2004, SPAI RSLO Executive secretary and anticorruption expert meet with a delegation of USAID:

- Susan Kutor, Local Governance and Stability Pact Coordinator, Regional Services Center for Europe and Eurasia, Budapest
- Michael Henning, Director, Democracy Office, Mission to BiH, Sarajevo
- Patricia Racicot Manso, Advisor for Humanitarian Assistance and South Eastern European Affaires, US Mission to the European Union, Bruxelles

Participants discussed **roles and channels of communication between SPAI RSLO, US agencies and other stake holders** in SPAI. It was clarified that



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the US Department of State representative is a member of the Steering Group. USAID's role is limited to management of its agreement with ABA/CEELI, which is currently providing technical and financial assistance to RSLO. This does not prevent other stakeholders/donors from establishing similar relationships with RSLO, and this is in fact a goal.

Participants analyzed the possibility of involving **additional donors in the financing of SPAI RSLO activities**. Three possibilities were identified:

- **Directly** through an agreement signed with SPAI RSLO
- **Indirectly** through an agreement signed with ABA CEELI, which provides funding and assistance to RSLO.
- **Indirectly** through an agreement signed with a different intermediary organization.

RSLO is instituting financial procedures and systems that would make any one of these funding avenues possible. For example, just as RSLO follows USAID regulations for procurement, financial management and reporting, etc. for funds provided by USAID, RSLO would follow regulations stipulated by other donors as necessary.

Furthermore, the importance of **transparency regarding the SPAI RSLO's overall performance was stressed**. It was decided that SPAI RSLO representatives will provide the Steering Group members with detailed information on the SPAI RSLO organization, structure, role and possible ways to interact with various stake holders. This information will be included within the SPAI RSLO presentation to be made during the Steering Group Meeting. In addition, communication with stakeholders will be ongoing between Steering Group Meetings.

**SPAI RSLO Visibility**. Both parties underlined the importance of carrying out a **dissemination campaign** with regard to the role of SPAI RSLO in the region. This will include: monthly updating of the SPAIgram, SPAI RSLO WEB page, press conferences, etc.

**SPAI RSLO Draft Work Plan** was reviewed, focusing on the following SPAI RSLO activities included in the draft work plan:

- The first SPAI Annual Meeting/Conference



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- Workshops – two initial workshop concepts presented for Steering Group approval
- Public Awareness Campaign concept presented for Steering Group approval

Additional project concepts proposed:

- An update to the 2001 SPAI needs assessment, which can serve as the basis for additional program design.
- Development of a database of regional anticorruption activities, which will reduce duplication and strengthen RSLO's information clearinghouse function.
- Identification of RSLO's value-added to existing donor activities, including, for example, the SEECF.

It was stressed that while the initial work plan is expected to be finalized at the 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting, additional activities and resources could be added afterward to meet ongoing needs and opportunities.

USAID representatives offered assistance in building the **Regional Anticorruption Network** by providing contact person for each USAID mission in the region.

At the end of the meeting, both sides expressed their satisfaction with achievements to date of the **Regional Secretariat Liaison Office**, which became fully staffed only on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Already, the office has undergone financial management training, procured equipment, etc. according to USAID regulations, and completed a draft action plan. The participants underlined the necessity of continuing the close cooperation between the new office in Sarajevo and all SPAI stake holders.

**Stability Pact Special Coordinator Office.** On 20 of April 2004, SPAI RSLO Executive secretary and anticorruption expert meet with a delegation of the Stability Pact Special Coordinator Office:

- John R. Riddle, Deputy Special Coordinator
- Gregor W. Koessler, Head of Cabinet
- Charlotta Ozaki Macias, Cabinet Advisor.



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The SCSP delegation raised concerns about the existing perception in SCSP Brussels about the lack of progress in the work of the SPAI RSLO.

SPAI RSLO representatives briefly presented the current status of the office, underlining the following three issues:

- RSLO became operational starting with 15<sup>th</sup> March 2004;
- From this moment the office undertook the necessary measures to organize the 7<sup>th</sup> SPAI Steering Group – drafting the agenda, work plan, quick start package of activities, cooperating with the Montenegrin authorities in organizing the event, ;
- For the moment SPAI RSLO receives financial support only from one donor country – United States of America. Further more US representatives advanced the possibility of allocating additional funds for SPAI RSLO substantial activities – workshops, regional conferences, assessments etc.

It was agreed that the delays in becoming operational had not been within the powers of the RSLO to resolve at once, and to follow a more proactive communication line. Excellent progress was made immediately after the receipt of the funding.

SPAI RSLO will from now on provide regular brief updates to the Special Coordinator through existing reporting lines (WT III), in order to allow SCSP Senior Management to provide visibility on political level and with Brussels interlocutors as well as to be able to follow progress made by the RSLO.

Following these constructive discussions, there was full agreement on next steps, including on jointly agreed minutes of the meeting.

***SPAI RSLO role in complementing existing regional anticorruption activities***

Participants stressed the importance of avoiding overlapping activities and duplications in carrying out anticorruption projects/activities in the region.

SPAI RSLO will have to ensure that its activities will be complementary with those implemented by European Commission (especially within SAP), OECD, Council of Europe etc.



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In this respect, SPAI RSLO representatives presented three tools envisaged within the Work Plan that will offer guidance in selecting and implementing regional anticorruption projects:

- Regional anticorruption network – consisting in information about policy makers and experts in the region
- Regional anticorruption database – consisting in legislation, strategies, ongoing projects, studies, progress reports, statistics

Up dating the previous SPAI assessment in order to obtain an overall image of progress made by the SPAI countries and to identify future areas for assistance

**PACO IMPACT**

On **22 - 23 of April 2004**, SPAI RSLO's Executive Secretary and Anticorruption expert attended the **PACO IMPACT Start up workshop in Sarajevo** - Implementation of anticorruption plans in South Eastern Europe. Following this workshop a bilateral meeting SPAI RSLO – Council of Europe was organized in order to asses future areas of cooperation.

**MAY**

**7th SPAI Steering Group Meeting 5-6 May 2004, Sveti Stefan, Republic of Montenegro**

The **first major event** organized by the office was the 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting, co-hosted with the authorities of the Republic of Montenegro. For the first time in the last two years period, **all SPAI member countries were represented by national high representatives**. Also, partner countries and partner organizations (US, France, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland, Council of Europe, OECD, American Bar Association, World Bank, European Commission, Transparency International, Open Society Institute, OSCE) actively participated to the discussions on the substantial agenda items.

The main objectives of the 7<sup>th</sup> Steering Group were:

- assessment of the progress made both at national and regional level in the implementation of the SPAI Strategy adopted in September 2003;
- debating and approving the SPAI RSLO DRAFT WORK PLAN for 2004;
- identifying the short and medium term priorities for the SPAI member states and areas of assistance;



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- debating and adopting a decision on the role of the SPAI in SEECP Joint Campaign to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption.

In preparation of the Steering Group Meeting the SPAI RSLO staff drafted the **SPAI RSLO WORK PLAN for 2004 and 2005** which includes as main activities:

- progress and needs assessment,
- training component,
- tools to enhance regional cooperation (regional anticorruption data base, network and exchange of experts),
- SPAI regional and national awareness campaign.

**Additional topics debated** during the last steering group:

- **assessment of the progress made both at national and regional level** in the implementation of the national and SPAI Strategies;
- identifying the **short and medium term priorities for the SPAI member states** and areas of assistance;
- debating and adopting a decision on the **role of the SPAI in SEECP Joint Campaign to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption.**

Each of the SPAI countries reported on the progress they had made in implementing their national anti-corruption strategies, the challenges remaining and their short - and medium-term priorities for assistance. Several international organizations and NGOs working on fighting corruption in SEE reported on their on-going efforts and discussed ways they could cooperate with the SPAI RSLO to help achieve regional goals.

On the second day of the meeting, the SPAI RSLO presented the progress it had made thus far and its draft workplan. Country representatives and international partners offered feedback and suggested changes and additions to make the workplan stronger and to address more closely the needs of the countries of the region.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting will most likely be held in Sarajevo in the fall.

SPAI RSLO drafted the minutes of the meeting which were approved on **31 of May 2004.**



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**ABA CEELI - SPAI RSLO - Joint assessment regarding the Republic of Moldova's 2004 Project of the National Strategy for Preventing and Fighting Corruption**

Experts from ABA-CEELI and the Stability Pact Anti-Corruption Initiative Regional Secretariat Liaison Office (SPAI RSLO) reviewed the Republic of Moldova's 2004 Project of the National Strategy for Corruption Prevention and Fighting ("National Strategy") and the Action Plan for accomplishing the National Strategy for corruption prevention and fighting corruption ("Action Plan").

The analysis evaluated the degree to which the proposed National Strategy and Action Plan complies with Council of Europe (CoE) and other international standards.

**SEECF Joint Campaign to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption in SEE**

SPAI RSLO team (executive secretary and anticorruption expert) participated in Bucharest, on **17 May 2004**, to the Expert's Meeting of SEECF Participating Countries and Observer Partners to prepare for the Ministerial JHA Meeting on 18 May 2004.

SPAI RSLO representatives also attended the **ministerial JHA Meeting on 18 May 2004**. During this second day event ministers of justice and home affairs formally endorsed the Joint Statement drafted during the Expert's meeting.

SPAI RSLO CONTRIBUTION

Within the Expert's meeting the SPAI RSLO Executive Secretary, delivered an **updated report** on the steps undertaken by the SPAI and SPAI RSLO in the field of fighting against corruption in SEE. The report included information regarding the establishment of the Regional Secretariat Liaison Office in Sarajevo, the 7<sup>th</sup> SPAI Steering Group Meeting in Sveti Stefan and next steps in implementing the SPAI Strategy and SPAI RSLO Work Plan for 2004 and 2005.

The RSLO's representative underlined the availability and readiness of the newly established office in Sarajevo to contribute to the effective implementation of the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs from the States



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Participating in the South East European Co-Operation Process (SEECP) on a Joint Campaign to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption in South Eastern Europe.

In the framework of the SEECP - JHA Conference, SPAI RSLO representatives undertook bilateral contacts and exchange of views and information with SPAI partner or potential partner countries and organizations: SPAI countries representatives – ministers of justice from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Romania, Romanian General Prosecutor, representatives of the SEECP Chairman in Office, experts from Albania, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro; TRANSCRIME; SECI CENTER; SPOC INITIATIVE and SPOC SECRETARIAT in Bucharest.

Common conclusion from all of these meetings was that RSLO, as regionally owned structure, can significantly contribute to coherent efforts of all stakeholders in fight against organized crime and corruption.

The Joint Statement specifically makes reference to the Stability Pact Anticorruption Initiative and SPAI Regional Secretariat Liaison Office as *fora* and mechanisms to enhance regional cooperation in fighting corruption in SEE.

- *“to strengthen regional cooperation in fighting corruption in SEE by ratifying and implementing the UN Convention against Corruption (Merida Convention) and by making full use of the Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative (SPAI) and its Regional Secretariat Liaison Office in Sarajevo“;*

**Strategic planning session**

On 26-29 May 2004, Executive Secretary, Anticorruption Expert and Administrative Assistant attended the **Strategic planning session held in Sarajevo**, organized by RIBA. The training included the following topics:

- RSLO Vision, Mission and Strategic directions
- External Analysis, Stakeholder Analysis;
- Review of Needs Assessment
- Analysis and Prioritization of Strategic Programmatic Alternatives
- Work plan - Implementation Planning
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, Indicators and Assumptions
- Budgeting
- RSLO Training Program



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**SPAI RSLO Workplan approved**

The SPAI RSLO objectives and activities were further determined through the process of the Strategic planning session held in Sarajevo, 26-29 May 2004 and by taking into consideration the recommendations made by SPAI Steering Group within the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Montenegro, Sveti Stefan 5-6 May 2004.

Additional inputs were provided by the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs from the States Participating in the South East European Co-Operation Process (SEECOP) on a Joint Campaign to Fight Organized Crime and Corruption in South Eastern Europe, Bucharest, 18 May 2004.

The above mentioned events gave strategic guidelines for the work of SPAI RSLO as well as the base for further developing and refining the work plan that was in principle approved by SPAI Steering Group during its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in Montenegro.

**The final version of the work plan was approved on 18th of June 2004 following the silent procedure.**

The final work plan includes specific programmatic and institutional development objectives:

Specific programmatic objectives:

- Supporting the process of adoption and implementation of the UN Convention against corruption by the SPAI COUNTRIES
- Developing and coordinating a Regional Anticorruption Program for Raising Public Awareness
- Sharing best practices in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating high-level corruption cases in SPAI Countries
- Assessment of the regional anticorruption needs and specific requirements

Institutional development objectives:

- RSLO – Secretariat of SPAI
- Building the necessary infrastructure for developing the research and information centre
- Enhancing the regional capacities to cooperate and interact



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- Fundraising and sustainability of the RSLO
- Institution-building training program

## **JUNE**

### **7th Regional Table of the Stability Pact and Working Table III, Portoroz, Slovenia, 7 – 8 June 2004**

Under the agenda set forth for the meeting of the Working Table III the SPAI representatives - professor Ugo Draetta, SPAI chairman and Josip Brkic, SPAI RSLO Executive Secretary - delivered updated reports on the recent developments and also short /medium term priorities.

The main theme of the WT III Meeting was "Stepping up the fight against organized crime and corruption in SEE". In this respect it was acknowledged that although several legal instruments to fight organized crime and corruption in SEE have been introduced, criminal networks and corruption continue to endanger human security, and to hamper democratic and economic development, as well as the integration into Euro-Atlantic structures

### **Joint workshop organized by SPAI RSLO in partnership with Open Society Institute**

On 29th of June 2004, **Stability Pact Anticorruption Initiative – Regional Secretariat Liaison Office** (SPAI RSLO) and **Open Society Institute** organized in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina the regional workshop on "Combating Conflict of Interest at Local Governments in CEE – Sharing experience with the SEE countries".

The regional workshop was organized as a component of the "Local Government Policy Partnership" (LGPP) - a joint program of the Department for International Development (UK) and Local Government Initiative, Open Society Institute (Budapest). The objective of this co-operation was to produce **comparative policy studies** on selected local government issues. Beneficiaries of the policy proposals were national government ministries, local government associations, research and training institutions.

The main purpose of the event was to **disseminate the findings of a recent study published by Open Society Institute on "Combating Conflict of**

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Interest in Local Governments in the CEE countries”. The study offers a thorough and comprehensive analyse of the existing legal and regulatory framework and practices of the conflict of interest situations both of local elected officials and civil servants/administrative employees. National laws and local codes of conduct were assessed, by identifying the conflict areas, assessing their importance and advising policy makers on changing regulations and procedures. The study reflects the experience of **Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia** and authors of the study representing all this countries participated within the Regional workshop organized in Sarajevo.

Furthermore the event provided for the participants an excellent framework to **exchange information and share best practices** in the field of fighting corruption in general and managing conflict of interest in particular.

As **added value** to the existing framework, the organizers extended also invitations to attend the event to the SEE countries members of SPAI that were not subject to the assessment made within the project.

In this regard Stability Pact Anticorruption Initiative – Regional Secretariat Liaison Office (SPAI RSLO) identified the SPAI member countries that are currently in the process of developing legal and institutional framework for preventing and combating conflict of interest. The following SEE countries expressed their interest and actively participated to the workshop: **Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia.**

This joint approach facilitated real dialogue and sharing of experiences among the experts representing the participating 11 countries from CEE and SEE.

The following topics were discussed: main findings of the study carried out in CEE countries, prevention as a tool to fight conflict of interest, problems with the enforcement, new initiatives and plans for the future in CEE and SEE countries.

**The objectives of the project and of this particular event were fully accomplished** as it provided excellent opportunity for policy makers to learn from other countries’ experiences, to discuss their own problems and to identify practical and pragmatic solutions for the ongoing process of drafting and implementing the relevant legislation.



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**SPAI RSLO WEB PAGE AND DATABASE DESIGN**

SPAI RSLO initiated the procedure of selecting offers from IT companies in order to start developing the official WEB PAGE and the specialized database. Three offers were received:

- EUROBIT - 30.380 USD;
- COMART – 23.400 USD;
- Development Studio – 17.800 USD.

**SPAI gram**

Second issue of the SPAI GRAM was elaborated and circulated by the SPAI RSLO. The newsletter provides to all SPAI partners overall presentations and updated information about the activities carried out by SPAI RSLO during May and June.