

Local Administration Reform Project: European learning and practice transfer for Turkish senior officials

Written by Alexander Heichlinger (AT) and Julia Bosse (DE)

EIPA Barcelona has recently been entrusted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) within the Local Administration Reform project (LAR III), with three “learning journeys” – this November in Spain, and in France and Poland in 2020. This project is co-financed by the European Commission and conducted with the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation and the Ministry of the Interior.

The first five-day study visit to Spain – to the cities of Barcelona, where EIPA has a centre for many years, and Madrid – was carried out for a high-level Turkish delegation. The objective was to gain insights and support their legislative drafting process by addressing a number of relevant topics, and learning from innovative approaches and practices in the provision of public services and municipal public finance management.

Specifically, participants had the opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge, local experiences and lessons from Spain in following areas:

- How is the public administration system structured and what roles and functions do local governments exercise? Which

local government reforms are being undertaken?

- How is the financial management system (including operational and capital budgeting, fiscal planning, and monitoring of performance management and reporting) organised? Can local authorities increase their revenue and share it? What mechanisms of intergovernmental fiscal transfer between central and local governments exist?
- What legal and institutional structures allow local authorities to issue business licensing? Which other tools support the local business climate and economic development?
- How do relations between central governments and municipalities in terms of control and oversight of local governments function? Are there anti-corruption strategies and relevant legislation in place?

This extensive information and knowledge was not only acquired by visiting both the Spanish local and state administrations, but was also transferred via several rich tool boxes of best practices produced by EIPA such as the EPSA scheme, the **EUPACK project**, the European CEFG Group, and the Local Public Management Excellence Cloud.

A well-balanced mix of visits was made to local institutions (e.g. the City Council and Province of Barcelona, the Catalan Government as well as the Spanish Ministry of Territorial Policy and Civil Service together with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) in both cities. There were also in-depth discussions and lectures from in-house experts that provided the participants with a full overview, top-level expertise and best-practice models in the areas outlined above.