**PEMPAL Budget Community of Practice (BCOP) participation in OECD CESEE SBO Meeting and back-to-back meeting of BCOP Executive Committee – July 6-7, 2017, Paris, France**

1. On July 5-8, 2017 PEMPAL Budget Community of Practice (BCOP) members travelled to Paris, France, to participate on July 6-7, 2017 in the 13th CESEE OECD Senior Budget Officers (SBO) meeting at invitation of OECD Secretariat. The participants of the meeting included BCOP Executive Committee members - representatives of Ministries of Finance from the countries: Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation and Turkey. The group was accompanied by BCOP resource team, including Maya Gusarova, Senior Public Sector Specialist and BCOP Resource Team Coordinator; Deanna Aubrey, PEMPAL Strategic Advisor and BCOP resource team member and Naida Carsimamovic Vukotic, Consultant and BCOP Resource Team member (GGO15). Organizational support will be provided by Ksenia Galantsova, PEMPAL Secretariat.
2. This was the sixth annual OECD CESEE SBO meeting in which BCOP participated. BCOP has become increasingly involved in the preparation of *agenda* (available at <https://www.pempal.org/events/oecd-senior-budget-officials-regional-network-central-eastern-and-south-eastern-european>) and has been invited to participate in selection of the topics of the next year’s meeting, which will be hosted by Croatia. These annual meetings give the opportunity for PEMPAL BCOP members to network with the Ministries of Finance of the OECD CESSEE countries and learn about their current developments and plans in budgeting.
3. The agenda of the OECD CESEE SBO meeting started with the round table on the countries public expenditure developments and budget reforms and then focused on a number of issues, relevant for CESEE and PEMPAL countries. On Day 1 the meeting discussed findings of OECD-PEMPAL Survey on Performance Budgeting and development of OECD Best Practices for Performance Budgeting. Ms. Naida Carsimamovic Vukotic from BCOP Resource Team contributed with the presentation on the results of the OECD-PEMPAL survey. The presentation highlighted key trends and differences in OECD and PEMPAL countries. Thirteen PEMPAL countries that are part of the BCOP Working Group on Program and Performance Budgeting completed this survey in 2016, in addition to Turkey, which filled out the survey directly through OECD. The discussion that followed the presentation, focused around the following survey findings:
* In PEMPAL countries roles related to performance budgeting is more centralized within the central budget authorities (Ministries of Finance) than it is the case in OECD countries;
* Unlike in OECD countries, a frequent factor in motivating introduction of performance budgeting  in PEMPAL countries was improvement of coordination of government wide-strategic objectives, which at the same time still remains one the key obstacle to performance budgeting in PEMPAL countries despite noted improvements already achieved;
* PEMPAL countries perceive actual benefits of performance budgeting somewhat more positive than it is the case in OECD countries (possibly because of what is outlined in the previous item).
1. On Day 1 the meeting also discussed trends and lessons from countries in implementing spending reviews, based on the presentations, delivered by Ministries of Finance from the Netherlands, Croatia and Germany.
2. The last session of Day 1 was dedicated to gender budgeting. OECD team consulted with the participants on the OECD’s forthcoming *Gender Budgeting Toolkit*, seeking to identify essential tools for gender budgeting, good practice examples and lessons learned from countries experience. Further discussion on gender budgeting was inspired by the presentations from Iceland, Ukraine, as well as UN Women.
3. On Day 2 Symposium on Promoting Fiscal Transparency was organized with participation of GIFT, PEFA, International Federation of Accountants and PEMPAL. PEMPAL team has delivered a session on the efforts of the Working Group on Budget Literacy and Transparency to develop and promote good practices around citizens budget with the aim to improve budget transparency and allow citizens to better engage with the budget process. PEMPAL team, represented by Anna Belenchuk, BCOP Chair and Leader of the Working Group, Maya Gusarova and Deanna Aubrey from BCOP Resource Team, shared with the meeting participants findings of the knowledge product *Breaking Challenges in Constructing Citizen Budgets for PEMPAL Countries* (being finalized), and further plans of the Working Group to explore developments in PEMPAL countries and come up with recommendations on promoting public participation. The participants of the symposium praised BCOP on the knowledge product, finding it a comprehensive effort to identify and suggest solutions to address challenges, governments face in implementing citizen budget.
4. Using the occasion, on July 7 BCOP Executive Committee conducted its meeting, where the members reflected on the OECD CESEE meeting and discussed possible topics of interest for future meetings in cooperation with OECD. Fiscal risks remain one of the topics where PEMPAL countries have high interest and keen on reviewing approaches of OECD countries. Though it has been discussed in general during the BCOP Annual Plenary Meeting of 2017, there is interest to discuss tools and approaches in addressing different types of fiscal risks. Other proposed topics included intergovernmental fiscal relations, public private partnerships and managing human resources in the Ministries of Finance. The details on these issues and other issues discussed by the BCOP Executive Committee are reflected in the Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting at <https://www.pempal.org/about/governance/ex-com-bcop>
5. The results of the post event evaluation survey revealed that the events met expectation of 50 percent and exceeded expectations of 50 percent of respondents. The respondents gave on average 4.8 points out of 5 to the question if their participation in the 13th OECD CESEE SBO meeting met their objectives. According to comments provided by respondents, the participants appreciated the choice of topics covered at the meeting and evidence of close cooperation between international organizations. It was also evident to see that PEMPAL participation formed a significant part of the 13th OECD CESEE SBO meeting agenda and BCOP Executive Committee members were very active in discussions. *The evaluation report*is available at<https://www.pempal.org/events/oecd-senior-budget-officials-regional-network-central-eastern-and-south-eastern-european>