

# European Fund for the Balkans

*Bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union*

## Fellowship Programme for Young Government Officials from the Western Balkans **Supporting Excellence and Leadership in Governance**

*We are looking for the decision-makers of tomorrow who want to shape regional and European collaboration using their energy and enthusiasm*

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The European Fund for the Balkans is a multi-year joint initiative of European foundations designed to undertake and support initiatives aimed at **bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union** through grant-giving and operational programmes and, as such, is focused on individuals and organisations from Western Balkan countries.

As a direct follow-up to the International Commission on the Balkans (2004-2006), the Fund embodies the *"member-state building strategy"* with the *development of functioning state administrations* and *constituency-building* as its main priorities.

The European Fund for the Balkans has been initiated by four European Foundations including the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the King Baudouin Foundation, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the ERSTE Foundation. It is hosted by NEF.

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## **Background and Objectives**

At the heart of the recommendations of the International Commission on the Balkans lies a Member-state building strategy which embodies as its priorities the development of functioning state administrations and constituency-building for the countries of Southeast Europe. The development of effective and efficient state administrations is one of the major challenges that the countries of Southeast Europe face in their democratisation process. The Reforms in all of the countries are mainly driven by the EU integration process, irrespective of the prospective date of accession.

At the same time, due to the progressive integration process, the member states of the European Union themselves are faced with the challenge of developing new forms of cross-border collaboration. Administrative procedures are increasingly being determined by European regulations, as the EU's expanding field of competence now also touches upon what were traditionally national political issues. Domestic politics and security issues (such as for example migration) now require multilateral agreement and a universal approach. Possible future member states are only marginally involved in these processes to date, but they will be directly affected once they become members. Some of the newest members still struggle to meet the requirements of the EU membership.

Cross-border working relations are not developed through institutions, but by the people who work in them. Personal networks and an understanding of different working cultures are essential to overcoming barriers of national administration and past conflict. Both the EU integration process and the performance of the Balkan countries within the EU will depend on qualified and experienced human resources to guide and shape the process.

How can the employees of national ministries be prepared to meet these requirements? An excellent academic education and qualifications in the national administration system is the basis of this preparation. Furthermore, each public official responsible for the European domain should acquire practical experience of a different European member state over an extended period of time.

In response to these needs and complementary to existing programmes supporting institutional reform, the EFB launched in year 2008 a Fellowship Programme for young government officials from the Balkans as one of its flagship operational programmes.

## **Programme content**

The Programme aims to contribute to the development of effective and efficient state administrations in the region by offering a tailor-made fellowship and training programme for highly qualified young professionals from the highest ranking state authorities of the countries of the Western Balkans.

By participating in the Programme, the fellows have the opportunity to:

- gain professional experience in EU countries' federal or state government agencies,
- receive training on EU (and other international) issues,
- receive training on their respective field of expertise,
- acquire leadership and management skills at seminars,
- engage with their colleagues from the region and the EU and thus
- create links between administrations through individual networks,
- serve as ambassadors of their respective countries,
- learn a foreign language and
- participate in an alumni network.

During their stay in the host country, the Fellows get the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the administrative structures and forms of political decision-making in the host country and in the EU. The programme is complemented by an introductory seminar, a visiting programme to EU and other institutions in Brussels and a final seminar. These seminars provide regional and European political knowledge as well as leadership and managerial skills. Meetings of alumni serve to continue and reinforce the network beyond the completion of the programme.

The introductory seminar represents the kick-off of the 3-month programme cycle organised in Berlin and Potsdam. It includes a co-operation with the Potsdam Center for Policy and Management (PCPM) an initiative of the University of Potsdam, which sets out to promote advanced study and research as well as academic training projects for mid-career professionals and executives who work at the interface of political and administrative responsibility.

### **A unique approach**

The Programme is unique in terms of its duration, content and the number of participating countries from the Western Balkans and European Union. Up to 20 scholarships are made available for civil servants from the Western Balkans to spend a 3 month fellowship in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Netherlands or Poland.

The choice of the host institution is made on a case-by-case basis taking into account the preferences outlined in the application form, the profile of the fellow, the professional interests, the language skills, and the strategic interest of the employer.

The quality and intensity of the cooperation with the authorities of the host country is crucial to the success of the fellowship. The Fellow should be integrated in accordance with his/her professional qualifications. An ambitious profile of responsibilities from which both sides can benefit will be compiled by the Fellow and his/her supervisor.

Excellent knowledge of the language of the host country is desirable. However, the fellows will receive an allowance for intensive language training in their countries prior to the deployment in the host institution.

The Fellowship Programme is organised building upon the long standing experience offering similar programmes of the Robert Bosch Stiftung (The Bellevue Programme; Fellowship Programme for Public Servants from CEE).

## **Finance and Benefits**

During the Programme duration, fellows receive a monthly stipend of 1,500 euros from the European Fund for the Balkans in addition to the relocation fee. The costs for language training are also reimbursed up to a fixed sum. Travel, accommodation and any other essential maintenance costs relating to seminars and other compulsory events are also covered. The EFB supports the fellows with organisational issues.

## **Whom are we looking for?**

Civil Servants of ministries and highest ranking state institutions in the Western Balkan countries can apply.

The programme is targeted at public officials who have several years of professional experience in public administration and have already assumed initial managerial responsibilities or are preparing for a position of leadership. Basic knowledge of the workings of the European Union is required and personal enthusiasm for the European idea is essential.

## **Prerequisites**

- maximum age of 40,
- at least 3 (ideally 5) years of professional experience upon completing studies,
- at least 2 years in role as a public official for the top state authorities,
- initial managerial experience or prospects of assuming leadership responsibilities,
- excellent academic qualifications (masters degree or equivalent),
- very good knowledge of English,
- ideally basic knowledge of the language of the host country,
- sound knowledge of national and international politics and economics,
- strong interest in the political development of Europe,
- negotiating skills,
- team-working skills,
- initiative and definite readiness to perform,
- excellent written powers of expression,
- ability and readiness to acquaint oneself with various different topics in a short period of time,
- ability and readiness to complete inter-disciplinary work in inter-departmental working groups,
- ability and readiness to organise its own life arrangements in a new environment.

## **Application**

The application for the Fellowship Programme will be consisted of 3 phases:

- Online application
- Submitting additional documents via E-mail
- Interview

A pre-selection of candidates will be undertaken by the European Fund for the Balkans. The final selection is made by a Selection Committee.

For detailed information on the application process, please visit our website [www.balkanfund.org/fellowship2010](http://www.balkanfund.org/fellowship2010).

Applications will be accepted in the period from **27<sup>th</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009**.

## **The Programme schedule**

Intensive language training: *January – End of March 2010*

Introduction seminar: *April 2010, 10 days*

Working phase I: *April – Mid May 2010*

Intermediary seminar: *Mid May 2010, 3 days*

Working phase II: *May – June 2010*

Final Seminar: *Beginning of July 2010, 5 days*

## **Contact**

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