

European Fund for the Balkans

Bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union

EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE BALKANS FACT SHEET

ABOUT US

The European Fund for the Balkans is a multi-year joint initiative of European Foundations including Robert Stiftung, the King Baudouin Foundation, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the ERSTE Foundation.

Established in July 2007, the Fund is designed to undertake and support initiatives aimed at bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union through grant-making and operational programmes.

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

OUR ACTIVITIES

1. Public Launch of EFB and Panel Discussion on "The Balkans in Europe's Future"

On June 18 in Sarajevo in the Grand Hall of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly, the EFB celebrated its regional launch with a public panel discussion on "The Balkans in Europe's Future".



Over two hundred guests from the region and other countries attended the panel discussion with the members of the International Commission on the Balkans – former Italian Prime Minister, Giuliano Amato, former Serbia and Montenegro foreign minister Goran Svilanovic, former Bosnia-Herzegovina Prime Minister, Zlatko Lagumdžija as well as young leaders from the Balkans. The panel discussion was welcomed by Miroslav Lajcak, High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The topics and unconventional form of the discussion, masterfully moderated by Nick Gowning, provoked many interests among the attendees, prompting them to focus on the EU prospects of the

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Balkan and the main challenges and obstacles standing in the way of the region's integration and steps to that needed to be taken to achieve that goal.

2. THINK and LINK – Regional Policy Programme for Think Tanks and Policy Institutes

In response to the need of fostering different debates on the challenges, costs and opportunities of genuine EU member-state building through-out the region EFB launched the first of its annual policy programme: "THINK AND LINK" - Regional Policy Programme for Think Tanks and Policy Institutes in March 2008. The annual programmatic topic for 2008 was: "Environmental policy in the Western Balkans – policy legacies, current institutions and European standards".

The EFB received 26 project proposals from NGOs and Think Tanks from all over Western Balkan countries. Based on the quality and the relevance of the project proposals, 6 organizations were selected to participate in the Programme. The Programme outcomes include policy papers based on sound research, organization of public debates accompanied by outreach activities, and establishing of cooperation and communication channels within the regional think-thank network.

On June 22 – 24 the first seminar was held in Zagreb where the participants had the opportunity to discuss their own and other research proposals and voice their comments and suggestions about the research topics. The first results of the research projects, which will be conducted by six research teams from Belgrade, Pristina, Skopje, Split and Tirana, are expected by February 2009.

The financial support includes grants of up to 15.000 EUR to be used for research costs, project related travel and dissemination activities.

3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Leadership Development Programme (LDP) concept is based on the premise that the driving force for the continuation of the political, social and economic reforms in the Western Balkans are qualified young professionals with international experience and exposure. Each year, the LDP offers up to 30 graduate students from Southeast Europe a unique academic and networking experience and opportunity to cooperate with their counterparts from other countries.

Within the framework of the Program, on the 30th of August, a two-week Academy took place in Berlin. The Academy brought together 30 participants carefully selected to experience Europe through the Academy superior curriculum which includes topics such as European Union and its development of its relations with the SEE and wider issues of international and economic relations.

The Programme runs over a ten-month period and builds upon the combined effort of the TRANSFUSE Association and the College of Europe of 2006. Since last year the European Fund for the Balkans is supporting these important initiatives as part of its project activities within the Experiencing Europe Programme.

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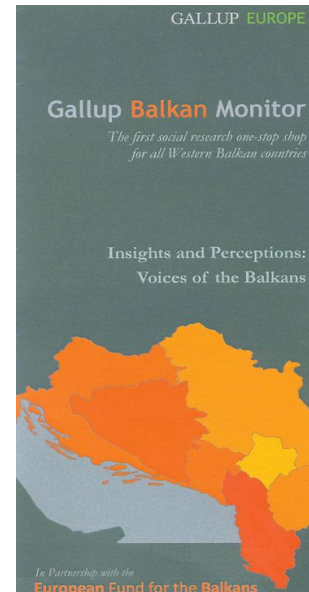
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4. GALLUP BALKAN MONITOR

Gallup in close partnership with the European Fund for the Balkans is carrying out the *Gallup Balkan Monitor*, the first social research one-stop shop for all Western Balkan Countries. The EFB will be a partner of the Gallup Balkan Monitor for three years, starting with the survey of 2008.

Gallup Balkan Monitor research is conducted annually and provides an up-to-date assessment on the socio-political, socio-economic, and multi-cultural dimensions of the Balkan region.

The first results of the Gallup Balkan Monitor will be presented in Brussels in November 2008.



5. "European Future of the Western Balkans – the Youth has a Role to play"

On 11 and 12 April 2008, the European Fund for the Balkans in cooperation with the Belgrade Fund for Political excellence organized a regional two day seminar with the title "European Future of the Western Balkans – the Youth has a Role to play".

The seminar was a reunion of the youth alumni of the Council of Europe Network of Schools for Political Studies from the Western Balkans region. Participants were young representatives of political parties, state institutions, NGOs, the media and businesses from each of the 6 schools for political studies from Tirana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Skopje, Podgorica and Belgrade.



The young participants had the chance to discuss existing and future ideas and activities of development of regional cooperation and concrete examples of leadership and activism among young generations of the region. A special focus was on the image question of the Western Balkans and ways to address this challenge.

In 2009, the European Fund for the Balkans will continue with its programmatic activities related to the strengthening the ties between young leaders the Balkans by organization of annual Balkan Youth Forum.

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Founding Partners

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Hosted by NEF



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