

# NEWSLETTER

## WB6

### WB6 WB6 announces grant awarded projects of the First Call

The Western Balkans Fund announced this month the grant awarded projects through its First Call for Regional Proposals, which had been publicly launched on November 15, 2017. 18 projects from the six Contracting Parties will bring together 84 organizations from the region. *Read on pages 2-4*



## Tirana

### WB6 and MEFA sign Host Country Agreement

Western Balkans Fund (WB6) and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) of Albania signed the Host Country Agreement. In the ceremony organized at the premises of MEFA in Tirana, members of diplomatic corps, civil society, media and staff members of WB6 participated.

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## Skopje

### Staff Retreat of WB6

Western Balkans Fund in early April 2018 in Skopje conducted a staff retreat to continue with internal organizational development through strategic development that is going to take place next upcoming months.

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## Belgrade

### EWB Interview

The Executive Director of WB6 Dr. Gjergj Murra gave an interview for the well-known informative page focused on our region, European Western Balkans. Dr. Murra stressed the importance of the regional cooperation and the role of WB6 in this regard.

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### The importance of people-to-people contacts

By Aleksandar Vesic

Regional cooperation is a broad term that may alter its meaning and purpose across the general dimensions of mobility, connectivity or digitalization. In essence, regional cooperation is about fostering free movement of people, goods, services and ideas.

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# AWARDED PROJECTS OF THE WBF FIRST CALL

The Western Balkans Fund has the pleasure to announce the grant awarded projects through its First Call for Regional Proposals, which had been publicly launched on November 15, 2017.

18 projects from the six Contracting Parties of WBF, will receive grants of up to EUR 12'000. In total, 84 organizations from the Western Balkans are collaborating in these 18 projects that connect our region in fields of cultural cooperation, education and scientific exchanges and promotion of sustainable development. The organizations leading the groups of grantees origin to equal amounts from the six Contracting Parties (three initiatives per Contracting Party).

With the publications of the list of finalists, the WBF has started the phase of contractual procedures with the 18 lead organizations. This phase is expected to be concluded within April 2018, in order to open the way for the implementation of the projects.

The evaluation of the projects highlighted the potential and capacities of the civil society actors of the region, its educational institutions, associations of culture, sports, arts, and clusters of business, and their interest in cooperating and hereby creating regional impact through people to people contacts.

The WBF would like to emphasize that the selection was very competitive, since due to budgetary reasons, only 18 grants can be awarded to a total of 351 applications. There were many more beautiful regional projects to choose from, and the WBF hopes to be able to do so in the future.

The Western Balkans Fund would like to thank all the applicants of 351 projects (in total 1298 organizations from the WB region) for their time, consideration and participation to the WBF First Call. We reassure you that this is just the beginning of a new collaboration era in the Western Balkans! We are committed to the success of the 18 projects chosen for our first grants, and we will keep our partners and friends posted on their progress.

Keep following the Western Balkans Fund!

*The official announcement could be found here:*

<http://westernbalkansfund.org/2018/04/12/western-balkans-fund-announces-the-list-of-grant-awarded-projects-of-the-first-call/>

*Please find the detailed list of Awarded Projects on pages 3 and 4.*

Contracting Party	Name of the project	Lead applicant	Geographic coverage and Partners per Contracting Party	Thematic area
Belgrade	6 <sup>th</sup> Global Youth Forum: Youth Power For The Common Future	ECPD Danubian Centre for Cross-border Cooperation	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Economic Society of Albania (ESA), Albania 2. FON University, Macedonia 3. VAMK University, Finland 4. ECPD – European Center for Peace and Development, Serbia	Education and Scientific Exchanges
	Street Art in the Balkans	Club for Youth Empowerment 018	<u>Partners:</u> 1. BRAVO Association, BiH 2. Alter Center, Macedonia 3. Dolori Association, Albania	Cultural cooperation
	"Into the future without water?!" TV documentaries "Green Patrol in Action"	Green Initiative of Vojvodina	<u>Partners:</u> 1. NGO "Molika", Macedonia 2. NGO "Euromost", Montenegro	Promotion of sustainable development
Pristina	Doku.tech	IPKO Foundation	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Share Foundation, Serbia 2. Metamorphosis, Macedonia 3. Open Labs, Albania	Education and Scientific Exchange
	Rethinking films – regional intercultural film school for young people	Dokufest	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Pravo Ljudski Film Festival, BiH 2. Pancevo Film Festival, Serbia	Cultural cooperation
	REACT FOR THE FUTURE: Reflection, Education, Action, Commitment, Together	Center for peace and tolerance	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Democracy Plus, Kosovo* 2. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Serbia 3. CIVIL MK - Cnter for Freedom, Macedonia 4. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Macedonia 5. United World College Mostar, BiH	Cultural cooperation
Podgorica	Regional CSO platform advocating social innovation under employment policies that guarantees security for youth at risks	Association for Democratic Prosperity – Zid	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Youth Cultural Center- Bitola, Macedonia 2. National Association of Youth Workers, Serbia 3. LENS, Kosovo* 4. Beyond Barriers Association, Albania 5. South East European Youth Network, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Promotion of Sustainable Development
	Importance of Protected Areas for Economic Development	NGO Green Step	<u>Partners:</u> 1. NGO Green Step, Montenegro 2. NGO Triton, Montenegro 3. NGO ERA, Kosovo* 4. NGO TOKA, Albania	Promotion of Sustainable Development
	Birds Without Borders – BWB	Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP)	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Macedonian Ecological Society (MES), Macedonia 2. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), Albania 3. Ornithological Society "Naše Ptice" (NP), Bosnia and Herzegovina	Education and Scientific Exchanges
Sarajevo	If stories could walk, if cities could talk	Association for care and general rights of children "Naša djeca" Zenica	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Tačka komunikacije, Serbia 2. SEGA, Macedonia	Cultural cooperation
	Summer School "Bringing EU closer to young workers from the region – meeting good practices and learning more on labor policies and measures"	Trade Union of Administration of the Republic of Srpska	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Trade Union of Workers of Administration, Judicial Bodies and Citizens' Association of the Republic of Macedonia 2. Trade Union of Administration and Justice of Montenegro 3. Trade Union of Administration of the Republic of Serbia	Promotion of Sustainable Development
	CLIO in the Balkans – Enhancing history teacher's network and improving the practice of teaching history as tool for reconciliation in the region.	History teachers association in Bosnia and Herzegovina EUROCLIO HIP BiH	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Udruženje za društvenu istoriju –UDI Euroclio, Serbia 2. Asocijacija nastavnika istorije u Makedniji ANIM, Macedonia 3. Udruženje profesora istorije Crne Gore HIP MONT, Montenegro 4. Shoqata e Mësimdhënësve të Historisë së Kosovës SHMHK, Kosovo*	Education and Scientific Exchange

Contracting Party	Name of the project	Lead applicant	Geographic coverage and Partners per Contracting Party	Thematic area
Skopje	Education4Progress: Regional Cooperation to Improve EU Law Teaching	Centre for South East European Law School Network (SEELS)	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Faculty of Law "Justinianus Primus" Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Macedonia 2. Faculty of Law, Goce Delchev University of Shtip, Macedonia; 3. Faculty of Law, University of Tirana, Albania; 4. Faculty of Law, University Sarajevo, BiH; 5. Faculty of Law, University of Zenica, BiH; 6. Faculty of Law University, "Džemal Bijedić" University of Mostar, BiH 7. Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, Serbia 8. Faculty of Law, University of Niš, Serbia	Education and Scientific Exchange
	Balkan regional youth forum - Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation	Association of Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA)	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Local Democracy Agency of Prijedor, BiH 2. Local Democracy Agency „Kosovo* 3. Local Democracy Agency, Albania 4. Local democracy agency, Montenegro 5. Agencija lokalne demokracije, BiH 6. Centar lokalne demokratije LDA, Serbia 7. Agencija lokalne demokratije Zavidovići, BiH 8. Local Democracy Agency – Subotica, Serbia	Cultural Cooperation
	Strengthening cross-border cooperation and relations in the Western Balkans through people-to-people contact of young entrepreneurs	Macedonia 2025	<u>Partners:</u> 1. CANSEE Canadian Serbian Business Association, Serbia 2. Bosnian American Friendship Association – Project "RESTART", BiH	Promotion of Sustainable Development
Tirana	Balkan Girl Power	South East Europe Social Contract Institute	<u>Partners:</u> 1. National Youth Council of Macedonia, Macedonia 2. Organization for Promoting Activism, Serbia 3. NGO iACT, Montenegro 4. ARTPOLIS, Kosovo*	Cultural Cooperation
	Creating synergy in Western Balkans for strengthening education, research and science	European Movement Albania (EMA)	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Balkans Policy Research Group (BPRG),Kosovo* 2. European Movement Novi Sad, Serbia	Education and Scientific Exchange
	Digital Girl of the Year	CID - Center for Information and Development	<u>Partners:</u> 1. Innovation Centre Kosovo, Kosovo* 2. ESTIMA Macedonia, Macedonia	Education and Scientific Exchange

### Grant awarded organizations will gather in Tirana

The Western Balkans Fund will organize two days of activities on May 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Tirana, Albania with the grant awarded organizations.

A workshop will be organized for the purpose of detailing the implementation process of the projects, which involve 84 organizations, universities, schools and institutions from the Western Balkans region.

The proper implementation of the projects and their positive effect in the region is one of the main objectives of the Fund.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, the organizations will be awarded in a ceremony where dignitaries of WB6, diplomats, civil society organizations, academia and media are planned to participate.



## Western Balkans Fund And The Ministry For Europe And Foreign Affairs Of Albania Sign The Host Country Agreement

Western Balkans Fund (WBF) and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA) of Albania signed the Host Country Agreement. In the ceremony organized at the premises of MEFA in Tirana, members of diplomatic corps, civil society, media and staff members of WBF participated.

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania Mr. Ditmir Bushati thanked Visegrad4 Group of countries for their mentorship and valuable support in the establishment and activities of the Western Balkans Fund. Minister Bushati also thanked WB6 group for their understanding and dedication in this process. He paid a special welcome to Albania to the international staff of the WBF coming from the Western Balkans region.

The Executive Director of WBF, Dr. Gjergj Murra stressed that the Fund now is a reality aiming to bring more cooperation and people to people contacts in the Western Balkans. “Today, the Western Balkans Fund represents a shared success of all parties involved in its creation. We appreciate that the Republic of Albania, being as our host country is supporting every step on our way, regardless of the challenges or difficulties we met.”

The Host Country Agreement between WBF and Republic of Albania represents a fulfilled commitment not just to Western Balkans Fund Contracting Parties, but also to all partners involved in Fund’s creation and development. Apart from political and strategic support, through this Agreement, Albania provides the Fund with the functional conditions for the daily operations.

*The link at the page of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania:*  
<http://www.punetesjastme.gov.al/en/press-office/news/minister-ditmir-bushati-signed-the-host-agreement-with-the-western-balkans-fund>



## On the importance of people-to-people contacts

By Aleksandar Vesic\*

Regional cooperation is a broad term that may alter its meaning and purpose across the general dimensions of mobility, connectivity or digitalization. In essence, regional cooperation is about fostering free movement of people, goods, services and ideas.

In the context of Western Balkans, regional cooperation has additional benefits as it can play a transformative role by harnessing the advantages of reconciliation and interaction between the nations of the region. For the Western Balkans, it intrinsically involves a process of “building bridges” and rediscovering our similarities. Ultimately, this process will lead towards building our common, and hopefully European, future.



At the higher levels of government cooperation has improved considerably, however, at the people-to-people level there is still a lingering sense of distrust and doubt, while the interactions still remain low. The peoples of Western Balkans still have much to learn about each other. They are neighbors, but are still wary of interacting.

That said, it is important understanding that political will, no matter how vital or necessary, cannot amount to good-neighborliness and regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is about creating institutions and adequately empowering them to enable this process.

For this reason Western Balkans Fund was created by the governments of the region to foster regional cooperation on the people-to-people level. Why is this important? Without human interaction political achievements cannot be translated into ground realities. Building networks and infrastructure has the sole purpose of moving people, goods, services and ideas across the region. Infrequency of human contacts could make these goals increasingly difficult or even futile.

Through our work, we have learned that the region is willing to cooperate. Only through our first call for proposals, approximately 1,300 organizations of civil society, local self-governments, business associations, educational institutions, and institutions of culture or sports, have applied for WBF grants.

This clearly indicates that creation of institutionalized framework for regional cooperation came at a right time. The best way of ensuring that benefits of cooperation are harnessed is through creating grounds for people-to-people interactions. In this way we will learn about how much we have in common, but also about opportunities we can pursue by cooperating in our diversity.

\* Senior Expert of WBF

## “Murra: Western Balkans is ready to assume ownership of regional cooperation”

“Agreement on Establishment of the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) was signed on 13 November 2015 in Prague, by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia. The WBF is financing and co-financing of small and medium projects in WB countries in the fields of common interest such as education, environment, human rights, youth exchanges. The European Western Balkans spoke with dr. Gjergj Murra, Executive Director of the Western Balkans Fund.”

*The interview of Dr. Murra for EWB could be visited here:*

<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/04/27/murra-western-balkans-ready-assume-ownership-regional-cooperation/>

## Brussels / “Back on the Agenda: EU Enlargement and Western Balkans”

WBF participated at the event “Back on the Agenda: EU Enlargement and Western Balkans - “Opening the floor to discussion on the future of the EU enlargement, supported by the V4” organized by Centre for European Perspective (Slovenia). This event gathered think tanks and young leaders from WB6 with the aim to develop a constructive debate on enlargement where participants had the opportunity to give their contribution and provide concrete policy recommendations. Participants of this event worked together to bring back the EU enthusiasm in the region, also to assure that EU recommit itself to the enlargement and bringing Western Balkans back on its agenda.

## Belgrade / Anniversary of the European Fund for the Balkans

WBF as a regional organization was part of the European Fund for the Balkans 10th Anniversary Event, held in Belgrade, Serbia. WBF team met with beneficiaries, stakeholders, key influencers and leaders coming from WB6. This event was a great opportunity for WBF to learn how much CSOs around WB6 are willing to work and together have developed “Declaration of a European Balkan Partnership” that was launched during the event. This declaration assists CSOs around the WB6 to advocate and lobby towards the European Integration Processes and regional cooperation in WB6.





### WBF retreat meeting in Skopje

WBF in early April 2018 in Skopje conducted a staff retreat to continue with internal organizational development through strategic development that is going to take place next upcoming months. WBF used the opportunity to invite Committee Senior Official be part of this important event as a perfect occasion share their view and approach on WBF strategic development.

### Projections of activities for the upcoming months

- May 2018, Official Promotion of the first WBF Grantees
- May 2018, Start of the WBF projects implementation period
- May-July 2018, Monitoring visits of the WBF projects in the region
- May-June 2018 Collaborative visits to organizations in the WB6 Region
- June-August 2018, Preparation of three years WBF Strategic Development document



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[www.visegradfund.org](http://www.visegradfund.org)

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