

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2023

CELEBRATING 60 ISSUES OF WBF MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

We are thrilled to mark a momentous milestone in our journey as we celebrate the publication of our 60th monthly newsletter. Over the past five years, we've embarked on a remarkable odyssey of knowledge sharing, inspiration, and community-building. What began as a humble endeavor to connect with our audience has grown into a cherished tradition, and we're ecstatic to commemorate this achievement with all of you.

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WBF PRESENTS VERITYCON 2023 CONFERENCE: NAVIGATING THE DISINFORMATION ERA



VerityCon 2023 – Navigating in the Disinformation Era Conference will tackle one of the biggest threat of our times, the disinformation. The Western Balkans Fund will be in charge of organising the event, supported financially by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and International Visegrad Fund.

Scheduled to take place in November, this remarkable event will connect preeminent experts and leaders who have placed combating disinformation at the forefront of their agendas

The partnership was officially formalized on August 30th at our Secretariat, marked by the contract signature ceremony between the Executive Director of the Fund and His Excellency Mr. TAKADA Mitsuyuki, Ambassador of Japan to Albania.

Following the good cooperation with MOFA Japan through Embassy of Japan in Tirana the partnership with countries of V4 Group and their cooperative instrument International Visegrad Fund (IVF), this is our 4th cooperation together and we are confident to tackle the topic in coherent and analytical manner aiming to bring a comprehensive contribution throughout this action. The action is foreseen in form of International Conference, providing space for dialogue among diverse stakeholders to discuss the concerning topic.



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HIGH LEVEL MEETING IN SARAJEVO WITH H.E. MINISTER KONAKOVIĆ

On August 17, in Sarajevo, a delegation headed by WBF Executive Director, Dr Murra, had the pleasure of meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Minister, H.E. Elmedin Konaković.

In a friendly exchange, Minister Konaković underlined the value of our mission and the importance of having a regional-owned mechanism that promotes cooperation and reconciliation at a wide scale.

On our behalf, we sincerely thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina for all their efforts in promoting the Fund and for their boundless support.



Monitoring and Mentoring Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Members of our Secretariat had the pleasure of meeting with our grantees in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Istocno Sarajevo.

Mr. Bisha, WBF-EU Joint Action Manager and Ms Valjevac, HR Officer, met with representatives of RK Borac Banja Luka, Poljoprivredni klaster "SRP", Fondacija Cure and Ekolosko istraživačko društvo EID.



WBF-RAI Cooperation

In Sarajevo, we visited with excitement the headquarters of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative – RAI. With our like-minded colleagues, we exchanged experiences and had productive conversations about regional cooperation in the Western Balkans Region and South East Europe. We look forward to exploring potential collaboration opportunities between our two organizations.

At RAI, we were also glad to meet a dear friend, our former colleague Denis Grbo.



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MEETING WITH THE ITALIAN AGENCY FOR COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

An Italian proverb says: “Il buon giorno si vede dal mattino” (A good day starts from the morning). And indeed, we had an excellent day with Ms. Stefania Vizzaccaro, director for the Western Balkans Region at the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development.

For over one hour, we provided a detailed presentation of the Fund's current operations, grant portfolio and mission.

On her behalf, Ms. Vizzaccaro underlined that our two organisations have many things in common and expressed the will for greater cooperation in the future.

We sincerely hope that, as the saying goes, this encounter will be a good morning to a long and lasting partnership.

At the end of our meeting, Ms. Vizzaccaro was honored with a token of our gratitude and recognition from our Executive Director, Dr. Murra.



ALBANIAN DAILY NEWS | EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW OF THE WBF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DR. MURRA



“You ask if we have served our purpose. Of course not! The need is only increasing. People have realised that cooperation in the Region is not only possible, but is highly beneficial for all and we see that year after year, the interest continues to grow!”

Current state of affairs in the Western Balkans Region, Cooperation, Reconciliation, People-to-People links and the role that our Fund has to play in the future are key elements of the interview of Dr. Gjergj Murra, WBF Executive Director, for Albanian Daily News.

Read full article: <https://albaniandailynews.com/news/-travel-speed-toward-the-eu-is-up-to-us->

Report on the 4th Call for Proposals

The Western Balkans Fund is happy to inform that we have published the Report dedicated entirely to the projects of the 4th Call for Proposals of the WBF-EU Joint Action (otherwise known as the 4th Call for Proposals).

30 beautiful regional projects were implemented thanks to EU-WBF funding from April 2022 to January 2023, with all of them making an important impact in regard to establishing new people-to-people links, enhancing regional cooperation and reconciliation. The Call Report contains detailed information about the Call's details and the projects implemented in that framework.

LINK:
https://westernbalkansfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/REPORT-EU-WBF-Joint-ACTION-FINAL-18.07.23-1-1_compressed-1.pdf



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ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE 2 CFP OF WBF MOVE GRANTS

WBF is glad to announce the **34 winners of the 2nd Call for Proposals of the WBF Move Grants.**

A secondary grant-giving mechanism launched in March with the aim of providing a year-round support to civil society organisations and individuals, this Call (open only to individuals) attracted in total 193 applications, 113 of them eligible.

After a two months long evaluation process, we are happy to announce the winners of this Call.

FULL LIST: https://westernbalkansfund.org/announcing-the-winners-of-the-2-cfp-of-wbf-move-grants/?fbclid=IwAR3AxUnbFakZmqjUdHvgtK3bJyc4iIXSk5YtbURhELsSpefVZCd_hNTYHiU



Open

WBF "OPEN DOORS" POLICY

On August 10th we welcomed Martina to our Secretariat, a young political scientist and intern at the Slovak Embassy in Tirana.

Engaging with young people from our Region and beyond is a key priority for the Fund.

Young people are the primary beneficiaries of our grants, our advocacy campaigns and the target of our tailor-made internship program, which is open to all WB citizens from 18-25 years old.

We look forward to replicating Martina's experience with anyone willing to know more or visit our Fund. Contact us anytime, and we will be happy to welcome and brief you about our mission and the opportunities we provide



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ABOUT WBF FUNDED PROJECTS

FUTURE 4 ROOTS



The delicious food made in Western Balkans has the power to be an excellent bridge of cooperation.

We already knew that, but it is a pleasure to rediscover the immense potential of the food thanks to the “Future4Roots” project, implemented by Poljoprivredni Klaster “SRP” in East Sarajevo, together with partners in Novi Sad, Kriva Palanka, Rudo and Han Pijesak.

“Future4Roots” is a project of the 5th Call for Proposals, co-funded by the European Union, IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

WBF PROJECT IN THE SPOTLIGHT OF RADIO FREE EUROPE!



Part of the 4th Call for Proposals, the Yugocycling Campaign and partners have prepared plans to replace decommissioned railway tracks with new eco-friendly bicycle trails.

The bicycle trails spanning (currently only part of the path are accessible) from Belgrade to Sarajevo, Mostar, Trebinje and Herceg Novi are expanding, providing more touristic opportunities to the already rich offer of our Contracting Parties.

Learn more about “Western Balkans Greenways” project by checking the video: <https://youtu.be/-YEFt8GzKj4>

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ABOUT WBF FUNDED PROJECTS

KIDS CLASSICAL MUSICAL CAMP

Children and teenagers, from 7-18 years old participated in a four day piano and acoustic workshop in Bitola.

The project “Kids Classical Musical Camp” united students and pedagogues of the Association of Pianists and Music Pedagogues Bitola, Udruženje Sirmium Gradus ad Parnassum in Sremska Mitrovica and “Tefta Tashko Koço” High School in Korça.

Besides music, the participants focused on the many things that unite them during the unique visits at the Bitola Museum, “Heraclea” archeological site near Ohrid and National Park “Pellister”.

At the end of the workshop, participants put in place a concert broadcasted by the Radio Television of North Macedonia.

“Kids Classical Musical Camp” is part of the 5th Call for Proposals, co-funded by the European Union, IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.



TEENDOC TAKING PLACE IN ČAČAK

In Čačak, a workshop organized by our grantee, IFC Filmart, is taking place for young teenagers who want to learn and socialize through documentary films. Program aims to enhance young people’s understanding of regional cooperation, youth mobility and intercultural learning, striving to influence changes in the local community and region, by using the power of documentary film in the processes of media literacy of young people, but also in the processes of dealing with the past and planning a common future in the WB region.

The project is part of the 5th Call for Proposals, co-funded by the European Union, IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance.

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Celebrating 60 Issues of WBF Monthly Newsletter

Our newsletter has been a conduit for fostering connections, sharing valuable insights, and celebrating the accomplishments of our community. Through these 60 issues, we've had the privilege of exploring diverse topics and it's been an incredible journey of growth and learning. As we look ahead, we're committed to continuing this journey, striving to bring you even more informative, inspiring, and thought-provoking content in the future. Here's to the next 60 issues and beyond, as we continue to grow, evolve, and celebrate our shared passion for regional cooperation and people-to-people links. Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey with us!

Photo of the month

