

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

The European Fund for the Balkans is a 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.

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, in 2008, launched the Fellowship Programme for Young Government Officials from the Western 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 the EFB Community network.

The Programme consists of the following phases:

- Fellows begin the programme by attending a 2 - 3 months **LANGUAGE COURSE** to prepare themselves for work and life in the host institution and country.
- All 20 fellows are brought together for the first time at the **INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR**, held in Germany, in co-operation with the Potsdam Centre for Policy and Management (PCPM). The Seminar is a unique chance for team building, networking, as well as through different lectures and discussions, gaining insight into the current European public administration challenges and opportunities.
- The **TRAINEESHIP PHASE** follows, with each fellow starting work at host EU member state institutions: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland,

France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

- The Programme is completed with a **FINAL SEMINAR**, held in Belgium – Fellows are having an opportunity to visit EU and international institutions and to attend a last set of trainings in leadership, communication, negotiations and change management.

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, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.**

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 a financial support 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 re-allocation fee. The costs for language training are also covered up to the fixed sum of 1,000 euro. 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 servants¹ 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

¹ Applications from candidates in political positions are NOT accepted

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.

Applications will be accepted in the period from **July 10 – September 10 2014**.

The Programme schedule

Intensive language training: *January – End of March 2015 (maximum of 3 months within this period)*

Introduction seminar: *April 2015*

Working phase: *mid April – end June 2015*

Final Seminar: *beginning of July 2015*

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