

“The European Fund for the Balkans works in direct continuation of the findings of the International Commission on the Balkans by reaching out to the citizens of the Western Balkan countries and thereby creating the pro-European constituencies these societies need for their future.”

Giuliano Amato, former Italian Prime Minister and Chair of the International Commission on the Balkans (2004-2006)



#### Supporting Policy Development

The Gallup Balkan Monitor is one of the initiatives that the European Balkan Fund supports through its fourth strand: policy development. Their reports offer a wide-ranging insight into the Balkans inhabitants' perceptions of living. Experienced social researchers collect findings that can provide base for diverse strategies.

#### Partners

Robert Bosch **Stiftung**



In 2003, ERSTE Foundation evolved out of the Erste Oesterreichische Spar-Casse, the first Austrian savings bank. It holds 25.3% of the shares of Erste Group. ERSTE Foundation invests its dividends in social development projects in Austria and Central and South-Eastern Europe. It supports social participation and civil-society engagement; it aims to bring people together and disseminate knowledge of the recent history of a region that has been undergoing dramatic changes since 1989. As an active foundation, it develops its own projects within the framework of three programmes: Social Development, Culture and Europe.

What would you change?

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



**European Fund for the Balkans**



## CONTEXT

**Have you ever wondered how individuals and organisations from the Western Balkan countries can get closer to the European Union? So have we, and together with three leading European foundations we have given a contribution by setting up the European Fund for the Balkans.**

All countries willing to join the European Union must undergo significant reforms and comply with an abundance of legal regulations. This is a time consuming process requiring not only improvement within a government's administration but mindsets of the entire nations. And yet, researches continue to show scepticism among ordinary people who believe that the benefit of the accession will only be felt by those who are already well off.



## IMPACT

In order to encourage the EU integration processes in the South Eastern Europe, four European foundations – ERSTE Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, King Baudouin Foundation and Robert Bosch Stiftung – have set up the European Fund for the Balkans, designed to undertake and support initiatives aimed at bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union through grant-giving and operational programmes.

Whether you are an individual or you work in an organisation, the Fund can support your efforts to contribute to the European integration processes of the Balkans. There are many agendas of many stakeholders in these processes that can decelerate reforms. For that reason an integrated approach is needed, with a number of strategies and plans but also debates and awareness campaigns to inform wide population of the benefits that joining the European Union can bring. This is what the European Fund for the Balkans does.

Photo:  
In June 2008, the European Fund for the Balkans celebrated its regional launch with a public panel discussion on "The Balkans in Europe's Future" in Sarajevo.

“The European Fund for the Balkans is a unique concept initiated and funded by four different foundations. To keep up with this variety of opinions and approaches there is a need for constant development and active engagement.”

Hedvig Morvai-Horvat, Executive Director of the European Fund for the Balkans

## FACTS

Envisaging Europe through 'Think and Link' initiative works with regional research projects to promote inclusive and evidence based policy making. 12 think tanks are supported each year and, this way, the emerging policy institutes from the Balkans are linked with EU based think tanks.

Practising Europe enhances the professional and administrative capacities of young Balkan government officials in the EU integration process. The annual programme recruits 20 highly qualified young civil servants who get a fellowship to spend three months in a EU country.

Experiencing Europe assists youth in the Western Balkans to experience and gain knowledge about the European Union. For too long, the politics of their countries have caused them to live in a ghetto-like atmosphere. This strand of the Fund encourages the youth to be more active and to link up with their peers across Europe, as well as globally to find issues that connect them.

Cover:  
Mladen Stilinović, Dvostruki prekršaj / Double Indemnity from Crveno-Roza / Red-Pink, 1980 pastel, banknote on paper, 13 x 18 cm  
Courtesy: Kontakt. The art Collection of Erste Group

Developing Policies for the Balkans is the Fund's contribution to policy making in support of the integration of the Balkans within the EU. The Gallup Balkan Monitor initiative, for example, conducts researches which offer insight into people's perceptions of different issues, and that can therefore help the leaders shape their policies.

## European Fund for the Balkans

*Bringing the Western Balkans closer to the European Union*

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