

European Fund for the **Balkans**

Fellowship Programme

FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

PROGRAMME GUIDELINES

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR
THE DECISION-MAKERS OF
TOMORROW WHO WANT TO
SHAPE REGIONAL AND EUROPEAN
COLLABORATION WITH THEIR
ENERGY AND PASSION**

Deadline for
applications

**FEBRUARY 18
2019**

www.balkanfund.org/fellowship2019/

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GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Fellowship Programme for Government Officials 2019/2020

We are looking for the decision-makers of tomorrow who want to shape regional and European collaboration using their energy and enthusiasm.

The deadline for application via the online application form is February 18, 2019.

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I General information about Programme

Fellowship Programme for Government Officials is a one-year practice-oriented educational programme for government officials. The purpose of the programme is to give impetus to the EU integration-driven reforms of the Western Balkans' administrations, through building the capacities of individuals, who are acting as the agents of change. The programme targets ambitious government officials with a strong commitment to contributing to the development of their societies who are lifelong learners, acquiring skills and broadening their horizons throughout their careers.

The Western Balkans countries' needs, as well as experiences before and after the accession of new Member States in 2004, and two subsequent expansions in 2007 and 2013 are showing that administrative capacity plays a key role in the capability to assume both the obligation of the EU accession process and the obligations of membership later on. The Enlargement Strategy adopted in the beginning of 2018, confirmed the European future of the region as a geostrategic investment in a stable, strong and united Europe based on common values. It spells out the priorities and areas of joint reinforced cooperation, addressing the specific challenges the Western Balkans face, in particular the need for fundamental reforms and good neighbor relations. The Strategy underlines that the EU should enhance its policy engagement with the Western Balkans, focusing on areas of joint interest such as justice and home affairs, including security and the fight against organised crime, the economy and the single market, energy, transport and digital policy, social policy, education, research and innovation, as well as on foreign affairs and defence.

Whereas political leadership is undoubtedly necessary to steer the EU accession process, it needs to be supported by skilled and stable public officials, capable of performing all of the complex tasks involved in the EU integration process, including the transposition of EU *acquis* into national legislation, coordination of sectorial policies, management of EU pre-accession assistance, etc.

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.

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.

The Fellowship Programme for Government Officials is EFB's flagship intervention launched in 2008. The programme is giving impetus to EU integration-driven reforms of the Western Balkans' administrations by educating and motivating public officials to practice and advocate European principles of public administration.

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Programme specific objectives are:

- to develop the capacities of a selected category of public officials who want to shape regional and European collaboration, by targeting national actors important for European integration;
- to enable a good environment for supporting motivated government officials in acquiring knowledge and skills regarding European principles of administration, and transferring know-how within their departments of work.

Expected results are on the individual and institutional level:

- By empowering the ambitious individuals not only with knowledge, but also with tools and technique, the programme is providing them with assets to develop their careers.
- Participation in this programme helps to create a professional network on EU and regional levels and an understanding of different working cultures, which is essential for every person.
- After the programme, the officials return to their respective institutions, acting as the agents of change in their everyday work.
- The presence of Fellows in the institutions of the EU States has an impact on changing the perception of the region, when the enlargement issue is not at the top of the EU agenda and the citizens of the Member States predominantly oppose further enlargement.
- The programme's regional approach ensures the mixture of the officials from Western Balkans countries, and yields the additional benefit of regional confidence building, stemming from social bonding and professional networking of the fellows.

II Fellowship Programme for Government Officials 2019/2020

Targeted institutions

Having in mind the EFB's and the programme's objectives, as well as the latest EU enlargement strategy, the Fellowship Programme for Government Officials in the 2019 edition will be focused on the most important common challenges in the region. Thus, as communicated in the mentioned Strategy and based on the conclusions of Berlin Process Summits, potential fellows will be government officials working in the fields of **justice, security, economy, energy, transport and digital policy, social policy, education, research and innovation, public administration reform** 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.

- Countries aspiring to join the Union need to establish and promote from an early stage the proper functioning of the core institutions necessary for securing the rule of law. Rule of law is crucial for a stable business environment, providing legal certainty for economic operators, supporting consumers and stimulating investment, jobs and growth. Improvement in the field of fundamental values and rights of national minorities are common challenges in the region. For the **justice and rule of law**, relevant ministry in focus is the Ministry of Justice¹, as well as the Office of the Ombudsman and Data Protection Office.
- Although the countries of the Western Balkans are not all at the same level of integration in the EU, the economic criteria happen to be of the utmost importance to the further process of accession and enlargement policy, and the same exercise is given to each and every one of

¹ In each specific WB6 country, Ministries dealing with these issues are different, so we listed the fields of expertise, not all applicable Ministries. It is up to a candidate to explain in the application form, the rationale why hers/his area of expertise is in the target field.

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them. So, fulfilling the criteria of economic governance, functional market economy, growth and fiscal consolidation is the common challenge in the region. Concerning **economic criteria**, the focus will be on the Ministry of Finance, Economy, Economic Development, Office of the Auditor.

- The European Commission Energy Community, which aims to expand the EU's energy acquis to enlargement and neighbourhood countries, should be further strengthened in the light of the EU's security of supply concerns. This should be achieved by further promoting energy sector reforms in the participating countries, while also supporting the modernisation and sustainability of their energy system and their full integration in the EU energy regulatory framework. The Transport Community Treaty will promote integration of land transport markets and infrastructure whilst helping the Western Balkan countries implement EU land transport standards. Development of infrastructure and transport in the Western Balkans region is in the essence of the Berlin Process too. Concerning **energy, infrastructure and transport**, the focus will be on Ministries of Transport, Energy, Infrastructure.
- Enhanced strategic and operational cooperation between the EU and the Western Balkans on security, is pivotal to addressing effectively and efficiently the existing security and terrorism threats that affect the Union and the Western Balkan region. Much work is already under way at EU level to help build capacities in the Western Balkans and facilitate international police and judicial cooperation to counter threats originating from organised crime and terrorism. Concerning **security** field, eligible institution is Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The role of education must be given a higher priority especially in terms of fostering greater tolerance, promoting European values and strengthening the cohesion of society. Furthermore, Berlin Process conclusions are underlining the relevance of issues related to the **digital agenda, research and innovation, social policies and education**. Eligible institutions for these areas are Ministries of Science, Education, Innovation, Labour and Social Welfare.

Programme structure

Planned objectives and expected results are achieved by implementing the following activities:

Application

The European Fund for the Balkans is launching a targeted call for applications. Only civil servants from eligible ministries and independent bodies (Office of the Commissioner for Data Protection, State Auditor, Ombudsman) can apply. Applications from candidates in political positions are not accepted. A detailed description of eligibility criteria is presented in Section III.

Selection

Selection of applicants is conducted in two phases – technical and qualitative selection. Technical selection is an administrative review, performed by the EFB's General Secretariat staff. Only applicants fulfilling the technical eligibility conditions are accepted for qualitative selection. Applicants pre-selected for qualitative selection may be requested to send a copy of their university diploma via e-mail. The copy of the diploma should be sent together with the translation into English. Qualitative selection is performed by the Selection Committee. During the qualitative selection, short-listed applicants are called for an interview. The final step is the formal evaluation process for post-interview selection, with the same criteria for every candidate.

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Placement procedure

The choice of a host institution is made on a case-by-case basis, within the list of eligible institutions, taking into consideration the preferences outlined in the application form, the profile of the fellow, professional interests, language skills, and the strategic interest of the employer. The final decision about the choice of a host institution is made after the participant has been accepted to the programme. Each fellow is requested to provide alternatives to the preferred host institution for the case of not-acceptance by the first choice. Host institutions play a critical role in the selection process. Participation does not guarantee a final match between the Fellow and host institution. Upon final decision, the host institution delegates the host mentor responsible for supporting fellowship work plan development, the fellow's orientation in the host institution, facilitating the fellow's work, and monitoring and evaluating the fellow's performance. Fellows are developing a fellowship work plan, in consultations with both home mentors and host mentors.

Language training

Fellows will take an intensive language course in their home country, prior to departure for the introductory seminar. The language training expenses are paid directly by EFB.

Introduction seminar

An Introductory Seminar in Berlin and Potsdam will offer participants an insight into the European Administrative System and equip them with necessary skills for the practical phase in the host institution, like intercultural skills and team work. Fellows will discuss challenges in the EU and in the Western Balkan countries, regional cooperation issues and public administration performance management. They will also have the chance to discuss their plans for their fellowship, present their professional and personal goals, and receive individual advice. The Introductory Seminar will serve as a platform for the fellows' network, creating an atmosphere of mutual support and assistance during their placement in host institutions. The academic partner for the seminar is UP Transfer GmbH at the University of Potsdam.

Practice phase

Following the Introductory Seminar, each fellow will be placed in a government institution for a period of 8 weeks. During their stay in a host institution, fellows will take part in a peer-to-peer exchange of experiences, and will familiarise themselves with administrative structures and forms of policy making in a host institution. Host mentors will support fellows by induction and orientation for each fellow's position in the host institution, actively monitor and facilitate fellows' working and learning processes, facilitate fellows' interaction with other institutions and evaluate fellows' performance. The quality and intensity of the cooperation with the host mentor and authorities of a host institution is crucial for the success of the fellowship.

Final seminar

At the end of the Practice Phase, the European Fund for the Balkans will invite the fellows to a final review meeting presenting the results of their work and plans for follow-up. The final seminar will include training seminars in leadership and change management, hence preparing fellows for knowledge transfer in their home institutions. The academic partner for Final seminar is College of Europe.

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Presentation of fellowship experience in home institution

Each fellow gains specific knowledge and skills, and typically manages to create networks with public officials from at least one institution in the EU. The fellow is obliged to share this knowledge and skills with his/her colleagues in the home institution. Knowledge sharing must be structured, with at least one presentation for colleagues.

At the end of cycle, the fellow reports to the EFB.

Funding

Up to 20 scholarships will be available for civil servants in the 2019/2020 programme cycle. The support granted to the fellow by the EFB includes: participation fee; language training; travel expenses, lodging, meals and fees for seminars; relocation package, child allowance and stipend for practice phase.

Language training funding - The EFB will directly pay costs of language training in the home country before the start of the Introduction Seminar. The fellow is responsible for selecting a language training provider and organising his/her language lessons. In total, up to €1,000.00 of language training costs can be paid by the EFB.

Introduction and Final seminar funding - The EFB will cover travel expenses between the location of the fellow's placement and the location where seminars start and end². All local travel during seminars will be organised and covered by EFB. EFB will cover expenses for accommodation during seminars and special events. Hotels will be pre-booked by EFB. Accommodation during the seminars includes breakfast and lunch. The expenses for dinners, except for joint dinners organised by EFB, should be covered by the monthly stipend (please read stipend description in the next paragraph). EFB covers participation fees for seminars and special events.

Practice phase funding - The EFB will cover round-trip travel expenses between the fellow's residence and the host location³. EFB shall assume relocation costs of €500. This amount is foreseen for covering expenses related to the search for housing (such as agency costs), costs of moving (luggage transportation or excess luggage fee), temporary accommodation costs in the host country (hotel expenses while searching for housing), and medical insurance. The fellow is expected to obtain sufficient travel insurance against illness, liability and accident in the host country using the relocation fund. Costs for a 3-month multi-entry Schengen tourist visa for the host country will be covered by EFB. EFB will grant the fellow a Stipend of €3,000 for the 8 weeks period. This sum shall serve to finance all living expenses throughout the duration of the Practice Phase⁴ - lodging, meals, local travel, etc. EFB will pay a maximum amount of €150 per child (under the age of 18) per full month duration of a child's stay in the host country. The amount of €150 is adjusted accordingly in cases where the child does not stay the full duration of one month in the host country. EFB covers 50% of the costs for one-time travel from the child's place of residence to the host country and back to the same place of residence.

² Only the costs for the most direct route/route with the most economical price will be covered regardless which route the fellow chooses. Airplane tickets might be also on low cost carriers. For closer destinations, travel would be organized by car service.

³ Same as reference 2.

⁴ The host institutions pay no compensation

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By participating in the programme, the fellows from the targeted institutions will have the opportunity to:

- gain professional experience in EU countries' federal or state government agencies during the 2-month Fellowship Phase,
- receive training on EU (and other international) issues,
- receive training on their respective fields 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,
- be part of the EFB Community network.

Fellowship Programme 2019 tentative schedule

Open call	January 2019 – 18 February 2019
Selection of fellows	February 2019 – March 2019
Placement procedure – matching host institution and beneficiary	April 2019 – July 2019
Introduction seminar	Beginning of September 2019
Fellowship phase	September, October/November 2019
Final seminar	November 2019
Presentation of fellowship experience in home institution	December 2019
Final fellow's report	January 2020

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- 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,
- participate in the EFB Community network.

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III Eligible applicants

The Programme is specifically designed for civil servants from the eligible central government institutions and independent bodies (Ombudsman, State Audit Office, Data Protection) in the Western Balkans 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 workings of the European Union is required and personal enthusiasm for the European idea is essential.

- national of one of the Western Balkan 6 countries (Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- employed as a government official⁵ in one of the eligible central government institutions (see paragraph II Targeted institutions)
- at least 3 years as a civil servant for state authority,
- initial managerial experience or prospects of assuming leadership responsibilities,
- excellent academic qualifications,
- 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,
- teamwork skills,
- initiative and definite readiness to perform,
- excellent writing skills,
- 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 one's own life arrangements in a new environment.

IV Procedure for submission and selection of applicants

Application Process

Applications can be submitted exclusively until February 18, 2019 via the online application form. Applications sent by post, fax or e-mail will not be considered!

In order to apply for the Fellowship Programme you **must** use the on-line application system.

Before beginning the application process, you will need to have a valid e-mail address in order to register. You will not be able to register with the same e-mail and password more than once or to save your details and return to complete the application at a later date. Therefore, make sure that you study the application form carefully and prepare the necessary documents (see below) before you start the on-line application process. Also, please thoroughly research and make informed decision about the host institution options.

The application must be completed in English.

⁵ Applications from candidates in political positions will NOT be accepted

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You will be requested to upload the following documents:

- **Detailed CV in English** (maximum 3 pages, pdf). Please upload a CV using the Europass template in English. <https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions> .
The CV should include a description of your relevant professional experience to date and a summary of your educational and academic background, such as, name of your home organisation, job title, number of months/years spent in each position, description of your duties and responsibilities, details of the work you have carried out, etc.
- **Letter of consent from your employer** (pdf). You are asked to upload a signed and stamped letter of consent from your superior officer or an authorised representative⁶ stating that you will be approved for the necessary leave of absence from September 7, 2019 to November 15, 2019, in the case that you are accepted for the Fellowship Programme. Please upload the letter of consent using the given template.

When filling out the application form, you will be asked to provide information which requires a longer period of time for writing. You can write the text in advance in a standard text writing programme and copy/paste it into the appropriate field of the application form.

Please take into account the following instructions for the various sections of the online application:

1. **Motivation Letter:** We expect you to write a motivation letter, (minimum of 300 words, maximum of 500), with a detailed presentation of your motive for applying to the Programme, relationship of your professional interest with the Programme, as well as your intermediate- and long-term professional goals and expectations for your visit to the host institution.

When answering these questions online be as specific as possible:

2. Please describe your major area of professional interest and describe how it relates with the thematic fields of the Fellowship Programme - justice, security, economy, energy, transport and digital policy, social policy, education, research and innovation, and public administration.
3. Please describe how the knowledge and skills you will gain will help you address your institution's and country's needs.
4. Please state your professional goals for the next 5 years; how will the Fellowship Programme help you reach those goals?

Programme Preferences: In this section, you are requested to outline your preferences regarding a host country and host institution, including the specific department. We would especially appreciate if you are able to provide a contact person at your preferred host institution(s). This information will not influence the selection process but can contribute to the success and speed of your placement, in the case that you are selected.

Please think carefully about the preferences concerning your placement. You should consult with your home mentor. In addition, take into account that it is not always possible to match your wishes. The selection you make concerning host country and institution, on the application form, is not binding, but it will help us in making a final decision about your placement. Please consult also one of the websites where you will inform yourself about the cost of leaving in certain cities (for example www.numbeo.com/costofliving).

⁶ In cases where the superior officer has not been granted powers of procurator on behalf of the institution

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Only after you submit the application by clicking on “Submit” will we be able to register it. You will receive a notification from the EFB which confirms the receipt of your application. In case you wish to print a copy of your application, you will be able to do so before submitting it.

Selection process

Selection of applicants is conducted in two phases – technical and qualitative selection.

Technical selection is an administrative review, performed by the EFB’s General Secretariat staff. Technically non-compliant applications will be automatically rejected and applicants will be notified. Applicants pre-selected for qualitative selection may be requested to send a copy of their university diploma via e-mail. The copy of the diploma should be sent together with the translation into English.

Qualitative selection is performed by the Selection Committee. Qualitative selection will be performed in two phases:

- Application evaluation during the period February 2019.
- Short-listed applicants will be called for an interview during the period between February and March 2019.

V Fellows’ Responsibilities

Participants are expected to be available during the overall period of the Programme and to attend each planned activity. **All of the activities of the Programme require a full-time presence.** Please, take some time to carefully review the contract template.

Any clarification questions concerning this call for applications should be submitted by writing an email to fellowship@balkanfund.org.