

European Fund for the **Balkans**

Fellowship Programme

FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

**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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PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

Fellowship Programme for Government Officials

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

The 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.

Background

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.

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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.

Objectives and expected results

The European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) is an initiative launched in 2007 by European private Foundations. The EFB aims at strengthening democracy, fostering European integration and affirming the role of the Western Balkans in addressing Europe's emerging challenges.

The EFB's strategic objectives are:

- to develop the Western Balkans' social capacity focused on the region's democratisation and EU accession process;
- to develop a policy platform that improves policy making while strengthening democratic institutions and civil societies in the Western Balkans and supporting EU integration;
- to develop a culture of regional cooperation with a set of norms taken at the societal level.

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

Specific objectives are:

- to develop the capacities of a selected category of government 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.

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- 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.

Programme description

The Programme is specifically designed for government officials working in the fields of **justice, security, economy, energy, transport and digital policy, social policy, education, research and innovation, public administration** 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. 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 government officials from eligible fields can apply. Applications from candidates in political positions are not accepted. A detailed description of eligibility criteria is presented in the [Guidelines for Applicants](#). A sufficient period of time is left for applicants to get acquainted with the call rules and prepare necessary documents. *Expected activity duration: one month.*

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 will be accepted for the qualitative selection process. Rejected 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 a translation into English. Qualitative selection is performed by the Selection Committee. During the qualitative selection process, short-listed applicants will be called for an interview. The final step is a formal evaluation process for post-interview selection, with the same criteria for every candidate. *Expected activity duration: two months*

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, thus it is extremely important that applicants thoroughly investigate possible host institutions (including specific departments) and prepare a solid rationale and explanation for the choice. Participation does not guarantee a final match between the Fellow and the host institution. Upon final decision, the host institution delegates a host mentor responsible for supporting the development of the fellowship work plan, the fellow's orientation in the host institution, facilitating the fellow's work, and monitoring and evaluating the fellow's performance. Fellows develop their fellowship work plans, in consultations with home mentors and host mentors.

Expected activity duration: four months

Language training

Fellows take an intensive language course in their home country, prior to departure for the introductory seminar.

Expected activity duration: two/three months

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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, Germany.

Expected activity duration: six days

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.

Expected activity duration: eight weeks

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, Belgium.

Expected activity duration: four days

Presentation of fellowship experience in home institution

Each fellow gain 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.

Expected activity duration: one month

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 of language training costs can be paid by the EFB.

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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 end¹. 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 location². 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-week period. This sum shall serve to finance all living expenses throughout the duration of the Practice Phase³ - 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.

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.

¹ Only the costs for the most direct route/route with the most economical price will be covered regardless which route the fellow chooses.

² Same as reference 2.

³ The host institutions pay no compensation