

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ORDER

ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS ACCELERATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS' EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Antonela Dhimolea
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Regional cooperation is a fundamental and crucial instrument that guides the Western Balkan Six (WB6) into a culture of dialog and comprehension in the spirit of the European model of building peace, reconciliation, economic growth and sustainable development.



Despite the European Union's financial and technical support, what clearly drives the Western Balkans' internal fragility are economic figures, high levels of youth unemployment, migration, widespread corruption, and a lack of a strong democratic system.



In this context, the cohesion provided by regional organizations and initiatives should be considered an indispensable sound mechanism towards a better future for the WB region.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the European Union (EU) offered the Western Balkans the bright dream of eventually joining the union. In that period, reliance on a united Europe was strong and hopes were high, but within a decade the EU vision became quite deceptive and unreachable for the six Western Balkan countries (WB6). Hence, European membership of the Western Balkans (WB) is still in process and after Croatia's EU accession in 2013, there was like progress and encouragement regarding the enlargement in public perception.

Therefore, the long path of the EU accession process with the WB has generated a new set of challenges, not only for the countries involved but also for the EU itself. Recently, the WB and EU are facing old and modern challenges in view of the new geopolitical and regional circumstances.

However, the EU enlargement to the WB6 still remains a top priority for the union, and in this context, the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini stated in 2018: "The Western Balkans are part of Europe: we share the same history, the same geography, the same cultural heritage and the same opportunities and challenges today and in the future".

This constructive approach was encouraging and promising to Western Balkans countries. As a matter of fact, to accelerate the enlargement process as well as demonstrate its strong political will towards the EU enlargement, the EU has established a range of regional organizations and initiatives and has adopted a strategy called "A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans".

The strategy has defined the prospective route of the WB6 towards European Union by introducing 6 new initiatives: rule of law, security and migration, socioeconomic development, transport and energy community, digital agenda, reconciliation, and good and friendly relations.

The strategy highlights that EU integration is an objective and merit-based process which depends on tangible outcomes achieved by each individual country. Besides this scope, the strategy will also serve the European Union to be prepared to welcome new members once they have

met respective preconditions.

With this in mind, political leaders and citizens from the Western Balkans now have the important task of overcoming obstacles and building a prosperous future, namely their countries' full EU membership. There is no other alternative; thus, EU accession should be realistic and achievable in the near future. The EU should maintain this view, because without the WB6, the union's mission would not be fully completed, and Europe would not be a stable and secure area. In this respect, a strong economic and political steadiness, as well as healthy democratic systems in the WB countries remain important criteria towards the EU integration process. Consequently, various regional organizations and initiatives have been established, aiming at the acceleration of the EU integration process as well as the bolstering of overall regional cooperation.

ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES IN INCLUSIVE REGIONAL COOPERATION

Regional cooperation is a fundamental and crucial instrument that guides the WB6 into a culture of dialog and comprehension in the spirit of the European model of building peace, reconciliation, economic growth and sustainable development. Obviously, all standards promoted by the EU through its enlargement process are valid and a remarkable asset for the future of the Western Balkans.

To that regard, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) is an appropriate mechanism through which the EU endorses political and economic reforms in the WB with financial and technical assistance. For the period 2007-2013, IPA had a budget of €11.5 billion, while IPA II allocated €12.8 billion for the period 2014-2020, and IPA III's budget is €14,162 billion for the period 2021-2027.

Despite the European Union's financial and technical support, what clearly drives the Western Balkans' internal fragility are economic figures, high levels of youth unemployment, migration, widespread corruption, and a

lack of a strong democratic system. To smooth these challenges and advance the integration process, the EU in cooperation with the South-East European countries, have established about 54 regional organizations and initiatives in different areas of cooperation, such as in security, trade and economy, society, culture and mobility, energy and transport, connectivity, migration, etc. In this context, the cohesion provided by regional organizations and initiatives should be considered an indispensable sound mechanism towards an optimistic and better future for the WB region.

Regional organizations and initiatives are specifically concentrated on 6 main pillars: political cooperation; mobility; culture and education; good governance; connectivity, investment and trade, as well as security and migration. In these terms, most regional organizations and initiatives have a similar structure; a mission, a written statute and rules of procedure, as well as a secretariat, website and headquarters. The distribution of these organizations is as follows: Bosnia and Herzegovina hosts 9 regional organizations*, Albania 2, North Macedonia 3, Serbia 3 and Montenegro 2 (with a new initiative to be added this year - the Regional Cyber Security Center).

According to the rules of procedure, new membership in regional organizations or initiatives is based on the consensus of all the parties. On the other hand, the statutes do not stipulate suspension or exclusion of a member state. In this context, the suspension of Belarus from the Central European Initiative (CEI) last May, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, was a necessary decision taken by all CEI members but the appropriate steps leading to the decision were not drawn in the initiative's rules of procedure. Considering the new geopolitical challenges, adjusting this handicap should clearly be considered in view of respect for rules of procedures of regional organizations and initiatives.

Following the implementation of the Brussels agreement, facilitated by the European Union, Kosovo has joined a range of regional organizations and initiatives under the condition that its denomination would be marked with an asterisk and footnote in all documents pertaining to organizations. In this regard, in order to encourage a successful regional cooperation and regional economic integration, the EU and other Western Balkans countries should support Kosovo to extend its representation in regional organizations and initiatives, as well as host a secretariat in Pristina.

In the framework of cooperation within regional organizations, there have been recent positive dynamics in

the overall friendly relations between the Western Balkan countries. For example, in order to fulfill respective obligations derived from regional organizations in the field of security and migration, EU members and WB6 are working together on responding to current common threats such as; transnational organized crime, management of migration flows, outcomes of Russia's war against Ukraine, energy security as well as terrorism and violent extremism. In this regard, in the field of migration and security, WB6 are cooperating in the framework of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), while WB6 and SEE countries are cooperating in the context of the Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe (PCC SEE), Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI), and the Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC), etc. Likewise, FRONTEX operations expanded in the Western Balkans are demonstrating a good vibe of cooperation between the EU and WB6. Furthermore, WB6 and EU are also cooperating on migration through the EU action plan on the Western Balkans, adopted during the EU-WB Tirana Summit. The EU has firmly supported its Western Balkan partners with more than €100 million in financial and humanitarian aid, while also providing relevant expertise on the ground regarding migration issues. This has resulted in a number of conventions, agreements and protocols of cooperation signed and implemented in the field of security and migration. However, with the rise in numbers of irregular crossing attempts in 2022, more concrete actions should be undertaken.

In addition, two Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) missions (EUFOR Althea and EULEX Kosovo) still operate in the region. The Western Balkans are additionally participating in EU CSDP missions throughout the world. Moreover, the EU and WB are working together in institutions like Europol, Eurojust, the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), and the Western Balkans Counter-terrorism Initiative (WBCTi). In order to provide security and rule of law, the EU is providing more than €31 million for counter-terrorism and projects on countering violent extremism in the region, through IPA's financial support and under the framework of the Western Balkans Integrative Internal Security Governance.

Improving connectivity and trade within the Western Balkans, as well as between the Western Balkans and the European Union, remains an important element that would bring clear benefits for the region's economies and citizens. The Western Balkans has made the connectivity agenda one of its highest priorities, with a special emphasis on the preparation and financing of concrete

*including those under the umbrella of RCC

regional infrastructure investment projects, but also on the implementation of technical standards and soft measures such as simplifying border crossing procedures, railway reforms, information systems, road safety and maintenance schemes. In this context, the WB6 and EU are cooperating under the Berlin Process, Western Balkans Investment Framework, WB6 Chamber Investment Forum, Regional Cooperation Council, Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network Energy Com Energy Community, Electronic South Eastern Europe Initiative Mediterranean, Regional Environmental Center, Sava Comm, South East Europe Transport Observatory, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group, Regional Working Group on Environment Competitiveness, Central European Free Trade Agreement, South East Europe Investment Committee, etc.

To speed up the EU integration process of the Western Balkans, the European Commission adopted the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) in 2014 - a macro-regional strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian area. It was jointly developed by the Commission and the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (All) members and stakeholders, who agreed to work together on four pillars: sustainable tourism, environmental quality, blue growth and connectivity in the Mediterranean region. In the light of the new challenges in the All region, during its All-EUSAIR Chairmanship in Office, in the period May 2021-June 2022, Albania launched the review of the EUSAIR strategy.

In the meantime, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) has drafted the SEE 2030 Strategy, which intends to improve citizens' living conditions in the region and accelerate the EU integration process. It is in the process of implementation by the WB6 and SEE countries. As a new regional initiative, the Berlin Process is also fostering the European integration perspective as well as overall cooperation between the WB6. In this respect, RCC and Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) are engaged in implementing the Berlin Process' Common Regional Market (CRM), while the South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) remains an important tool in the process of transport system development in the region, concentrated on infrastructure development and soft/horizontal measures as an integrated part of the transport system. In this context, in cooperation with the European Commission, SEETO has developed a multi-annual Strategic Working Program and a set of horizontal measures to be further implemented.

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) is another joint initiative by the WB, EU, financial organizations, donors and beneficiaries, aimed at

increasing cooperation in the field of investments for the socioeconomic development of the region and acceleration of the European integration process for the Western Balkans. The initiative is also part of the implementation of the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

In this respect, the EU Economic and Investment Plan aims to hasten a green and digital transition as well as further regional cooperation, by attracting public and private investments. It is backed by the Western Balkan Guarantee Facility, which could mobilize up to €20 billion. In this perspective, investments will only be viable if Western Balkans accelerate the necessary reforms, including reforms in the area of rule of law and the fight against corruption. The European Commission has unveiled a substantial €3.2 billion investment package to support 21 projects on transport, digital development, climate, and energy connectivity in the Western Balkans. This is the first major package of projects under the EU Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans.

The EU goal for the near future is to prepare up to €30 billion in investments, as a combination of grants, preferential loans and guarantees through the EIP, in order to close the development gap between the European Union and the region, as well as support the post-pandemic economic recovery in the WB6.

Additionally, being the biggest donor in the Western Balkans, the EU is supporting the establishment of a Regional Electricity Market. In North Macedonia it will support a photovoltaic solar project that would supply energy to the region and EU grids. This is part of the region and Europe's green transition, and it is expected to help the environment and economies of the Western Balkans. At the same time, construction of the strategically important eastern part of the "Corridor 8" railway started in December 2022. It extends between North Macedonia and Bulgaria, in the section Kumanovo - Beljakovce - Kriva Palanka.

In line with the objectives defined in the EU Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, Albania is developing strategic projects to generate green and sustainable energy and transport, with the aim of connecting the region to the European Ten-T Network. Albania's Skavica Hydropower Plant will allow the export of renewable energy to the entire region. Additionally, the country's building of gas interconnections will contribute to the region's green transition and to the stability of the electric grids. A railway corridor from the Port of Durrës will connect Albania to

North Macedonia and Bulgaria and improve multi-modal connections with Italy.

Furthermore, the Australian-British Rio Tinto company, currently operating in the region, has announced an investment of \$2.4 billion to develop lithium extraction in Serbia, aiming to serve the industry in Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania, and elsewhere in Europe and the region. In the meantime, EU-funded projects like the gas inter-connector between Serbia and Bulgaria aim at improving Serbia's energy security.

Related to this, Corridor V is a key transport infrastructure project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aiming at improving connections between Mostar and Sarajevo and further north to Budapest. Montenegro, on the other hand, was awarded an additional €40 million in non-repayable grants from the European Union for three new infrastructure projects to improve water facilities, education and roads.

The Energy Support Package for the Western Balkans consists of €1 billion in EU grants, aiming to assist the immediate effects of energy crisis and build resilience in the short to medium term. The first half of the package consists of €500 million in budget support to alleviate the economic and social impact on families and SMEs, and support energy transition and security in the region. The second half of the package consists of €500 million to advance energy diversification, renewable energy generation and gas and electricity interconnections through the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF).

The most recent and concrete outcomes of regional cooperation in the field of connectivity, energy and trade are: signing of the Transport Community Treaty (TCT); lifting of roaming tariffs within the WB; reduction of roaming tariffs between the EU and the WB; Green Lanes between WB facilitated by the cooperation between CEFTA, RCC and TCT; as well as projects in various areas completed in the framework of the WBIF. Another achievement was the establishment of Green Lanes between the WB and the EU. In this regard, the customs administrations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Montenegro signed a Memorandum of Understanding on December 9th, 2022, aiming to enhance the CEFTA-TCT Green Lanes with the European Union. The initiative started in July 2022 with the establishment of the electronic exchange of data between North Macedonia and Greece, and continued in September 2022 with the establishment of Blue Lanes between Albania, Montenegro and Italy as part of the Mediterranean connectivity. The signing enabled the speeding up of customs procedures and other

formalities at border crossing points, as the system connects the customs administrations of the Western Balkans and the European Union.

In the field of mobility, at the Berlin Process Summit on November 3rd, 2022, the leaders of the WB6 signed an agreement on the free movement of citizens using only identity cards, as well as an agreement on mutual recognition of university degrees and professional qualifications. In this context, the EU is encouraging the Western Balkan countries to speed up the ratification of the 3 signed agreements. The establishment of the Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is considered as yet another great achievement in the framework of the Berlin Process. The European Union has supported RYCO through its "Enhancing Youth Cooperation and Youth Exchange in the WB6" project to create a more suitable environment and new opportunities for young people to travel and explore the WB countries, and cooperate on shared projects in the field of culture, sports, environment, etc. Another important regional initiative in the field of mobility, youth, and culture is the Western Balkan Fund (WBF).

EFFICIENCY OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Removing trade barriers, encouraging cooperation between business communities, attracting the attention of potential investors, and promoting exchange between young people would strongly contribute to improving a positive opinion of the EU on the Western Balkans. A lack of perspective and hope to join the European Union would, on the other hand, create a power vacuum that risks being filled by some other powers, possibly Chinese or Russian influence. Populist nationalism, soft authoritarianism, and intolerant policies could be even more dangerous in exploiting social insecurities and economic imbalances if the integration process were to be prolonged beyond limits. However, the current engagement of the EU in the Western Balkans, reconfirmed in the Tirana Declaration following the EU-WB Summit, gives some hope towards an acceleration of the integration process as well as the mitigation of Euro-sceptic perceptions in the region. Therefore, following the goals drawn in the declaration, the EU-WB cooperation needs some concrete and promising achievements towards full EU membership.

Despite the EU's good intentions in establishing various regional organizations and initiatives to accelerate the European integration process in the Western Balkans, the large number of these organizations does not necessarily indicate a successful and beneficial regional cooperation. Specifically speaking, there are 10 regional organizations and

initiatives that operate in the area of connectivity, investment and trade, 14 in the area of mobility, education and culture, 5 in the area of good governance, 14 in the area of security and migration, etc.

Some regional organizations and initiatives are funded by the EU in cooperation with the Western Balkans, while some are funded only by the WB countries, which regularly pay annual financial contributions to maintain their budgets. Such contributions do not always bring concrete benefits to Western Balkans countries. For example, Albania, Serbia and North Macedonia are part of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), contributing about €60,000 annually, but they do not participate in the BSEC projects and usually are not able to attend meetings of the organization's working groups because there is a lack of interest by government ministries towards BSEC activities and projects since these member states are not part of the Black Sea area. As a result, the remaining benefit from BSEC is the opportunity to employ one national representative to the secretariat of the organization.

Keeping this example in mind, besides financial obligations, disadvantages stemming from the large number of regional organizations and initiatives include: lack of human and financial resources to attend all relevant activities; lack of interest to participate in activities of regional organizations and initiatives operating in the same area; lack of interest to assume leadership of regional organizations and initiatives, in particular chairmanship of organizations benefits from which are considered little; as well as lack of human resources in the WB public administrations to appoint national coordinators to each regional organization and initiative.

However, some regional organizations and initiatives are truly efficient for regional cooperation: WBIF, CEFTA, RCC, TCT, RYCO, SEECP, EUSAIR, WBF, MARRI, PCC SEE, etc. In this context, the Berlin Process through its initiatives like the Common Regional Market, Green Agenda, Economic Investment Plan, and Green Lanes remains the most important and indispensable regional mechanism to accelerate the European integration process and foster regional economic integration.

Therefore, the Western Balkans countries should believe in a credible EU enlargement perspective while maintaining a continued dedication toward strengthening the pro-active and constructive role in regional cooperation and good and neighborly relations, which are significant pillars of the EU integration process. On the other hand, the EU should be more engaged in the Western Balkan region, and in this respect, it should deepen the cooperation with region in

order to encourage each country to advancing the implementation of necessary reforms in public administration, judiciary, fight against corruption and organized crime, protection of human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities and property rights. It has to be stressed that for the first time the declaration of the Tirana EU-WB Summit mentioned another condition for integration: "the separation of powers in the Western Balkan societies". This has become another challenge the WB6 will have to face.

Due to the new geopolitical circumstances, it may be the time for the EU to consider a new strategy for the Western Balkans to counter the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine in the Western Balkans area. The fragility of WB economies is badly affected by current global threats. Therefore, in this new reality the EU would better tolerate some preconditions regarding the EU integration process, and thus help speed up the integration of new members in order to avoid the presumed undesirable influences of other powers in the region. The final and tangible objective of a new Western Balkan strategy should be the full integration of 18 million WB citizens into the huge European family, and not the preparation for future EU membership or the successful completion of regional economic integration. Therefore, EU policies should show goodwill and comprehension to convey this vital message to Western Balkans citizens, who deserve to be European citizens in the near future and enjoy a better life in accordance with EU standards.

GLOSSARY OF THE ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of the regional organisations and initiatives

All Adriatic-Ionian Initiative
 CBC Cross-Border Cooperation Programmes
 CEI- Central European Initiative
 COSAP -Conference of the European Integration
 'Parliamentary Committees of States Participating in the
 Stabilisation and Association Process TCP Transnational
 Cooperation Programmes
 Regional Cooperation Council
 SEECP- South East European Cooperation Process
 SEECP PA -SEECP Parliamentary Assembly Connectivity
 PABSEC-Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic
 Cooperation
 ECRAN -Environment and Climate Regional Accession
 Network Energy Com Energy Community
 e-SEE -Electronic South Eastern Europe Initiative
 REC -Regional Environmental Centre
 Sava Comm.- Sava Commission
 SEETO -South East Europe Transport Observatory
 SWG-RRD Regional Rural Development Standing
 Working Group in SEE WGE* -Regional Working Group on
 Environment Competitiveness
 BSEC -Black Sea Economic Council
 CEFTA -Central European Free Trade Agreement
 SEECEL -South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial
 Learning
 SEEIC* -South East Europe Investment Committee
 WBC-RTI -Steering Platform for Research for the Western
 Balkans
 TFCS* RCC -Task Force on Culture and Society
 WB EDIF -Western Balkans Enterprise Development and
 Innovation Facility
 WBF -Western Balkans Fund
 RYCO-Regional Youth Cooperation Office
 WBIF -Western Balkans Investment Framework
 WB6 CIF-Western Balkans Chamber Investment Forum
 WISE -Western Balkans Research and Innovation Centre
 Skills and mobility
 BC SDN -Balkan Civil Society Network
 CPESSEC -Centre of Public Employment Services
 EN PES -European Network of Public Employment Services
 SEEIST-South East European International Institute Sustain-
 able Technologies
 ERI SEE -Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
 ESAP -Employment and Social Affairs Platform
 JWGMRPQ* -Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition
 of Professional Qualifications
 MARRI -Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
 RYCO -Regional Youth Exchange Office

SEEHN -South Eastern Europe Health Network
 SAWG* -Social Agenda 2020 Regional Working Group
 WBPET -Western Balkans Platform on Education and
 Training Good governance (public administration, anti-
 corruption and justice)
 NALAS -Network of Associations of Local Authorities of
 South East Europe NISPA Network of Institutes and Schools
 of Public Administration
 RAI -Regional Anti-corruption Initiative
 ReSPA -Regional School of Public Administration SEELS
 South East European Law School Network
 WGJ* -Regional Working Group on Justice Fighting crime
 PCC SEE -Police Cooperation Convention for South East
 Europe
 SEEPAG -South East European Prosecutors Advisory Group
 SELEC Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
 SEPCA- Southeast Europe Police Chiefs Association Security
 A-5 U. S. – Adriatic Charter
 CVE-FTF Platform * -Regional Platform for Countering
 Radicalisation and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism
 and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in SEE
 DPPI SEE- Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for
 South Eastern Europe
 EADRCC- Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination
 Centre
 RACVIAC- Centre for Security Cooperation
 RHP -Regional Housing Programme
 SEDM- Southeast European Defence Ministerial Process
 SEEMIC * -South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs
 Forum
 SEENSA* -South East European National Security Authorities
 Forum
 SEESAC- South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse
 for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons *

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

EIP-Economic and Investment Plan
 CSDP-Common Security and Defence Policy
 EUFOR-European Union Force in BiH
 EUROPOL-European Union Agency for Law Enforcement
 Cooperation
 EUROJUST-European Union Agency for Criminal Justice
 Cooperation
 EULEX-European Union Force in Kosovo
 FRONTEX-European Border and Coast Guard Agency
 Western Balkans Counterterrorism Initiative (WBCTi).
 IPA- Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
 BiH-Bosnia and Hercegovina
 RO-Regional Organisations
 WB-Western Balkans
 SEE-South East Europe

TABLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS & INITIATIVES

No	Regional Organisations & Initiatives	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	North Macedonia	Kosovo	Montenegro	Serbia
	Political cooperation						
1	RCC-Regional Cooperation Council	+	+	+	+	+	+
2	CEI-Central European Initiative	+	+	+		+	+
3	AII-Adriatic Ionian Initiative	+	+	+		+	+
4	BSEC-Black Sea Economic Cooperation	+		+			+
5	SEECF-South East Europe Cooperation Pact	+	+	+	+	+	+
6	Berlin Process	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	COSAP -Conference of the European Integration Parliamentary Committees of States Participating in the Stabilization and Association Process TCP Transnational Cooperation Programs	+	+	+		+	+
8	SEECF PA SEECF -Parliamentary Assembly Connectivity	+	+	+	+	+	+
9	PABSEC-Parliamentary Assembly of Black Sea Economic Cooperation	+		+			+
	Connectivity						
10	Energy Com. (AT)	+	+	+	+	+	+
11	e-SEE	+	+	+	+	+	+
12	SEETO- South East Europe Transport Observatory	+	+	+	+	+	+
13	TCT-Transport Community Treaty	+	+	+	+	+	+
14	SWG-RRD- Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group	+	+	+	+	+	+
15	WGE* Regional Working Group on Environment	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Trade and Investment						
16	CEFTA (BE) Central European Free Trade Agreement	+	+	+	+	+	+
17	SEECF (HR) South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning	+	+	+	+	+	+
18	SEECF* South East Europe Investment Committee	+	+	+	x	+	+
19	WBIF-Western Balkan Investment Framework	+	+	+	+	+	+
20	WB6 CIF-WB6 Chamber Investment Forum	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Mobility, Education and Culture						
21	ERI SEE -Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe	+	+	+	x	+	+

22	JWGMRPQ*- Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications	+	+	+	+	+	+
23	SAWG*- Social Agenda 2020 Regional Working Group	+	+	+	+	+	+
24	TFCS* -RCC Task Force on Culture and Society	+	+	+	+	+	+
25	WBF-Western Balkan Fund	+	+	+	+	+	+
26	RYCO-Regional Youth Cooperation Office	+	+	+	+	+	+
27	CPESSSEC-Centre of Public Employment Service		+	+		+	+
28	SEEHN- South Eastern Europe Health Network	+	+	+		+	+
29	SEEIST-South East European International Institute Sustainable Technologies	+	+	+	+	+	+
30	WPET- Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training Good governance (public administration, anti-corruption and justice)	+	+			+	+
31	BC SDN -Balkan Civil Society Network	+	+	+	+	+	+
32	WISE -Western Balkans Research and Innovation Centre Skills and mobility	+	+	+	+	+	+
33	WB EDIF- Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility	+	+	+	+	+	+
34	ECRAN -Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network Energy Com Energy Community	+	+	+	+	+	+
35	REC -Regional Environmental Centre ^ {international status}	+	+	+		+	+
	Good Governance						
36	NALAS- Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe	+	+	+	+	+	+
37	ReSPA- Regional School of Public Administration	+	+	+	+	+	+
38	RAI- Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative	+	+	+	x	+	+
39	WGJ*- Regional Working Group on Justice	+	+	+	+	+	+
40	RHP- Regional Housing Programme Security Cooperation and Migration		+			+	+
41	RACVIAC (HR)- Centre for Security Cooperation ^ {International status}	+	+	+	x	+	+

42	PCC SEE- Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe	+	+	+		+	+
43	SEENSA*- South East European National Security Authorities Forum	+	+	+	+	+	+
44	SELEC (RO)- Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre	+	+	+	x	+	+
45	SEESAC- South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons	+	+	+	+	+	+
46	CVE-FTF*- Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters	+	+	+	+	+	+
47	MARRI- Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative	+	+	+	+	+	+
48	SEEPAG-South East European Prosecutors Advisory Group	+	+	+		+	+
49	A-5 U. S. – Adriatic Charter ^ {international status}	+	+	+		+	+
50	DPPI SEE- Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South Eastern Europe	+	+	+		+	+
51	CBC Cross-Border Cooperation Programme	+	+	+	+	+	+
52	SEDM -Southeast European Defense Ministerial Process	+	+	+		+	+
53	SEEMIC * South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs Forum	+	+	+		+	+
54	EADRCC- Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre ^ {international status}						

Note

- *Initiatives under the RCC
- + =member, x=observer
- ^ Regional organizations with international status

HEADQUARTERS OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN WB6						
Regional organization	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	North Macedonia	Kosovo	Montenegro	Serbia
RCC-Regional Cooperation Council		S				
RAI- Regional Anti-corruption Initiative		S				
e-SEE		S				
SEEIC* -South East Europe Investment Committee		S				
TFCS* -RCC Task Force on Culture and Society						
JWGMRPQ*- Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications		S				
SAWG*- Social Agenda 2020 Regional Working Group		S				
SEEMIC *- South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs Forum		S				
SEENSA*- South East European National Security Authorities Forum		S				
CVE-FTF*- Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters		S				
SEETO- South East Europe Transport Observatory						S
SEESAC- South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons						S
TCT-Treaty of Community of Transport						S
MARRI- Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative			S			
SEEHN- South Eastern Europe Health Network			S			
SWG-RRD- Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group			S			
WBF-Western Balkan Fund	S					

RYCO-Regional Youth Cooperation Office	S					
ReSPA- Regional School of Public Administration					S	
SEEIST-South East European International Institute Sustainable Technologies					S	

Note

- S = Secretariat

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ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES TOWARDS ACCELERATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS' EUROPEAN INTEGRATION



The Western Balkans countries should believe in a credible EU enlargement perspective while maintaining a continued dedication toward strengthening the pro-active and constructive role in regional cooperation and good and neighborly relations, which are significant pillars of



the EU integration process. The current engagement of the EU in the Western Balkans, reconfirmed in the Tirana Declaration following the EU-WB Summit, gives some hope towards an acceleration of the integration process as well as the mitigation of Euro-sceptic perceptions in the region. Despite the



EU's good intentions in establishing various regional organizations and initiatives to accelerate the European integration process in the Western Balkans, the large number of these organizations does not necessarily indicate a successful and beneficial regional cooperation.

Further information on the topic can be found here:
<https://www.tirana.fes.de/publications/>