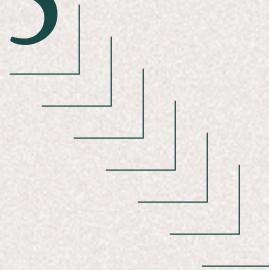




THE
BALKAN
FORUM

MONTHLY UPDATE

November, 2025



Pact for Growth initiative concludes with a joint regional declaration

During 7 to 11 November 2025, The Balkan Forum and its partners participated in an intensive and meaningful project meeting in Tetovo and Skopje, dedicated to advancing the social dimension of the EU Pact for Growth in the Western Balkans. The gathering provided a space for reflection, collaboration, and renewed commitment to a more inclusive and people centred integration process.

Partners revisited the results of previous workshops and training activities and engaged in a series of informative institutional meetings. Discussions with the Ministry of European Affairs, the European Policy Institute, and civil society actors offered valuable insights into EU accession reforms, current challenges, and the importance of cooperation between state institutions and the civic sector. A central moment of the visit was the exchange with Ms. Arlinda Gjakova, State Secretary at the Ministry of European Affairs, who together with department heads provided an open and constructive overview of North Macedonia's reform efforts.

The meeting's most significant achievement was the finalization and signing of the Tetovo Declaration. This joint commitment brings together regional partners around a shared vision of social inclusion, equality, and strengthened collaboration as essential elements of the EU integration journey. Its signing represents both the culmination of past efforts and the beginning of a clearer direction for the future.

Partners also agreed on a concept note that outlines the continuation and expansion of project activities with a focus on deeper regional cooperation. This collective roadmap ensures that the lessons learned and the partnerships built throughout the year are translated into concrete next steps.

The Tetovo meeting reaffirmed the coalition's shared purpose and strengthened its unity of effort. With the Tetovo Declaration and the agreed concept note, the partners move forward with a clearer voice and a renewed determination to advance the social dimension of the EU Growth Plan across the Western Balkans.



Building Connections and Shared Impact

Regional Dialogue on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans

On 24 November, the Executive Director of the Balkan Forum participated in the regional forum “Regional Dialogue on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and Renewable Energy Communities”. The forum focused on the implementation of the Green Agenda commitments and the role of civil society organizations in promoting renewable energy, advancing environmental reforms, and contributing to a sustainable transition in the region. The participation strengthened regional connections and contributed to discussions on the operational and policy challenges shaping the Green Agenda.



Participation in EPALE Networking and Registration Event

On 25 November 2025, the Balkan Forum participated in the EPALE information and networking session held at the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The event brought together institutional representatives and civil society actors to discuss the EPALE platform and its role in supporting lifelong learning. Introductory remarks were delivered by representatives of the Erasmus Plus Office Kosovo and MASHTI, followed by an in depth presentation by Kristina Zimaj, who outlined the platform structure, thematic priorities for 2025, user engagement, and opportunities for collaboration through Erasmus Plus. The session concluded with an open discussion on strengthening participation in EPALE.



Conference on Building a Culture of Volunteerism

The Balkan Forum participated in the conference “Building a Culture of Volunteerism from Individuals to Institutions”, an event that brought together youth, institutions, schools, businesses, and communities from across Kosovo to highlight the value of volunteerism and civic engagement. The conference featured inspirational speeches, panel discussions, and the presentation of the Volunteer of the Year Awards.

The Communications Officer of the Balkan Forum played an active role in the event by serving as a member of the jury responsible for selecting the Volunteerism Awards and by moderating a panel discussion on the link between mental health and educational volunteerism. The event showcased success stories, collaborative models, and examples of impactful community initiatives that contribute to a stronger culture of civic participation.



Media presence

The Executive Director of the Balkan Forum, Gazmend Bërlajolli, was invited to the public broadcaster RTK to discuss the launch of the EU 2025 Country Report for Kosovo. The interview focused on the key findings and progress presented in Chapter 27 on Environment and Climate Change. During the discussion, he outlined the report's implications for Kosovo's environmental policies, highlighted current challenges, and emphasized the importance of sustained alignment with EU standards. This media engagement offered a valuable opportunity to contribute expert insights to the public dialogue on Kosovo's EU integration process.



New Blog Published: Western Balkans 2025 – A Rollercoaster Ride Toward the European Union

Our Research Officer, Arta Haxhixhemajli, published a comprehensive blog titled Western Balkans 2025: A Rollercoaster Ride Toward the European Union. The article offers an in depth reflection on the European Commission's 2025 country reports for the region, highlighting progress, challenges, and political dynamics shaping each country's EU accession path. The blog examines key developments in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, providing an informed and balanced perspective on the opportunities and setbacks that continue to define the EU integration process in the Western Balkans.



Western Balkans 2025: A Rollercoaster Ride Toward the European Union
– Arta Haxhixhemajli
November 07, 2025



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