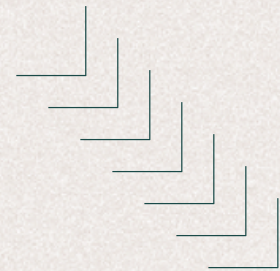


MONTHLY UPDATE

April, 2026



Train-the-Trainer (TTT1) in Bulgaria and Preparatory Coordination

April marked a dynamic month for The Balkan Forum, driven by strong regional collaboration, capacity-building efforts, and growing civic engagement.

Within the framework of the GreenBridge project, a **Train-the-Trainer (TTT1)** programme was delivered in **Sofia, Bulgaria (14–17 April 2026)**, following an online coordination meeting held on 9 April to align partners on the training content and approach.

The training gathered **24 VET teachers**, including **12 participants from Kosovo** and **12 from Bosnia and Herzegovina**, fostering regional exchange and collaboration.

Day 1 (14 April)

The programme opened with an introduction to the GreenBridge project and an overview of the importance of green skills in the EU context, setting the foundation for the training.

Day 2 (15 April)

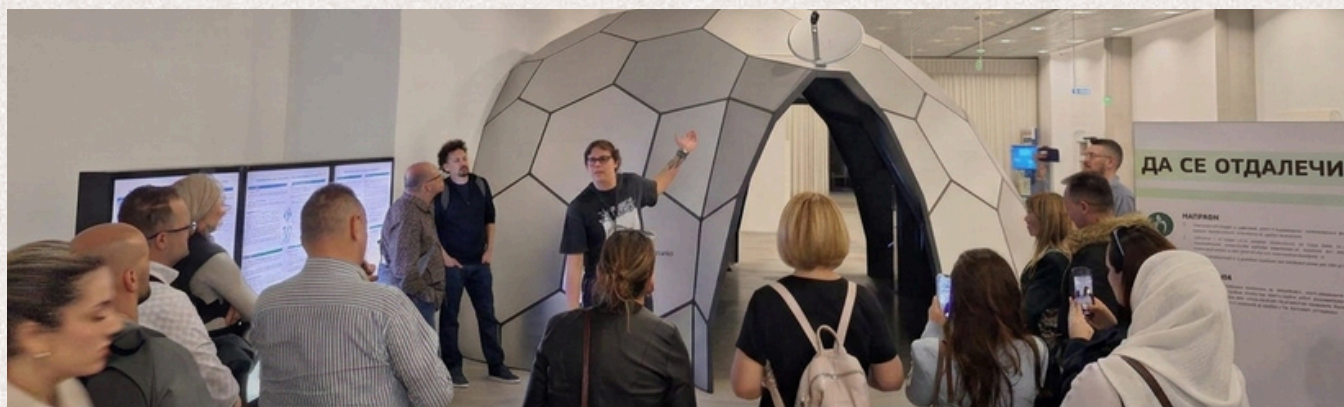
Participants were introduced to the GreenBridge e-learning platform, which is now fully developed and accessible online, and engaged in initial modules on sustainability and environmental ethics, complemented by a practical study visit.

The platform can be accessed here: <https://www.green-bridge.eu/en/>

Day 3 (16 April)

The training continued with key topics related to the green economy and sustainable development, combined with further practical learning through field-based activities.





Day 4 (17 April)

The programme concluded with a focus on practical application and participatory teaching approaches, alongside reflections on how to integrate green and digital skills into VET teaching.

The TTT1 strengthened participants' capacities in green and digital skills, introduced practical teaching methodologies, and supported the integration of these competencies into VET systems, contributing to better alignment with labour market needs.

Participants expressed very positive feedback on the training, highlighting high levels of satisfaction with both the content and the practical approach, as well as its relevance to their teaching practice.

As a continuation of the capacity-building process, a second **Train-the-Trainer (TTT2)** activity is planned to take place in **Malta in September 2026**.



Strengthening Youth Mobility and Partnership – April 2026

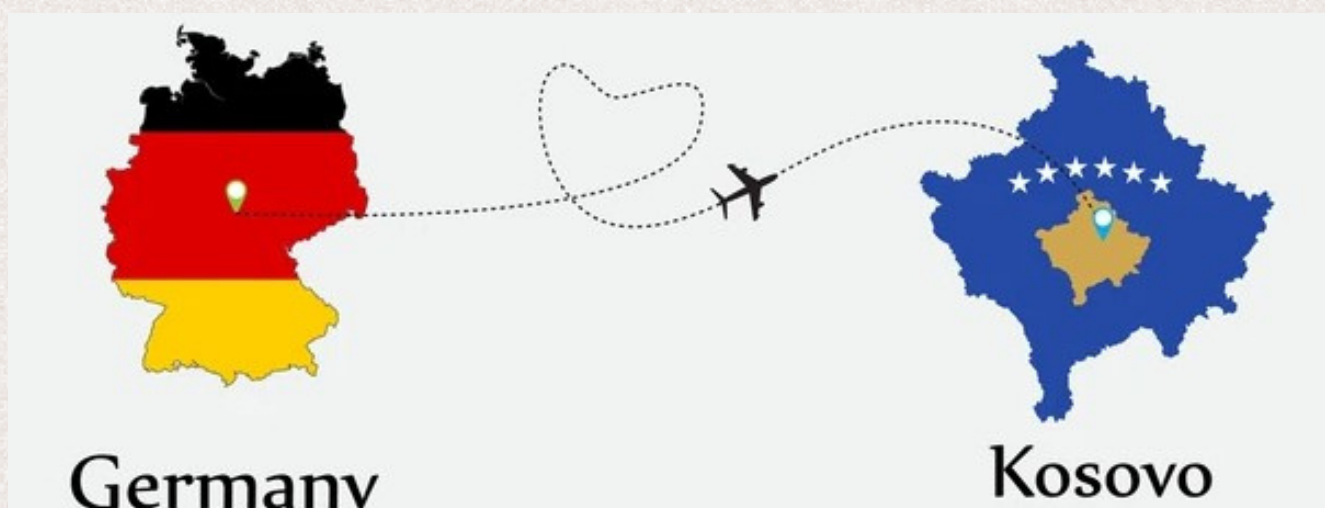
Overview: Throughout April, The Balkan Forum advanced its partnership with **Friedenskreis Halle e.V.**, an organization with longstanding experience in organizing international long-term voluntary services, both in sending volunteers abroad and hosting international volunteers in Germany. This was achieved through active coordination of incoming and outgoing volunteer mobility processes.

Key activities included preparatory steps for the potential hosting of international volunteers in Kosovo, as well as managing the identification and pre-selection of candidates from Kosovo for a **12-month voluntary service placement in Germany (September 2026 – September 2027)**.

To support this process, an open call for applications was launched and widely disseminated across networks, generating strong interest among young people, particularly those with prior engagement in volunteering and community-based initiatives. The outreach further strengthened collaboration with key youth-focused organizations, including AVETAE, TOKA, Bonevet, DyVo Lab, Activism Roots, and other partners.

Why it matters: These efforts represent a concrete step in operationalizing the partnership with Friedenskreis Halle e.V., contributing to increased youth engagement, intercultural exchange, and expanded capacity-building opportunities. At the same time, they lay the groundwork for continued cooperation in both hosting international volunteers in Kosovo and enabling young people from Kosovo to gain meaningful international experience in Germany.

What's next: As the process nears completion, **1–2 candidates from Kosovo** are expected to be selected for the voluntary service in Germany, while **1 international volunteer** will have the opportunity to join The Balkan Forum in Kosovo, marking a meaningful continuation of this exchange.



Fresh Insights on Governance and Democratic Trends

The Balkan Forum published **four analytical blog articles** on its website, within the month of April addressing timely and highly relevant issues related to democracy, governance, and ongoing developments in the Western Balkans.

“Maintaining Liberty in the Western Balkans in an Age of Global Retreat – Freedom House Report” – Arta Haxhixhemajli

Published on April 8

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/26w9fdk3>

The analysis examines the findings of the Freedom House 2026 report, highlighting the region’s “partly free” status and the ongoing challenges related to governance, institutional resilience, and democratic development.

“Orbán is out. Who’s next?” – Xhabir Deralla

Published on April 13

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/2rrsjw8u>

The article examines the dynamics of authoritarian leadership in Europe, using Hungary as a case study to reflect on broader political trends and the resilience of political systems beyond individual leaders.

“Magyar Wins. Hungary’s Real Test Begins” – Xhabir Deralla

Published on April 21

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/BlogbyXhDeralla>

The piece explores evolving geopolitical and security challenges, with a focus on hybrid threats and the importance of strengthening democratic resilience in the region.

When a Referendum Becomes a Weapon: Slovenia and the NATO Question – Xhabir Deralla

Published on April 22

Link: <https://tinyurl.com/BlogbyXhabir>

This article addresses key political developments in the Western Balkans and Europe, highlighting their implications for regional stability and cooperation.



From Recommendations to Action: Advancing the Eco-Champions Voting Phase

The Balkan Forum intensified its efforts under the **Eco-Champions** project, focusing on promoting the online voting and petition phase launched in March.

Building on the **20 recommendations** on sustainable waste management in Kosovo, activities during this period aimed to increase public engagement and participation. Citizens are invited to vote for their top **5 recommendations out of the 20**, helping identify the most important priorities for action.

Strong emphasis was placed on outreach and dissemination, encouraging both citizens and stakeholders to take part in the process. The campaign highlights the importance of civic participation, with the goal of reaching **200 votes from Kosovo**, while ensuring that citizens' voices are reflected in the final recommendations through the petition.

The initiative has now entered an active outreach phase, with the voting and petition being widely shared across our networks, partners, stakeholders, activists, and citizens, alongside a strong push on social media to reach as many voices as possible.

Make your voice count by taking part here: <https://link.dev/togg49b>

ECO CHAMPIONS

3 MARS - 3 QERSHOR
2026

VOTE

VOTO ONLINE *Mbetjet janë tonat
Komuniteti është i yni
Zërin ta ngrisim të gjithë!*

Nga marsi deri në qershor, votoni dhe mbështesni peticionin tonë për të rritur ndërgjegjësimin për menaxhimin e përgjegjshëm të mbetjeve, aty ku ka më së shumti rëndësi – brenda komuniteteve tona.

Co-ordinated by the European Union

Co-funded by the European Union

Coordinator: Partners: Associated Partners:

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At the same time, preparations began for the next phase of engagement in May.

On May 29, an online webinar session will be organized, bringing together experts and citizens, with an expected participation of around **60 citizens**. The session will present the results of the petition and open space for discussion, aiming to foster an engaging exchange on waste management challenges and solutions in Kosovo.

We invite all interested participants to register here: <https://tinyurl.com/sbj5aa2h>

The Zoom link will be shared with those who register ahead of the session.

ECO CHAMPIONS

29
MAJ
2026
ORA: 11:00-12:00

**LE TA NDRYSHOJMË BASHKË
MËNYRËN SI MENAXHOJMË MBETJET
BËHU PJESË E EVENTIT TONË ONLINE!**

Më 29 maj, bëhu pjesë e eventit tonë online dhe kontribuo në zgjidhje më të mira për menaxhimin e mbetjeve.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for their content. Project Number: 1010147502

Co-funded by the European Union

Coordinator: Partners:

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Associated Partners:



Highlights from Key Events and Engagements

Participation in KDI Roundtable on Political Integrity in Kosovo

On 24 April 2026, The Balkan Forum participated in a roundtable organized by KDI on political integrity in Kosovo. The discussion highlighted key legal, institutional, and digital challenges, noting that while transparency has improved, the data ecosystem remains fragmented and limits effective accountability.

Key recommendations focused on aligning the legal framework with EU standards, applying the “open-by-default” principle, and strengthening inter-institutional data integration to improve transparency and oversight.



Source: KDI official Facebook page.

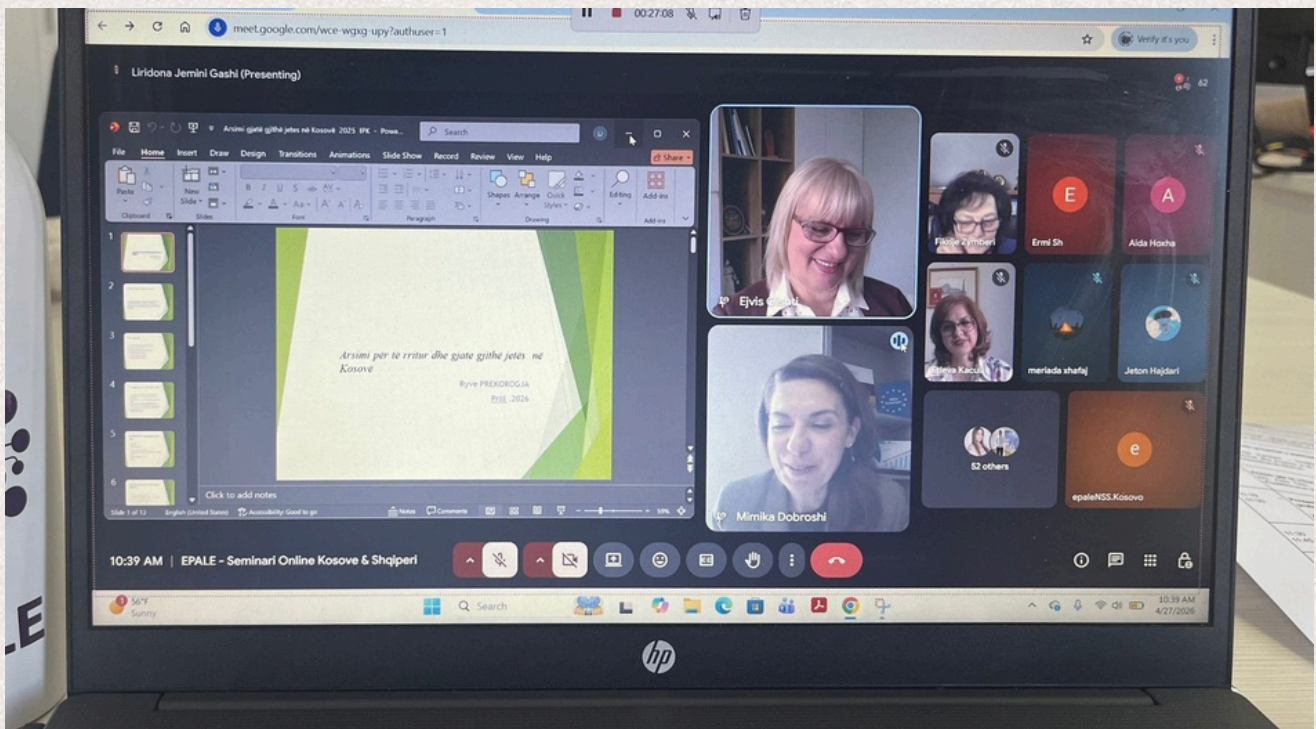


Participation in EPALE Kosovo–Albania Joint Seminar

On 27 April 2026, The Balkan Forum participated in the first joint seminar between EPALE Kosovo and EPALE Albania, marking an important step for the adult learning community in the Albanian language.

The seminar brought together professionals, institutional representatives, and practitioners from both countries, creating a valuable space for exchange on priorities, challenges, and recent developments in adult education, as well as opportunities offered by the EPALE platform.

Participation in this event contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and knowledge exchange in the field of adult learning, while supporting the promotion of EPALE as a platform for networking and professional development.



Source: EPALE Official Facebook page.



Coming Up in May

In May, The Balkan Forum will continue its engagement through several key activities at both regional and project levels.

UNIGREEN: On **4–5 May 2026**, The Balkan Forum will participate in a **two-day training in Thessaloniki, Greece**, hosted by the International Hellenic University. The training will focus on the application of a self-assessment tool designed to evaluate sustainability practices within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), supporting partners in strengthening their institutional capacities and contributing to the development of sustainability policy guidelines.

GREENBRIDGE: Next consortium meeting, taking place from **13–15 May 2026 in Valletta, Malta**, where project partners will come together to review progress and coordinate the next phase of activities under the project.

ECO CHAMPIONS: Later in the month, on **29 May 2026**, an online session (webinar) will be organized. The session will bring together experts and citizens to present the results of the voting and petition process, with around **60 participants** expected, and will provide a space for discussion on waste management challenges and solutions in Kosovo.



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