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# Regional Security Cooperation in the Western Balkans

By Donika Emini and Donika Marku

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# Introduction

The Euro-Atlantic perspective and regional cooperation can be listed as the key ingredients of stability in the Western Balkan countries. In fact, regional cooperation has not only tied together all Western Balkans under a shared purpose, but it has been the most essential tool of stabilization and association - a process that is effectively paving the way of EU integration for the six Western Balkan countries.

Regional cooperation covers a wide range of sectors among which security cooperation is one of the top priorities. Manifested with many challenges, security cooperation between countries in the Western Balkan countries has been a project largely promoted by the EU, in particular some EU member countries taking keen interest in the region. The enhanced cooperation in the security sector is indeed driven by the overall EU objectives in the framework of the EU criteria on good neighbourly relations, but also on the resilience and preparedness

of the region to respond to security challenges with serious implications for EU countries.

A myriad of initiatives, some institutionalized with fully functioning secretariats and headquarters, and some limited on the level of projects, have been launched by or with the support of the EU. Project level cooperation schemes have been used as a successful tool for ensuring full inclusion of all Western Balkan countries, especially Kosovo due to the political obstacles caused by the two not-recognizing countries that is Serbia followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to the various regional security cooperation schemes in the Western Balkans, the EU has attempted to internalize regional security cooperation through the EU integration conditionality, more specifically Chapters 23 and 24,<sup>1</sup> albeit limited to the candidate countries that have ▶

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<sup>1</sup> Since 2011–2012, the EU has started prioritizing chapters 23 and 24 in the accession negotiations (Judiciary and fundamental rights & Justice, freedom and security)

▶ advanced in the integration process. Another effective mechanism that the EU uses to promote cooperation in the Western Balkans is the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA),<sup>2</sup> through the Chapter on freedom, security and justice.

This policy brief aims at looking at the regional security cooperation, mapping the existing platforms in which the Western Balkan Six, and South Eastern European countries are cooperating, and looking specifically into the possibilities and perspectives for its further enhancement. Thus, this document will contribute to the security agenda which will be discussed at the Poznan Summit of the Berlin Process.

## Sketching the challenges

The importance of enhanced regional security cooperation in the Western Balkans is multi-layered. First, stronger security cooperation contributes to creating political stability, security and economic prosperity in the region.<sup>3</sup> Second, regional security cooperation is a solid instrument for addressing key security challenges in the region with serious implications for the EU, such as organized crime, corruption, illegal migration and border management.

Multilateral security cooperation schemes represent one of the most challenging cooperation frameworks. This situation is even more complex in post-conflict and transitioning regions such as the case of the Western Balkans.

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<sup>2</sup> To date, all Western Balkan countries have signed the SAA with the EU. Kosovo was the last to sign the SAA which entered into force in the first half of 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Levitin, Oleg, and Peter Sanfey. "Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans." European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. February 2018. Accessed May 2019. <https://www.ebrd.com/documents/eapa/western-balkans-summit-2018-paper.pdf>.

One of the key obstacles in fostering cooperation in the field of security is the lack of trust among countries that have shared a conflicted past. Owing to the problematic past and continuing lack of trust among Western Balkan countries, there could not be too many successful regional security initiatives. Hence, regional initiatives are considered the most successful and effective if they involve joint work in a specific field of action at a relatively low level and in a less sensitive field.<sup>4</sup>

The second issue that hinders security cooperation is the fact that countries of the Western Balkans have been more reluctant to cooperate in multilateral schemes as they have perceived them as somewhat of a threat to their independence, or in some cases even as an attempt by the EU to re-establish and revive some kind of Yugoslav space.<sup>5</sup> As a result, more of the Western Balkan countries have preferred to work and

cooperate on bilateral level.

Another push factor against increased multilateral regional cooperation is the language and legacy issues/heritage. A study carried out among think tanks in the region operating in the field of security shows that language plays a major role in cooperation in the security sector in the region. For instance, cooperation between countries speaking the same or a similar language was more solid. This applies more to the countries sharing Slavic background, excluding Kosovo and Albania. The language barrier has determined the way those countries develop their cooperation. On a more operational level, the study shows that the Montenegrin police or military officers would prefer their Serbian or Bosnian counterparts, rather than Albanian or Kosovar counterparts. The same applied to the other side, for a Kosovar police officer it was easier to cooperate with Albanian counterparts.<sup>6</sup> The differentiated

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<sup>4</sup> Emini, Donika. "Kosovo's Membership and Representation in Regional Security Initiatives." Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. 2014. Accessed 2019. [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's\\_Membership\\_and\\_Representation\\_in\\_Regional\\_Security\\_Initiatives\\_668693.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's_Membership_and_Representation_in_Regional_Security_Initiatives_668693.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Serbia's Plan to Bring Back (best Of) Yugoslavia." POLITICO. 10 April, 2017. Accessed June 15, 2019. <https://www.politico.eu/article/for-serbias-vucic-road-to-eu-runs-through-balkans/>

► cooperation has had a major impact also on how countries behave on multilateral regional level. Henceforth, most of the communication that takes place on regional security initiatives level yields limited results in establishing substantial and practical cooperation between the countries that have very little cooperation on bilateral level.<sup>7</sup>

## Security Cooperation: An externally driven project gradually internalised

Establishing and maintaining sustainable security cooperation in the Western Balkans has become the most important interest of the EU, in particular of some member countries. As such, the EU would see it as a key mechanism to generate

political stability, security and economic perspective. More importantly, for the EU, regional security cooperation would turn the region into a proactive partner to address key security challenges, fight transnational organized crime, corruption, border management and illegal migration – a key priority area for the EU.<sup>8</sup>

The multi-frontal engagement of the EU in fostering regional security cooperation has created the perception that this was a more externally driven project, rather than a necessity that internally derives from the region itself.<sup>9</sup> While in many ways, by being part of the EU conditionality, regional security cooperation in the Western Balkans can be seen as a success story, it has sometimes been regarded as a form of ‘home-work’ set by the EU and the international community rather than something that derived out of the internal needs in the region.<sup>10</sup>

One of the first steps to internalize the

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<sup>6</sup> Qehaja, Florian. "Uneven Regional Security Cooperation: Lessons Learned and next Steps." Aspen Institute Germany. 2016. Accessed June 2019. <http://www.aspeninstitute.de/wp-content/uploads/Publication-EU-Enlargement-and-Regional-Cooperation-1.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Stojanović, Sonja, and Ejduš, Filip. Security Community Practices in the Western Balkans. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> "Regional Cooperation In Western Balkans: A View From Inside The European Union. The Premises and Obstacles " Accessed 13 June, 2019. <https://dergipark.org.tr/download/article-file/117968>.

<sup>9</sup> Marciacq, Florent. "The European Union and the Western Balkans after the Berlin Process Reflecting on the EU Enlargement in Times of Uncertainty." FES South East Europe. 2017. Accessed 2019. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/13948.pdf>



externally driven push by the EU was the transformation of the Stability Pact into a Regional Security Council (RCC) in 2007. RCC has gradually become an 'umbrella' of regional initiatives in the Balkans covering various fields such as economic and social growth, infrastructure and energy, justice and internal affairs, cooperation for greater security and improving the quality of human resources. With an office in the Balkans and one in Brussels, RCC marked the first effort in the Balkans to promote stronger regional ownership.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, it was meant to play a crucial role in enhancing regional cooperation while diminishing the influence of the still-present divisions among Western Balkan countries.

Increased responsibilities and ownership required more effective regional leadership and management. However, the independence of Kosovo in 2008 placed RCC into a challenging position

following the emergence of two major bilateral disputes in the Western Balkans with major implications for regional cooperation platforms.

Even though the Kosovo case still remains questionable due to the fact that the obstructive approach of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina still continues, in 2013 the board of RCC decided to amend the statute and its founding declaration, to replace UNMIK's reference and enable Kosovo to be represented in this platform.<sup>12</sup> To date, RCC has integrated a large number of ongoing security initiatives in the Western Balkans and South East Europe working actively to generate stability through cooperation in the region, but also respond to major security threats that cannot be addressed by the countries individually. The graph below offers a clear mapping of regional security cooperation initiatives and the number of partner countries they include. ►

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<sup>10</sup> Mogildea, Mihai: "A Regional Integration Model for Advancing the Europeanization Process in Central and Eastern Europe." Slovak Foreign Policy Association. 2017. Accessed 2019. [https://think.visegradfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Mogildea\\_The-Visegrad-Group-A-regional-integration-model-for-advancing-the-Europeanization-process-in-Central-and-Eastern-Europe.pdf](https://think.visegradfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Mogildea_The-Visegrad-Group-A-regional-integration-model-for-advancing-the-Europeanization-process-in-Central-and-Eastern-Europe.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Minic, Jelica. "Ownership for Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkan Countries." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. 2009. Accessed 2019. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/sarajevo/06609.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Demjaha, Agon. "Kosovo's Participation in Regional Organizations and Initiatives." Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development. 2010. Accessed 2019. [http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's\\_Participation\\_in\\_Regional\\_Organizations\\_and\\_Initiatives\\_359638.pdf](http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's_Participation_in_Regional_Organizations_and_Initiatives_359638.pdf)

## SECURITY COOPERATION

<b>Taskforces and Initiatives in SEE</b>	<b>ALB</b>	<b>BiH</b>	<b>BG</b>	<b>CRO</b>	<b>GR</b>
Centre for Security Cooperation (RACVIAC) - Zagreb	X	X		X	X
Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative (DPPISSE) - Sarajevo	X	X	X	X	
The South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) - Belgrade	X	X		X	
South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) - rotating	X	X	X	X	X
The United States Adriatic Charter - No HQ	X	X		X	
Forum for Western Balkans Defense Cooperation (SEEC) No HQ	X	X		X	

## JUSTICE AND HOMELAND COOPERATION

<b>Taskforces and Initiatives in SEE</b>	<b>ALB</b>	<b>BiH</b>	<b>BG</b>	<b>CRO</b>	<b>GR</b>
Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI) - Skopje	X	X		X	
Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative - Sarajevo	X	X	X	X	
Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) -Bucharest	X	X	X	X	X
Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEPCA)	X	X	X	X	
Women Police Officer Network (WPON) - No HQ	X	X	X	X	
Police Cooperation Convention for Southeast Europe (PCC-SEE)	X	X	X		

MD	MNE	RO	SRB	MKD	TR	KOS	SLO	Others
	X	X	X	X	X	in 2014 has been invited to participate - not yet a member	X	
	X	X	X	X	X		X	
X	X		X	X		X		Italy, Ukraine, USA, Georgia (observer)
Observer	X	X	X	X	X		X	
	X		Observer	X		Submitted Application		USA
	X		X	X			X	

MD	MNE	RO	SRB	MKD	TR	KOS	SLO	Others
	X		X	X		X		
X	X	X	X	X				
X	X	X	X	X	X		X	Hungary
X	X	X	X	X		X		
X	X	X	X	X				
X	X	X	X	X				Hungary, Austria

► In another attempt to internalize security cooperation – beyond the RCC on regional level – the EU has imposed regional cooperation in the security sector through EU integration Chapters 23 and 24. The need for more effective regional security cooperation is more emphasized in the fight against transnational organized crime, border control, police and customs cooperation, etc.<sup>13</sup> To date, these chapters are opened only with the so-called ‘front-runners’ Serbia and Montenegro. In the case of Serbia, cooperation is also stressed in Chapter 35 on Kosovo.<sup>14</sup>

the EU.<sup>15</sup> However, it demands regional cooperation among Western Balkan countries in all relevant fields including security.

In spite of all challenges deriving from the uneven cooperation in the Western Balkans, differentiated EU integration paths, lack of trust to share information in sensitive areas, security cooperation has been quite successful. This success can be attributed to several regional level initiatives – being project led or institutionalized platforms.

An effective tool for internalizing cooperation – yet again through the EU push – comes through the SAA. The SAA, signed between each of the Western Balkan countries and the EU, provides a unique possibility for each country to move on its own path and pace towards

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<sup>13</sup> Nozar, Wolfgang. “- 1 -The 100% Union: The Rise of Chapters 23 and 24.” Clingendael Institute. August 2014. Accessed June 2019. [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The 100% Union. The rise of Chapters 23 and 24.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The%20100%20Union.%20The%20rise%20of%20Chapters%2023%20and%2024.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> “Chapter 35: Normalisation of Relations between Serbia and Kosovo.” European Commission. November 2015. Accessed June 2019. <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/AD-12-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans A Policy Priority for the European Union.” European Commission. 2005. Accessed 2019. [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/nf5703249enc\\_web\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/nf5703249enc_web_en.pdf)

# Upgrading cooperation through the case study of Kosovo vis-à-vis Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Regional cooperation schemes have offered a multi-lateral platform in which all countries would effectively cooperate and share information. This is particularly important for Kosovo – as the only country in the Western Balkans lacking recognition by two neighbouring countries and five EU member states. The open dispute between Kosovo and Serbia, followed by non-recognition of Kosovo by Bosnia and Herzegovina created major challenges and obstacles in regional cooperation, especially in the security sector. On the other hand, it provided 'creative' ways of communication and created opportunities for Kosovo to use

the multi-lateral platforms to increase its presence and share information albeit in limited initiatives.

Kosovo has been facing major challenges in joining regional security cooperation schemes. As such, Kosovo was either represented by UNMIK, EULEX or even KFOR in certain military initiatives.<sup>16</sup> Kosovo's cooperation has taken place on a very limited level, many times using creativity so that it is acceptable for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kosovo's regional prospects have been and still continue to be openly hindered by the proactive position of the Serbian Government to block Kosovo's membership in regional security cooperation. Sporadically, Bosnia and Herzegovina further complicates regional cooperation by joining Serbia in the act of blocking.<sup>17</sup> This attitude pattern is purely based on the political position each of the two countries has taken by not recognizing the state of Kosovo, hence the security providers' authorities are not being acknowledged. ►

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<sup>16</sup> Emini, Donika. "Kosovo's Membership and Representation in Regional Security Initiatives." Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. 2014. Accessed 2019. [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's\\_Membership\\_and\\_Representation\\_in\\_Regional\\_Security\\_Initiatives\\_668693.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Kosovo's_Membership_and_Representation_in_Regional_Security_Initiatives_668693.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Kryeziu, Sofije. "No Way Out? Assessment of Police Cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia." Kosovar Centre for Security Studies. 2016. Accessed 16 June, 2019.

► This issue has been addressed in the framework of the EU facilitated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. In 2012, regional representation and cooperation or the so-called footnote agreement<sup>18</sup> was signed between both parties. It is through this agreement that both Kosovo and Serbia confirmed their commitment to the fundamental EU value of effective, inclusive and representative regional cooperation. The agreement would allow for Kosovo to participate and sign new agreements on its own account and to speak for itself at all regional meetings.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of the agreement, Kosovo has been struggling to find its way in regional security cooperation schemes. The footnote agreement foresaw a more inclusive future for Kosovo in the regional arena, unfortunately the obstacles in the implementation process and the opposition of Serbia have made this

process harder and prolonged for Kosovar institutions.<sup>20</sup>

The strong identification of security institutions with statehood has made Kosovo's integration in regional security initiatives, but also the multilateral and bilateral level of cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia more difficult. The complexity of the lack of cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia in the field of justice and security was explicitly reflected in the case of murder of Oliver Ivanovic – a Kosovo Serb politician – who was murdered in 2018 in the northern part of Kosovo.<sup>21</sup> The case will take longer to be effectively solved due to lack of direct cooperation between authorities of Kosovo and Serbia.

Regional cooperation schemes and projects have served as a means to overcome complexities between Kosovo

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<sup>18</sup> Kosovo\* will be the only denomination to be used and the footnote to be applied to the asterisk will read: "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence"

<sup>19</sup> "EU Facilitated Dialogue: Agreement on Regional Cooperation and IBM Technical Protocol." European External Action Services (EEAS). February 2012. Accessed May 2019. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/128138.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/128138.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Ēmini, Donika, and Stakic, Isidora. "Belgrade and Pristina: Lost in Normalisation?" European Institute for Security Studies. April 2018. Accessed 15 June, 2019. [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief\\_5\\_Belgrade\\_and\\_Pristina.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief_5_Belgrade_and_Pristina.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> "Kosovo Arrests Four in Oliver Ivanovic Murder Investigation." Balkan Insight. January 15, 2019. Accessed 13 June, 2019. <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/11/23/kosovo-police-arrest-four-in-oliver-ivanovic-murder-case-11-23-2018/>

and Serbia by providing a 'middle-ground' solution to the problem. For instance, a project level cooperation based on informal exchange of information between police forces in Kosovo and Serbia has led to many successful cases.

*The case when two citizens of Serbia suspected to have been involved in a murder in Serbia found refuge in Kosovo gives a glimpse of the level of complexity of security cooperation in the Western Balkans. The case has been solved with the help of the regional platform ILECU.<sup>22</sup> Direct communication between the two ILECUs enabled the capture and return of the two suspects from Kosovo to Serbia through a jointly albeit informally coordinated operation. Serbia's ILECU contacted the ILECU in Kosovo directly to exchange information about the suspects. The Kosovo Police (KP) opened an investigation, apprehended the suspects and put them in detention. In fact, there was no arrest warrant for the suspects, but they were arrested on charges of possessing narcotics and links to the infamous criminal Naser*

*Kelmendi. Kosovo's ILECU informed the counterparts in Serbia that the suspects had been detained, to later agree on the time and place for the handover from Kosovo to Serbia. However, given the informality of this direct communication, the suspects could not be and were not officially handed over to the Serbian authorities, but were "released" at the agreed border crossing point. Upon the "release", Serbia's Police authorities, who were waiting on the other side of the border, rearrested the suspects.<sup>23</sup>*

While this regional project level cooperation scheme has brought criminals to the authorities in a successful way, this type of cooperation is not sustainable and the information exchanged on such levels of informal communication cannot be used as evidence in courts. This 'creative' way of coordination, however, was the only tool of communication back then. The case took place in 2015 and to date there is no advancement in strengthening cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia in both bilateral and multilateral regional platforms.

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<sup>22</sup> "ILECU International Law Enforcement Coordination Unit." Criminal Intelligence of Austria. 2008. Accessed 2019. <https://www.paris-pact.net/upload/b33fbb3138c256e51f6c5303476742c3.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> Kursani, Shpend. "Police Cooperation between Kosovo and Serbia." 2015. Accessed 2019. [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Police\\_cooperation\\_between\\_Kosovo\\_and\\_Serbia\\_749694.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Police_cooperation_between_Kosovo_and_Serbia_749694.pdf).

# A way ahead for the Western Balkan countries

Regional security cooperation is gradually becoming a norm in the Western Balkans deriving from the need to further strengthen security in the Western Balkans by jointly tackling issues such as organized crime, fight against violent extremism that could lead to terrorism, and strengthening disaster preparedness. The security framework is becoming increasingly complex and aggravated, in turn affecting the whole region's functioning and development and thus stability and prosperity of the entire EU. Henceforth, a close regional and enhanced cooperation, among Western Balkan countries, through dialogue and various forms of cooperation, will prove an effective response to contemporary security challenges and gradually pave the way to building trust among the countries.

There are many institutional forms of regional cooperation, several of them have produced effective results. Regional

cooperation was initially a project led by the EU which has been serving as a proactive external force in pushing the region to cooperate in the security sector. Henceforth, much of the progress has taken place for the sake of 'trying to please Brussels' but not to address the security concerns of the region per se.

More intense work is needed among the Western Balkans and the EU to make it clear that increasing cooperation in the security sector is also one of the criteria for Euro-Atlantic membership. In addition, Western Balkan countries shall be aware that regional cooperation is for the benefit of the region and its citizens, thus it shall derive internally from the region and not be implemented for the sake of ticking the box in the framework of the EU integration process.

A more proactive approach of the EU is needed in ensuring that Kosovo and Serbia are implementing the so called 'footnote agreement'. There should be effective mechanisms to prevent further blockades by Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina for Kosovo. Cooperation in the security sector is crucial for building resilience in the region, and successful response toward internal



and external security challenges, thus security vacuums shall not be allowed to exist in the Western Balkans as a result of limited cooperation between the Kosovo-Serbia-Bosnia and Herzegovina triangle.

On the other hand, EU's motivation for Western Balkan countries lies on the need for stability within the EU. Regional initiatives hold great potential in terms of improving relations between Western Balkan countries. Increased cooperation in the security sector between Western Balkan countries will yield successful in dealing with major security threats that can derive from the region and those externally imposed. As such, regional cooperation should be continuously promoted, while the EU and its member states must remain actively engaged in the region.

Effective regional cooperation is seen as an important preparation for future EU and NATO membership. Regional cooperation schemes have been actively preparing the Western Balkan and South Eastern European countries to join larger security cooperation mechanisms. During the past decade, seven countries from South East Europe and two from the Western Balkans

(Albania and Montenegro) have joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), whereas North Macedonia is expected to finalize its journey toward NATO membership by the end of this year.

Regional security cooperation needs to increase interactions between independent professionals, be it academics or civil society actors. This is particularly important in sharing experiences and learning how to successfully oversee the internal security sector reform but also closely observe the trend of regional security cooperation in the Western Balkans. This is particularly important in the case of Kosovo, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in which bilateral cooperation on state level is almost non-existent.

More importantly, regional security cooperation between Western Balkan countries needs to be followed by deepening the cooperation between Western Balkan countries and the EU. This relates to the need for more proactive involvement of the Europol, Eurojust, Frontex and other security mechanisms in the EU.

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# Information about SEE Think Net

**The SEE Think Net Network** was established in mid-march 2018 as the first regional network composed of civil society organisations that aim to monitor the topics related to the Berlin Process. The Network encompasses think tanks, civil society organisations and individuals from the 6 Western Balkan countries plus Croatia and Slovenia. Besides the Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis” (IDSCS) which will coordinate the Network, the SEE Think Net Network includes the Network of the European Movement in Serbia (NEMinS), Open Society Foundation for Albania and its affiliate, the EU Policy Hub, Adnan Ćerimagić, Politikon Network from Montenegro, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) from Croatia and the Centre for European Perspective (CEP) from Slovenia. The goal of the SEE Think Net Network is to produce significant policy inputs and provide policy recommendations on topics that derive from the Berlin Process. As such, its activities are devised in order to closely monitor the Berlin process and the policy areas the process encompasses.

As part of Regional cooperation in the Western Balkans The Berlin Process and Visegrad Group in comparison project, in December 2018, the SEE Think Network received financial support from the International Visegrad Fund. The network therefore broadened its scope of activities in the Visegrad region through cooperation with the following think tanks: the Centre for Eastern Studies from Poland (OSW), Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade from Hungary (IFAT), the Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) from Slovakia, and EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy (EUROPEUM) from the Czech Republic.

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# Information about the International Visegrad Fund

**The Visegrad Fund** is an international donor organization, established in 2000 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries—Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia to promote regional cooperation in the Visegrad region (V4) as well as between the V4 region and other countries, especially in the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership regions. The Fund does so by awarding €8 million through grants, scholarships and artist residencies provided annually by equal contributions of all the V4 countries. Other donor countries (Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States) have provided another €10 million through various grant schemes run by the Fund since 2012.

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## Link

**This publication is available at:**

<https://idscs.org.mk/en/portfolio/regional-security-in-the-western-balkans-the-role-of-the-berlin-process/>



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