REPORT

ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE

REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

For the period 1 October 2021 – 1 March 2022

BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

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Executive Summary

The preceding months brought an improvement in the overall epidemiological and economic situation, allowing South East Europe (SEE) region to recover faster than were the initial predictions. According to the World Bank estimates[1], in 2021 the SEE region will see a GDP growth of about 6.8%, whereas the forecast for the Western Balkans improved from 4.4 to 5.9%. While this gives some reason for optimism, it does not alleviate the need for caution, particularly as it concerns lingering socio-economic effects of the preceding recession. Despite the rebound, the employment rate in 2021 remained on average the same, while even noting slight decrease in four economies. Although the fall in poverty rate is expected to continue under the conditions of growth, damage to the labour market caused by the pandemic is likely to negatively affect the vulnerable groups such as women and youth.

Economic estimates suggest that some of the solutions to sustainability and comprehensiveness of recovery could be found in mutual learning, enhanced regional economic integration and green transition. The latter, in particular, is the matter not only of health but also of closer integration into the European and global value chains and access to EU resources.

On the other hand, the region had been undergoing a challenging period in domestic and regional politics, which in some instances sidelined the focus on economic recovery and regional economic integration. Nevertheless, European perspective remains the focal point for both the region and the European Union. This was reaffirmed in the Brdo Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 6 October 2021, under the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The process of EU integration remains firmly grounded not only in the meeting of merit-based criteria, but also in regional economic integration. The EU reconfirmed its support to this agenda with the adoption of the legal framework for the implementation of IPA III, which brought the total financial envelope for the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan up to 1.1 billion EUR.

There have also been positive steps in the reporting period regarding the EU enlargement process and regional relations. After two years, a new cluster in accession negotiations with Serbia was opened – Green Deal and Sustainable Connectivity. Moreover, Sofia and Skopje have succeeded in agreeing on the short name of North Macedonia, signalling enhanced efforts in resolving the remaining disagreements. After the approval of the negotiating frameworks by the Council of the EU, first intergovernmental conferences with Albania and North Macedonia are expected. Moreover, during the 4th Meeting of Stabilisation and Association Council, Kosovo[*] has informed the EU of its intention to apply for EU membership during this year (2022) and is expecting a decision by the Council on visa liberalization.

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[1]https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36402/Greening-the-Recovery.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[*] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), its Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) as well as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as the SEECP's operational arm have remained firmly committed to fostering regional cooperation to the utmost benefit of the SEE region and its participants. Particularly, the synergy and coordination between the RCC and the Greek SEECP CiO in the preceding period have ensured that the cooperation framework remains the principal forum for developing and implementing the agendas toward regional security, stability and prosperity. Not least, the joint organisation of the Junior Diplomats Forum provided an opportunity to familiarise new generations of diplomats in SEE with the relevance of and developments in regional cooperation, as well as to equip them with tools to further promote it in their service.

Over the reporting period, the RCC has focused on navigating the efforts towards socio-economic transformation of the SEE region and of the Western Balkans through the implementation of the Common Regional Market and elaboration of the next steps in the SEE 2030 Strategy, in line with the RCC Strategy and Work Programme 2020-2022.

The **SEE 2030 Strategy**, in particular, represents the new momentum in cooperation in South East Europe. Following the intense consultations with SEECP participants, civil society, regional and international organisations and adjustment of the draft text to the comments received, the SEE 2030 entered into the implementation stage. It was kick-started by the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee in November, which adopted its rules of procedure and the programming and monitoring guidelines of SEE 2030.

With the governance structure nearly finalised, and the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee held, the RCC was able as per its mandate to inaugurate concrete steps of SEE 2030 implementation. Thus, the RCC prepared the project proposal template for SEECP participants and other regional and international stakeholders, and set up the groundwork for the beginning of qualitative and quantitative monitoring, and building the foundations for regional dialogue mechanisms.

Implementation of SEE 2030 constitutes a novel and forward-looking approach toward the meeting of UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) by utilising the benefits of regional action and cooperation.

Regarding the **support to the implementation of the Common Regional Market,** RCC has been facilitating the efforts toward the establishment of the regional investment area; regional digital area; and regional industrial and innovation area in the region, underpinned by the EU's four freedoms.

When it comes to the **free movement of people**, the *Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications for Doctors of Medicine, Dentists and Architects*, the *Agreement on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications* and the *Agreement on Freedom of Movement with Identity Cards in the Western Balkans* have been concluded at the technical

level. The Working Group on Freedom of Movement of Third Party Citizens is finalising the last technical segments of the draft Agreement.

The region is continuing its path toward the **free movement of capital** by working on the cutting of costs on payments within the region. In this context, Single European Payment Area (SEPA) readiness is under assessment, while the implementation of the Western Balkans Payment Modernisation Project is underway.

Within the industrial component of the regional **industrial and innovation area**, mappings of three more sectors were finalised by the end of 2021: light manufacturing, circular economy and agro-food sectors. Moreover, in support of online data visualisation of the Regional Supplier Development Programme, Market Intelligence database and Market Access database have been launched. Reinvigoration of regional **sustainable tourism** has begun in line with the Tirana Declaration 2021, whereby RCC proposed the renewal of the Tourism Expert Group and the establishment of the Western Balkans Tourism Crisis and Recovery Committee, to be in line with CRM priorities.

In terms of **regional innovation**, RCC has been devoting efforts to coordinate activities of innovation stakeholders and to align with the *Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport* endorsed at the EU-WB Summit under Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Moreover, RCC assisted the region with capacity-building ahead of the official association of economies to Horizon Europe.

An important support to innovation and entrepreneurship was initiated with the organisation of the **first Butterfly Innovation and Business Forum** in December 2021, which provided visibility and networking opportunity to promising start-ups from the region, and will be followed up with the regional Butterfly Innovation Award in 2022.

RCC continued to champion **women economic empowerment** and participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). The *Western Balkans Women Entrepreneurs of the Year 2021* initiative was launched to promote and recognise women entrepreneurship, whereas in cooperation with UNDP, RCC facilitated the creation of the Council of the Western Balkans Network of Women in STEM.

Through its projects, the RCC also supports the inclusion of **youth** in policy co-creation and co-management through two ongoing Youth Policy Labs, the socio-economic inclusion of **Roma** and the improvement of **employment opportunities and working conditions** of women and men in the region.

Working toward the **regional digital area**, the 4th Western Balkans Digital Summit was held in October 2021, proving again to be the main framework of regional dialogue on digital integration. It confirmed the commitment of the participating economies to the objective and scope of the draft joint statements: on the free flow of data and on interoperability. Moreover, in the digital agenda, the region agreed on the *Roadmap for Lowering Roaming Charges*

between the EU and the Western Balkans, which provides, among others, a set of policy reforms to be delivered by all participating governments in order to allow for Roadmap implementation.

In addition to the Common Regional Market, RCC is assisting the implementation of the Green Agenda. In close consultations with governments and non-governmental partners, the Action Plan for the implementation of the Sofia *Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans 2021-2030* was endorsed by the six Leaders of the Western Balkans at the EU-Western Balkans Summit at Brdo pri Kranju. RCC has started preparations jointly with the host Ministry for a follow-up ministerial meeting in Pristina to discuss implementation of this Action Plan and identify priorities for the upcoming year through a joint declaration.

The efforts of the RCC to advance socio-economic integration and cooperation in the region are underpinned by its activities in **Good Governance** and Security cooperation. In the reporting period, the focus was on promoting cross-border/boundary mediation in South East Europe and on distant learning solutions for Judicial Training Institutes.

In terms of **security cooperation**, the RCC sought to stay on top of developing security situation in the region and beyond, organising a webinar on Paradigm Change in Afghanistan in view of its possible security implications for South East Europe, and continuing the widely recognised annual Regional Security Coordination Conference. Moreover, preparations are under way for the second edition of the regional public opinion survey on security issues, to be launched in May 2022. Comprehensive regional security cooperation is ongoing within the framework of the Integrative Internal Security Governance project.

Implementation of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme

A. Support to implementation of the Common Regional Market (CRM)

A.1 Economic Competitiveness
Regional investment retention and expansion part of CRM dealt with reviewing Covid-19 imposed measures on the regional level and their possible ISDS claims. RCC worked with GiZ to map the imposed measures on economy and regional level. The results are presented in the *Regional study on the impact assessment of Covid-19 response measures in the Western Balkans and their possible ISDS risks*. This action contributes to raising awareness of governments of potential risks, enabling regional exchange of experiences and best practices in risk mitigation and enhancing the ability of governments to react timely and effectively.

Free Movement of Capital area was focused on cutting the costs of cross-border/boundary payments within the region. Detailed discussions continue with regard to the Note on SEPA assessment/readiness from a legal/regulatory perspective, on the assessment in terms of the payments-related EU legislation transpositions, and on non-bank payment service provider

(PSP) licensing- and oversight-harmonisation approaches across the region. As part of the ongoing Western Balkans Payment Modernisation Project, being implemented together with the World Bank Group and European Central Bank, regional central banks had the opportunity to participate in the Cyber Resilience Oversight Expectations for Financial Market Infrastructures workshop. In addition to discussing SEPA readiness, the region considered the findings on the proposed Interoperability/Instant payments activity.

Sustainable Tourism part of the CRM picked up the work set up by the Tirana Declaration and the Triple P Tourism Project. Western Balkans Tourism policy partners[2] recognised the necessity to coordinate various tourism agendas that are being undertaken and implemented in the region (both on the regional and individual-economy levels) in order to develop synergies, where possible, and avoid duplication of work. In this context the RCC proposed renewal of the Tourism Expert Group (now CRM TEG) as well as the establishment of the Western Balkans Tourism Crisis and Recovery Committee, in line with the inclusion of regional tourism under the CRM.

Under *Industrial Development,* the RCC has continued the dialogue with regional economies related to private sector actions towards establishing a Regional Supplier Development Programme (RSDP). In addition, a key focus was on creative industries, one of the principal industries and measures in the CRM's Regional Industrial and Innovation Area. In efforts to support the regional development of creative industries, RCC commissioned a study aiming to analyse the policy environment, challenges and opportunities in the region. The study - which also includes a detailed mapping of key stakeholders, initiatives, networks and events of creative industries and economy overviews of the six regional economies - will be published during the first quarter of 2022.

A.2 Human Capital Development

There has been no change on the status of the *Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications for Doctors of Medicine, Dentists and Architects* and on the *Agreement on Recognition of Higher Education Qualification* since the negotiations for both had been completed on the technical level. Meanwhile, in December 2021 the Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications endorsed the work plan for 2022, in line with CRM, also adding some new activities. Based on the Working Group conclusions, work commenced on developing the Regional Quality Assurance Action Plan to assist both the region and economies individually to meet the European Standards and Guidelines on quality assurance.

Within the **Regional Innovation Area** agenda, the focus was on facilitating further development of a regional innovation ecosystem. The RCC established close cooperation with the key European organisations focusing on innovation and research under the Western

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[2] CEFTA, GIZ, Increasing Market Employability Programme, OECD, Via Dinarica Alliance BiH/Greeenvision, USAID Developing Sustainable Tourism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cross-border Institution Building (CBIB) and World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

Balkans Innovation and Research Platform. These include European Institute of Innovation and Technology (Knowledge and Innovation Communities - KICs), Enterprise Europe Network, Eureka Network and COST Association. The RCC's efforts to coordinate activities of innovation stakeholders by enabling smoother exchange of information help prevent duplication of efforts while contributing to a more effective deployment of resources allocated towards the expansion of a regional innovation ecosystem.

Important in terms of the support to the regional innovation area was the endorsement of the *Western Balkans Agenda on Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport* at the EU-WB Summit in Slovenia, as well as the signing of association agreements to the EU 9th Framework Programme Horizon Europe. Both events mark the critically important milestones towards the region's efforts to boost research and innovation performance and bandwagon with the more advanced EU Member States.

Ahead of the official association to Horizon Europe, the RCC designed capacity building of research & innovation National Contact Points (NCPs) to increase knowledge and skills of less experienced NCPs. The capacity-building attracted 64 NCPs from five economies, except for Bosnia and Herzegovina that did not appoint new NCPs by the start of the activity.

Following previous support towards the creation of four roadmaps of research infrastructures, the RCC facilitated the preparation of the first *Western Balkans Research and Innovation Infrastructure Roadmap.* The regional Roadmap has identified the strategic fields for the future investments in modern innovation ecosystems, boosting regional cooperation between academia and businesses, and encouraging commercialisation of knowledge.

Furthermore, the RCC launched the Technology Transfer Support Programme to invigorate technology transfer practices and facilitate regional networking of Technology Transfer Offices.

Through the Western Balkans Competitiveness and Innovation Accelerator, the RCC assisted the preparation of the first Strategic Foresight in the Region: Recovery on the Horizon report on science, technology and innovation that elaborates on three probable scenarios by 2035 that may influence the nature of Research & Innovation policies. Under the Accelerator umbrella, the RCC continued pursuing the most appropriate way of creating a regional innovation support mechanism that will boost early-stage innovation initiatives in the region.

The RCC, in partnership with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), organised the *first* Butterfly Innovation & Business Forum in December 2021. The event was structured to feature discussions on three key elements of any innovation ecosystem: innovation infrastructures, access to finance and human capital. The Butterfly Forum showcased successful start-ups, established innovative companies and early-stage innovative teams through 12 intense sessions, adding visibility to their efforts, and enabled networking with potential investors. The

regional Butterfly Innovation Award was inaugurated during the Forum and will become operational in 2022.

The RCC supported the EEN's efforts to simplify access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South East Europe by launching Access2Finance and Innovation platform (FINNO). The key benefits offered by FINNO include easily accessible information on major financial and innovation schemes available to SMEs, facilitating B2B and B2F meetings and networking opportunities.

Within the Regional Diaspora Knowledge Transfer Initiative, the RCC-facilitated Working Group on Diaspora focused on sharing key lessons learned from successful diaspora projects implemented in the participating economies and preparing the Compendium of Diaspora Best Practices. The first Regional Diaspora Forum took place in February 2022.

In order to support women economic empowerment (WEE Agenda) and in the framework of the joint RCC-UNDP Initiative, a Regional Roundtable[3] on Women Economic Empowerment was organised in December 2021, bringing together renowned women leaders and entrepreneurs from the region to further discuss strengthening partnerships, establishing a Regional Women Entrepreneurs Hub (RWEH) and sharing inspiring experiences between women in the region.

RCC started the year 2022 by recognising women entrepreneurs in the region and their efforts amidst different challenges faced through the *Western Balkans Women Entrepreneurs of the Year 2021* Initiative[4]. This initiative aims promote and recognise women entrepreneurs across six categories (green entrepreneurship, creative entrepreneurship, travel and hospitality, minority groups, start-ups and young entrepreneurs) in a final Regional Conference planned for 11th of March 2022.

Furthermore, to support the role of women in STEM, the RCC and UNDP facilitated the creation of the Council of the Western Balkans Network of Women in STEM. The Network's first practical output is an online communication campaign focusing on promotion of women in STEM role models that will begin in March 2022.

Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP)[5]

Towards the objective of tackling undeclared work, ESAP 2 continued supporting the Western Balkans Network for Tackling Undeclared Work. The 4th Plenary Meeting of the Network contributed toward education, awareness raising, and improving risk assessment in enforcement authorities. Related materials and studies developed have been made available online via ESAP 2 website. Moreover, in order to enhance the performance of the enforcement

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[3]https://www.rcc.int/events/1472/women-economic-empowerment-wee-roundtable-building-a-sustainable-western-balkans-women-entrepreneurs-hub

[4] Regional Cooperation Council | Western Balkans Women Entrepreneurs of the Year (rcc.int)

[5] This project has been financed by the European Union and implemented by the RCC, grant number VS/2016/0054 (March 2016 to February 2019), VS/2019/0094 (March 2019 to October 2019) and VS/2019/0348 (November 2019 – October 2022)

authorities in the region in tackling undeclared work, a series of five Mutual Assistance Projects (MAPs) with the EU/EEA and regional peers were completed by the end of 2021. MAPs have led to specific operational enhancements on the tackling of undeclared work in respective economies.

In October 2021, the ESAP 2 project completed the 2021 *Western Balkan Study on Alignment with the European Pillar of Social Rights* (EPSR), with reports for each individual economy and the Regional Report on performance of the Western Balkan economies regarding the European Pillar of Social Rights, with an online interactive Western Balkans' Social Scoreboard with 70+ Pillar indicators for all economies. These reports and the Social Scoreboard are guiding domestic actions related to the EPSR. The reports serve as a reference for progress in areas that include equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion, while the Scoreboard represents a data hub of the region's performance in the social scoreboard domain. The reports are followed by a promotional campaign to translate the key social rights principles into broader public messages and highlight how Pillar policies affect the day-to-day lives of citizens. The launch of the campaign with seven videos focused on human stories of the region is expected in March 2022.

As a follow-up to the ESAP 2-developed Study on Youth Employment in the region and in view of the region's previous commitment toward operationalising Youth Guarantee, ESAP 2 continued to assist the region's partners in familiarisation with Youth Guarantee by organising sessions for Public Employment Services (PES) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The sessions were grounded in the good example and experience of North Macedonia as the only economy in the region which has implemented a pilot Youth Guarantee.

In terms of other activities that focus on labour market policies and measures, ESAP 2 has provided individual-economy, demand-driven technical assistance to four government partners.

Within the component focused on alignment with the EU acquis, ESAP 2 project supported the establishment of the (informal) Network of EU Chapter 2 and Chapter 19 negotiators and civil servants dealing with topics related to these two chapters in those economies where negotiation structure still does not exist. The Network provides support in mutual learning, facilitation of information exchange, analytical work and contribution to strengthening capacities of the Network participants. Undergoing is peer-exchange and peer-learning between the Network participants and Croatia as an EU Member States on topics pertaining to the EU accession process, the use of European Social Fund and other elements falling under Chapters 2 and 19.

Continuing its activities to have up-to-date information on labour markets, the regional online ESAP Observatory has been updated with the latest labour market indicators (Q3 2021), including comparison with EU values. Besides macro and labour market data, the Observatory contains regularly updated monthly data on the registered unemployed (total stock and newly

registered) from all participating PES. In addition to labour market statistics, the online ESAP Observatory also includes the [Observatory Public Policy Tracker](), with Economic Reform Programmes of the participating economies.

Roma Integration 2020, Phase II[6]

During the reporting period, the key focus of the Roma Integration 2020 project was on the formulation of new or revised strategies for Roma inclusion in line with the new EU Roma Strategic Framework on Equality, Inclusion and Participation, and the Poznan Declaration. The project organised all-inclusive workshops with wide participation of civil society actors and international organisations to assist the governments in drafting and finalising their new Strategies.

The Roma Integration project continued its efforts in the region to end statelessness and ensure civil registration of Roma. A series of meetings on this topic was organised with NRCPs and other relevant officials near the end of 2021, focusing on ways to strengthen regional cooperation in order to smoothly implement the adopted roadmaps for ending statelessness among Roma.

On housing, the project successfully finished the legalisation of 50 Roma houses in two municipalities in Serbia, and is currently finalising the process of digitally mapping informal settlements throughout the region. Further efforts to continue the legalisation process will continue in 2022, as more data are now available and will help in this process.

The Roma Integration Action Team organised a regional discussion on the opportunities of the Digital Agenda for Roma entrepreneurs. The discussion brought together around 15 Roma entrepreneurs from the region, who had the chance to discuss with the RCC Secretary General the challenges and opportunities in the digital sphere, in relation to their business, as well as the efforts towards combating anti-gypsyism as the root-cause of economic exclusion of Roma. In line with this, the project also organised a training for 30 young Roma entrepreneurs from North Macedonia (Digital Boost Academy) with the purpose of assisting them to digitalise their businesses and transform their work from the conventional to the digital. The training provided support and mentorship both for boosting their businesses and knowledge on using various platforms.

On 13 December 2021 the Roma Integration Action Team organised a regional conference on *The Socio-Economic Impact of Covid-19 on Roma in the Western Balkans*, with the aim to present the findings of the respective regional analysis, discuss possible strategies and measures that could mitigate this impact, particularly in the areas of education and employment, and explore the use of recovery and resilience plans for addressing the Covid-19 impact among Roma.

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[6] This project is co-funded by the European Union, grant number IPA/2018/400-736

Finally, the project organised its 6th Task Force meeting in December 2021. The representatives of the participating economies presented their status of implementation of the Poznan Declaration, as well as the challenges, and proposals for improving and speeding up the process of Roma Integration in the enlargement region. The participants also reported on the progress and challenges in the fields of housing, employment, health insurance, and civil registration, while special attention was dedicated to the impact of Covid-19 on Roma communities, primarily on access to digital education.

Youth Lab Project[7]

From October 2021 to March 2022, the Western Balkans Youth Lab Project (WBYL) remained dedicated to efficiently implementing project activities under all four project components while preserving well-established cooperation with public administrations and National Youth Councils and Youth Umbrella Organisations (NYCs/YOUs) from the region.

As per the created Youth Lab Methodology, the Project successfully organised Mid-Term Conference of the First Thematic Youth Policy Lab on Unemployment in Sarajevo in October and once again ensured safe space for youth to work jointly and on an equal basis with policymakers. At the conference, members of the Working Groups from each participating economy presented developments regarding their Youth Lab activities at economy level (mostly related to Youth Guarantee, entrepreneurship, NEET, etc.) and planned the next steps towards Final Conference to be held in May 2022.

WBYL organised three bilateral trainings in Belgrade, Podgorica and Skopje in November 2021 for youth and policy-makers members of the second Regional Pool of Experts on Mental Health aiming to present the process of Youth Lab and prepare them for its implementation. Accordingly, Second Youth Lab Kick-Off Event was held on 9-10 December in Tirana on the topic of Mental Health. Over the two days, the event gathered close to 50 youth representatives from the region, as well as policy makers and representatives of the European Commission and World Health Organisation. Members of the Regional Pool of Experts used Youth Policy Lab Model to co-create 13 regional policy recommendations envisaging ways to raise mental health awareness, support measures and communicate the importance of prevention of mental health of young people.

Furthermore, Second Informal Donor Coordination Meeting on Youth Agenda, organised in Sarajevo in December, strengthened the Broad Coalition on Youth established in April 2021. During the Meeting stakeholders and participants in the process committed to strengthening the coordination mechanism in the long-term by agreeing on Joint Communique on Youth: Western Balkans Co-creating Future with Youth as Agents of Change, which is confirming their shared values and principles. Furthermore, the Meeting has marked the launch of the Online Donor Database prepared by WBYL, which is to serve as a real-time resource hub for

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youth related projects, actions and funds. This beneficial tool ensures more transparent and constructive exchange amongst donors, policy makers and youth.

As a follow-up of the Second Youth Lab on Mental Health, six individual meetings (one in each economy) were initiated in February to trail national recommendation development and to fast forward the process by supporting working groups to draft initial Technical Assistance and Capacity Building requests. Additionally, after almost fully implementing Youth Lab Methodology through two Youth Policy Labs on Unemployment and Mental Health, WBYL gathered youth co-chairs from both Youth Labs at the Regional Youth Meeting in Skopje in February with the aim to get their opinions and feedback on the Methodology and the overall flow of the process. Collected reviews are to be used as a reference point for further development of the Methodology and Youth Lab Model, but also for tailor-made creation of the future WBYL activities in general.

As per WBYL procedures, requests for use of Technical Assistance Instrument (to meet the needs of public administrations) and Capacity Building Instrument (to meet the needs of youth organisations) have been submitted in order to address immediate needs of the beneficiaries. When it comes to Technical Assistance, support is currently ongoing for the youth line ministries in five participating economies. Capacity Building instrument has been provided across the region and is currently ongoing for youth councils in Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

A.3 Digital Integration and implementation of the Digital Agenda

After intensive work on the preparations of the *Roadmap for Lowering Roaming Charges between the EU and the Western Balkans* (Roadmap), the document was agreed by regional economies end of September 2021. The political support from the EU to the whole process was shown during the EU-Western Balkans Brdo Summit that welcomed the Roadmap in Brdo Declaration. The ultimate goal of the Roadmap is to have roaming prices between the region and EU gradually reduced starting from 2023 and approximating the domestic charges in 2027. As the whole process is voluntary, i.e. the operators should reduce the charges on voluntary basis, the Roadmap also comprises a set of policy reforms to be implemented by the region's governments in order to improve business conditions and the overall business environment in telecom sector. Both processes will be thoroughly discussed, including through the meetings of the Working Groups on Roaming Policy, Broadband and 5G (the first Joint Meeting was held in February 2022), as well as through the Advisory and Coordination Body to be established, involving all the players in the process of reduction of roaming charges between the EU and the region. Three meetings with mobile operators from both the region and EU, last one held in December 2021, helped to address their challenges and concerns regarding the implementation of the Roadmap.

A joint meeting of the Working Groups on Broadband and 5G was held in October 2021 with the aim to discuss the state of play in the area of broadband and 5G in the region, as well as to

kick start the implementation of the 5G Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Through the monitoring template, the implementation and developments related to the activities from the Roadmap and 5G MoU will be followed in each economy.

The third meeting of the Digital Skills Multi-Stakeholder Working Group was held in October 2021, aiming to discuss the state of play in the area of digital skills and provide more details on the fully-fledged assessment of digital skills gaps and needs of the employees in public administration to be rolled out in 2022.

The work towards further implementation of regional actions connected with electronic identification (eID) and trust services has advanced in the reporting period. In November 2021, the RCC published the *Study on the Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans - Methodology, Implementation Vision and Action Plan,* which shows a practical approach and concrete action plan toward achieving the operational interoperability between participating economies, as well as between the region and EU Member States. In December 2021, the meeting of the Working Groups on Interoperability and Trust Services was held with the aim to discuss the vision of an interoperable region. To achieve the goals from the vision, the region is working on identifying cross-border/boundary use cases so as to ensure launching of pilot project(s). In this regard, follow-up tailor-made consultations were held beginning of February in each economy.

In 2021, participating economies embarked on another initiative, namely the establishment of the framework for free flow of data in the region. This initiative aims to create the conditions for the free flow of personal and non-personal data across the region by removing any existing barriers and optimising the utilisation of existing data centres. A regional report, presented and discussed during the regional meeting held in September 2021, will be published soon.

The 4th Western Balkans Digital Summit (WBDS) took place from 11 to 13 October 2021 in Podgorica. Due to the pandemic, the fourth Digital Summit was held online, followed by Digital Ministerial meeting held physically on 13 October 2021. WBDS Conclusions and two draft Joint Statements (i.e. on the free flow of data and on interoperability) cover the key actions and priorities in the area of digital transformation. Although Joint Statements were not endorsed, economies stay committed to their objective and scope. The first WBDS Steering Committee meeting of 5th Digital Summit held in February 2022, served as a kick-start meeting for the organisation of the next WBDS in Pristina.

In December 2021, RCC in cooperation with the EU and international partners organised a regional meeting on cybersecurity. This meeting aimed to present the state of play in participating economies and discuss the most recent developments in this area, main challenges and needs in the region, including the capacity building needs. Additionally, potential future support and regional actions in the area of cybersecurity were discussed.

Finally, in order to further align with the goals outlined in CRM and in the Conclusions of the 4th WBDS, workshops were held in November/December 2021 in each capital.

A.4 Sustainable Growth and Climate Change Resilience

As mandated by the Sofia *Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans* (GAWB), RCC was tasked to develop the GAWB Action Plan (AP) in a coordinative and consultative fashion. The AP was endorsed by the six Leaders of the Western Balkans at the EU-WB Summit under the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in October 2021.

RCC has started preparations jointly with the host Ministry to organise a follow-up ministerial meeting in Pristina to discuss implementation of the GAWB Action Plan and identify priorities for the upcoming year through a joint declaration. This ministerial meeting is expected to be organised in March and will be key to the future implementation of this regional agenda. It will be composed of several panels to incentivise discussions among the Ministers of Environment from the region as well as among key regional partners and International Financial Institutions.

B. Political Cooperation, Good Governance and Security

B.1 Political Cooperation

In support of the implementation of the Strategy and Work Programme 2020-2022 and the RCC founding documents, RCC has been working in close cooperation and synergy with the Athens' Chairmanship-in-Office of SEECP. In addition to providing relevant updates on the state of regional programmes' implementation at the SEECP Political Directors meeting and the informal meeting of SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the RCC assisted the Chairmanship-in-Office in the preparation of the 7th SEECP Junior Diplomats Forum, held online in February 2022. The Forum acquainted junior diplomats from the region on the past and present state of regional cooperation and trained them in matters of negotiating techniques, sports diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, using the invaluable experience and expertise of Greek diplomats and other relevant actors.

Maintaining regular and open communication with the regional partners and stakeholders strengthened long-term commitment to the regional agenda. To this end, the Secretary General held a number of bilateral consultative meetings in the region and beyond, whereas the RCC Liaison Office in Brussels continued to retain partnerships with Brussels-based partners on a daily basis.

B.3 Good Governance – Justice Reforms and Rule of Law

Promoting Cross Border Mediation in SEE Regional Conference was organised in October 2021, jointly by RCC and CSSP - Berlin Centre for Integrative Mediation. With in-depth expertise, specialist knowledge and many years of experience the regional experts contributed additionally to effective and sustainable solutions for an increased use of mediation in SEE region.

The study prepared by RCC *Promoting Cross-Border Mediation in Resolving Civil and Commercial Disputes in the Western Balkans* was also presented and discussed with the participants. Taking into consideration the current state of play in the region, the Conference

enabled learning from good practices and sharing knowledge on how to deal with similar challenges across the region.

The fifth meeting of the South East Europe Judicial Training Institutes (SEE JTI) Network was co-hosted by the RCC and the Academy of Judges and Public Prosecutors in North Macedonia in December 2021. The meeting focused on exchange of best experiences from the many different approaches by each of the Judicial Training Institutes during 2021 to successfully implement the respective training programmes, but also to discuss the possibility to promote mediation in the region with a view to reach a balanced relationship between Mediation and Judicial Proceeding.

As the focus of the SEE JTI Network during 2021 was to exchange best experiences from the many different approaches being taken by the JTIs towards distant learning solutions, the *Regional guidelines for effective judicial E-learning in SEE*, prepared by RCC in cooperation with GIZ ORF Legal Reform, were presented and discussed during this meeting.

With a view to support the reforms undertaken by the jurisdictions towards establishing independent, accountable and efficient judiciaries based on EU standards and values, targeted technical assistance in the reporting period included: *Regional Guidelines for Effective Judicial e-Learning in SEE*[8] and *Mapping the State of Play of Digitalisation of Justice in the Western Balkans*.

B.4 Security Cooperation

In an effort to anticipate and allow a timely response preparation to potentially developing security threats, in November 2021 the RCC organised a webinar on Paradigm Change in Afghanistan to discuss possible implications for South East Europe. The event gathered more than 100 participants and eminent experts and practitioners from the region and beyond, and warned that although the threat to South East Europe is at the moment low, the abuse of human rights under the new regime may yet present an ongoing challenge for the international community.

The Sixth Regional (Jumbo) Security Coordination Conference of the RCC was held on 6 December 2021 in Paris, in partnership with the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Institute for Higher National Defence Studies (IHEDN). A flagship regional security platform, the Jumbo Conference proposed further actions and cooperation in its Conclusions[9] in order to enhance security cooperation in topics discussed: radicalisation, irregular migration, and organised crime. Participants furthermore echoed the October 2021 EU-Western Balkans Summit Declaration and the necessity to strengthen cooperation between the EU and the region also at the operational level. Moreover, regional security cooperative order was again recognised as the main precondition for implementation of the ambitious socio-

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[8] https://www.rcc.int/pubs/133/regional-guidelines-for-effective-judicial-e-learning-in-see

[9] https://www.rcc.int/swp/news/358/conference-conclusions--sixth-regional-jumbo-security-coordination-conference

economic, digital and green agenda supported by the EU Economic and Investment Plan. The RCC was called upon to continue facilitating the Annual Conference.

Preparations for the second edition of the regional public opinion survey on security issues (SecuriMeter) are underway and the launch of the survey is expected in May 2022. In addition to topics covered in the first edition – Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism; Organised Crime; Border/Boundary Security; Migration; Small Arms and Light Weapons; and Disinformation – the second edition of the survey will also include perceptions on corruption and domestic violence. SecuriMeter is intended to serve as a valuable resource not only to policy-makers and security practitioners, but more broadly to the general public and to the promotion of peace and security.

In terms of facilitating and supporting the work of the SEE-level security cooperation, the RCC continued to assist the South East European National Security Agencies (SEENSA) and South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs (SEEMIC) platforms. In the framework of the 2021 SEENSA Chairmanship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 11th Meeting of the Heads of National Security Authorities of South East Europe was organised in November 2021. The meeting served to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and good practices among the NSAs in the region and to update the NSAs on the developments of security challenges as well as on regional security cooperation initiatives. It was agreed that Skopje will assume the Chairmanship of SEENSA in 2022.

The 13th SEEMIC Conference in November 2021 extraordinarily chaired this year by the RCC adopted the OSINT Report *Implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Security of South East Europe*. It was agreed that the Chairmanship in 2022 will be assumed by Sarajevo, whereby preparations are already underway to develop and implement the calendar of activities, including the SEEMIC Working Group, preparation of the OSINT Report on *The Role of the Military in Disaster Preparedness in SEE*, continuation of gender mainstreaming training organised in cooperation with UNDP/SEESAC, and contributing toward the UN SDG 5 – Gender Equality and UN SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG)[10]

Following the conclusions of the three IISG Regional Pillar Support Group Meetings held in September 2021 in Budva, the IISG Secretariat undertook a heavy workload in order to deliver the agreed outputs in the reporting period.

In this respect, in the period October 2021-March 2022, the IISG Secretariat implemented a series of meetings and produced several documents related to the development of Biennial Needs Mapping Report, Annual Response Mapping report and the IISG database, the aim of which is to map the support provided to the IISG process.

Furthermore, during the reporting period, the IISG Secretariat developed three Methodologies: the final version of the Methodology for development of IISG Annual Response Mapping

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[10] This project is co-funded by the European Union, grant number IPA 2019/414-918

Report, the draft Methodology on mapping support to the IISG needs (IISG Database), and the revised Methodology for development of IISG Biennial Needs Mapping Report based on the input received during the Consultations with the government Partners.

With regard to the process of development of the Biennial Needs Mapping Reports and filling in the templates/regional charts, following intense consultations and analysis, regional charts for the WBCTi (Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism Initiative), the WBCSCi (Western Balkans Counter Serious Crime Initiative), and the WBBSi (Western Balkans Border Security Initiative) were developed, presenting the needs on the regional level. The IISG Secretariat sent the final draft of the needs mapping report to the Partners for approval in order to be adopted at the next IISG Board meeting scheduled for March 2022.

The IISG Secretariat undertook preparatory activities related to developing the first report on mapping of responses. The process of mapping responses builds upon the needs mapping process and allows the possibility to structure the request for information on the first response mapping based on the logic of the filters used in the needs mapping. It is expected that the first regional mapping response report will be finalised by March 2022.

During the reporting period, the IISG Database was developed. It is designed to provide detailed information on regional projects, and follow up on the dynamics of the projects' implementation with a clear overview of the IISG pillars covered with the intervention on a multilateral basis, by collecting comprehensive and up-to-date data for those activities. The database is also structured per pillar and per beneficiary-domestic action and regional actions. In October 2021, two training sessions were provided to the government partners on the IISG Database. The commencement of the process of incorporating data is envisioned for February 2022.

Also within this period, the IIGS Secretariat operationalised the IISG website, which is now up and running and is constantly being updated with information related to the IISG process and activities.

C. Horizontal activities

C.1 Programming, Monitoring, Coordination
With respect to horizontal activities on programming, monitoring and coordination, RCC successfully closed the eighth Call for Applications on Balkan Barometer Public and Business Opinion Surveys and elected two companies to execute the collection of data in six economies of the region and analyse the data in the form of written reports, respectively. As per the established practice, RCC undertook internal revision of the questions in both Public and Business Opinion surveys to adapt to the newest trends and the pandemic-induced environment under which the field surveying is to take place. The collection of data is expected to be finalised end of February or beginning of March, after which the process enters the second and the final stage of data analysis and report writing.

Regarding the CRM agenda, RCC organised the 5th CRM Coordinators meeting in November with an objective to discuss a set of planned deliverables and key results for 2022 and review

feasibility of their implementation. RCC and its regional partners, in close consultation with the European Commission, have been engaged in the process of devising the prospective list of actions, which was reviewed by CRM Coordinators and commented during the meeting. In addition, the meeting also served to review progress on *Green Agenda for the Western Balkans* (GAWB) and agree on the next steps. In the course of January 2022, CRM Coordinators agreed on the list of deliverables, thus giving the green light for the implementation of agreed deliverables throughout 2022.

Regarding the monitoring of the CRM progress, RCC holds the overall responsibility to lead the process along each policy area. In November 2021, in close consultations with its regional partners, namely CEFTA, Transport Community (TCT) and WB6CIF, RCC initiated the process of drafting the first CRM Report on Implementation for 2021. The report is divided in two parts: the regional part informs on key achievements and milestones achieved in 2021, whereas the economy-level part of the report features a progress achieved at the level of each economy, thus offering a nuanced economy-level status that contributes to the overall regional actions. After a period of collection of inputs in all partner economies through their respective line Ministries, CRM Report on Implementation is set to be communicated to all economies for their final inputs, before sending the report for publication. Following the publication of the report in mid-March at the latest, RCC will be able to communicate the results of the first year of CRM implementation to the wider public, informing on the most important achievements done throughout the year and in such a way bring the entire process closer to its citizens.

Regarding the SEE2020 Strategy, which came to an end, the Annual Report on Implementation is being drafted now that the data collection process is finalised in all participating economies. The collection of data was delayed in comparison to the pre-pandemic period so the publication of the report is expected in March. Due to the worsening pandemic situation in the region, RCC will suggest to SEE2020 Monitoring Committee participants to endorse ARI for 2020 through written procedure. The SEE2020 Strategy features valuable lessons learned for the implementation of the new SEE2030 Strategy that has now officially kicked off.

C.2 Extending Partnerships
In line with the efforts to provide coherency and streamlining to the regional agenda, in this instance focusing on youth cooperation, the RCC partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso Transeuropa (OBCT), Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI) and Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) to organise the EU-Balkan Youth Forum in November in Rome. The Forum gathered 78 young people from 27 EU Member States and the region's six economies to discuss common issues and contribute to the dialogue between youth and policymakers. Conclusions of these discussions are to be shared with the Conference on the Future of Europe, whereas the Forum also marked the launch of the *EU-Western Balkans Youth Network*.

The RCC also remained active in supporting initiatives and events contributing to regional cooperation and EU integration. In cooperation with Friends of Europe RCC assisted in co-

organisation of the virtual EU-Western Balkans Summit in December, and partnered with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) to organise the 8th Western Balkans Civil Society Forum in Skopje in October. Moreover, partnership with EESC was extended to allow support to the preparation of EESC opinion on youth and innovation in the region.

SEE 2030

South-East European Cooperation Process took a critical step forward at the SEECP Summit in Antalya in June 2021 by endorsing the South East Europe 2030 Strategy, which brings thirteen SEE economies together in their efforts to achieve the UN SDGs across the three dimensions: peace; prosperity; and peace and partnerships.

Following intense consultations with SEECP participants, relevant non-government actors, regional and international organisations and other stakeholders, the draft text of SEE 2030 was adjusted according to the received comments, initiating the first phase of the implementation stage.

In terms of establishing governance structures, seven SEECP participants appointed their national coordinators as required by the SEE 2030. The first Monitoring Committee meeting composed of the appointed SEE 2030 National Coordinators of SEECP Participants and other mandated delegates from the remaining Participants took place in November 2021. The SEE 2030 Monitoring Committee adopted its rules of procedure, programming and monitoring guidelines of the SEE 2030, and mandated the RCC Secretariat to undertake actions per programming and monitoring cycles and to revitalise the dialogue with SEE think-tanks employed during the preparation stage.

The SEE 2030 Monitoring Committee adopted the selection criteria for prioritising programming activities of the SEE2030 Strategy and requested the RCC to prepare the project proposal template. The template was prepared and disseminated to the SEECP Participants and other relevant regional and international stakeholders in January 2022.

As part of the list of actions submitted for the approval of SEE2030 Monitoring Committee, the RCC Secretariat initiated its first cycle of consultation meetings with the SEECP Participants' Development Agencies acting as a development assistance donor in the SEE region. In the forthcoming period, RCC and the development agencies of Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Romania, Turkey and Slovenia will organise a round table meeting on SEE 2030.

According to the monitoring guidelines adopted by the SEE2030 Monitoring Committee, the monitoring of SEE2030 will include qualitative and quantitative monitoring. As regards the quantitative monitoring, the RCC Secretariat prepared a gap analysis regarding the availability and quality of data according to the list of indicators included in the SEE2030 during the reporting period, whereas qualitative monitoring will make best use of reports on individual policy area produced by OECD, UN and World Bank. The Secretariat has also undertaken exploratory talks with OECD and World Bank to create a sub-regional group for South East Europe in their international databases.

In addition to this, and based on the mandate received from the SEE 2030 Monitoring Committee, the RCC established dialogue with partners from academia and think-tanks. With regard to the latter, discussions are underway to regularise the dialogue with civil society in the context of the Strategy.

As part of the regional dialogue mechanisms and particular activities regarding development financing, RCC Secretariat held a bilateral meeting with the Hellenic Banking Association to launch a regional dialogue mechanism with the participation of all SEECP banking associations on development financing and SDGs responsive financial sector.

Follow-up actions on SEE 2030 Strategy will include organisation of a Donor Conference for fundraising for received project proposals. In addition, the SEE Statistics Network (SSN) will be established to monitor implementation. As foreseen in the Strategy's document, the first Annual Implementation Report will be presented to the 2nd Monitoring Committee meeting which, upon endorsement by the SEECP Participant delegations, is to be submitted to the SEECP Summit.

C.3 Communication

Communication efforts continuously aim to raise awareness on regional cooperation and EU integration. Communication is focused to general public, gaining more and more interest of younger audience and also engaging previously present public. RCC is doing so through utilisation of different channels and creation of diverse, user-friendly content to spread messages primarily about the activities of the organisation, but also about other subjects of matter to RCC and to region and EU's public, such as environmental issues, mental health, internet safety, Covid-19 pandemic, etc.

In the reporting period, RCC continued with the extensive promotion of benefits of Roaming Free with the winter edition of the campaign. Also, RCC is regularly promoting the region and its success stories, such as the stories of successful women in the region through the WE campaign or promotion of the region as a tourist destination, such as promotion of Novi Sad as the European Capital of Culture 2022, Tirana as the European Youth Capital 2022.

RCC is maintaining and developing good relations with the media from the region and the EU resulting in their ongoing interest for RCC's activities.

The promotion has focused on the following:

Promotion of regional cooperation and Common Regional Market:

- Video: RCC SG Majlinda Bregu on regional cooperation, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn1myYf1hvo&t=52s

- RCC Secretary General Majlinda Bregu exclusive interview for Balkan Insider on Green Agenda, Digital Transformation, Common Regional Market, etc.,

https://www.rcc.int/docs/600/rcc-secretary-general-majlinda-bregu-exclusive-interview-for-balkan-insider

- Interview by RCC Secretary General for Novi Magazin: European Union is Our Future, No Alternative; https://www.rcc.int/docs/603/european-union-is-our-future-no-alternative-interview-by-rcc-secretary-general-for-novi-magazin

- Promotion of **Digital agenda and Roaming Free Campaign** continued and is an ongoing effort through various channels and tools:

  ➢ Video: RCC SG Majlinda Bregu on next Western Balkans Digital Summit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxsiZIu6dY0&t=50s
  ➢ Extensive winter edition of Roaming Free Western Balkans campaign marking roaming free results in the region:
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNaj8dhmdrA
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig-HT1kurIQ
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKAbc_uIQdA
    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBviacL-_zI
  ➢ Published report: Western Balkans-European Union Roaming Data Report: https://www.rcc.int/pubs/127/western-balkans-european-union-roaming-data-report
  ➢ Published study: Digital skills needs and gaps in the Western Balkans - scope and objectives for a fully-fledged assessment: https://www.rcc.int/pubs/129/digital-skills-needs-and-gaps-in-the-western-balkans--scope-and-objectives-for-a-fully-fledged-assessment
  ➢ Published study: Mapping of digital innovation hubs, and identification of needs within Western Balkans and of prospective regional cooperation actions, https://www.rcc.int/pubs/130/mapping-of-digital-innovation-hubs-and-identification-of-needs-within-western-balkans-and-of-prospective-regional-cooperation-actions
  ➢ Published study: Regional Interoperability and Trust Services in Western Balkans - Methodology, Implementation Vision and Action Plan, https://www.rcc.int/pubs/132/regional-interoperability-and-trust-services-in-western-balkans--methodology-implementation-vision-and-action-plan

- Promotion of **Women Empowerment agenda (WE)**:
  ➢ Video: Meet Arijana Mulic, co-founder and owner of two businesses in Montenegro, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUfM2CNUOu0&t=6s
  ➢ Video featuring successful women from WE campaign and their messages: https://www.instagram.com/p/CXgMtYZsw1b/

- Promotion of the first **Regional Butterfly Innovation & Business Forum**:
  ➢ Video jingle: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNLEcVRJFb8
  ➢ Subpage on RCC website: https://www.rcc.int/pages/150/butterfly-innovation-and-business-forum

- Promotion of **Environment Agenda**: published Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, https://www.rcc.int/docs/596/action-plan-for-the-implementation-of-the-sofia-declaration-on-the-green-agenda-for-the-western-balkans-2021-2030
- Promotion of EU and WB values connecting the stories of young people from the EU and the region, https://www.instagram.com/p/CW0OoMGF3uy/
- Promotion of Justice and Home Affairs agenda:
  - Published guidelines: Regional guidelines for effective judicial E-learning in SEE, https://www.rcc.int/pubs/133/regional-guidelines-for-effective-judicial-e-learning-in-see
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Promotion of Western Balkans Youth Lab:

- Op-Ed by the Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council Majlinda Bregu: Western Balkans Youth and the Future of Europe, https://www.rcc.int/docs/608/western-balkans-youth-and-the-future-of-europe-op-ed-by-the-secretary-general-of-the-regional-cooperation-council-majlinda-bregu
- Video: Brain gain vs. brain drain, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN2ptou542I&t=20s
- Video: Interns - Youth Power of RCC's ESAP 2 project, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5rF7XXZ5Z8&t=2s
- Series of videos on Youth Policy Lab and what it means to young people, https://www.instagram.com/p/CWa-jG2t-cy/ https://www.instagram.com/p/CWdh9i4N6Mo/ https://www.instagram.com/p/CWlK3qftk76/ https://www.instagram.com/p/CWqDCSIAShx/
- Promotion of WBYL's dealing with mental health issues: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCPUMDI_1-s https://www.instagram.com/p/CXBJQzgLEIp/
- Brochure WBYL: Youth Policy Lab on Mental Health - Regional Pool of Experts, https://www.rcc.int/pubs/131/wbyl-youth-policy-lab-on-mental-health--regional-pool-of-experts
- Joint Communique on Youth: Western Balkans Co-creating Future with Youth as Agents of Change, https://www.rcc.int/docs/607/joint-communique-on-youth-western-balkans-co-creating-future-with-youth-as-agents-of-change

Promotion of Roma Integration project:

- Video promotion of successful Roma stories:
  - Leave No One Behind - Cira Ice Cream, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5XNULVsm6o&t=4s
  - Leave No One Behind – BestIntimo, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ83DkAvtLo&t=74s

> Leave No One Behind - Malikowsy Couture, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A48-7qLrRS0
> Interview for Euronews Albania with the Head of Roma Integration project Orhan Usein: Hate speech spreading faster from social media, Orhan Usein urges governments to combat antigypsyism, https://www.rcc.int/docs/606/hate-speech-spreading-faster-from-social-media-orhan-usein-urges-governments-to-combat-antigypsyism

ESAP 2:

- Regional Overview of Western Balkan Economies Regarding the European Pillar of Social Rights 2021, https://www.rcc.int/pubs/128/regional-overview-of-western-balkan-economies-regarding-the-european-pillar-of-social-rights-2021

List of Abbreviations

ARI	Annual Report on Implementation
BB	Balkan Barometer
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CiO	Chairmanship-in-Office
CRM	Common Regional Market
EC	European Commission
EEN	Enterprise Europe Network
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EPSR	European Pillar of Social Rights
ESAP	Employment and Social Affairs Platform
EU	European Union
FINNO	Access2Finance and Innovation platform
GAWB	Green Agenda for the Western Balkans
IFI	International Financial Institutions
IISG	Integrated Internal Security Governance
ISDS	Investor-State Dispute Settlement
JTI	Judicial Training Institutions
MAP	Mutual Assistance Project
NCP	National Contact Point
NEET	Neither in Employment nor Education or Training
NYC	National Youth Council
OSINT	Open Sources Intelligence Assessment
PES	Public Employment Service
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
RSDP	Regional Supplier Development Programme
RWEH	Regional Women Entrepreneurs Hub
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	South East Europe
SEESAC	South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEECP	South-East European Cooperation Process
SEEMIC	South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs
SEPA	Single Euro Payment Area
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWP	Strategy and Work Programme
TEG	Tourism Expert Group

UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment
WB	Western Balkans
WBYL	Western Balkans Youth Lab project
WB6CIF	Western Balkans Chamber Investment Forum
YOU	Youth Umbrella Organisation