

Developing a Feasibility Study on the possible creation of a Western Balkans “Visegrad” Fund

Objectives

The objective of the program is to elaborate a feasibility study on the potential creation of an inter-governmental fund regionally supporting civil society development, local governance and ethnic reconciliation in the Western Balkan countries, which would follow the spirit and to a certain extent the institutional model of the International Visegrad Fund (IVF). The study will also serve as a tool to convince the concerned governments, including those of the V4, and to engage them in supporting the fund.

Background

Regardless of the varying individual status of the target countries in the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, there are certain common regional problems that need more attention. Strengthening civil society development and regional cooperation are expected and widely admitted conditions for the integration of these societies into the „European family”, as defined by EU and NATO membership. By creating the fund participating countries could demonstrate improving regional cooperation/integration; foster conditions for EU integration; further the development of democratic structures and processes. Also, the fund would serve as an appropriate vehicle for regular regional cooperation, which is now lacking. Demonstrating that they know how to work together on common interests is an important step toward European integration and helps address “image” problems that are a hindrance to private and other investment.

Project Description

A task force group of distinguished experts of the field will be established to work on the feasibility study. In a later phase, a wider audience of local stakeholders and professionals will be involved to discuss the draft of the paper in order to amend it with further insights of those potentially affected. The final version will be presented and published with the aim of encouraging the governments of the V4 and Western Balkan countries to take the initiative of creating the fund.