

BERLIN PROCESS / WESTERN BALKANS PROCESS

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY PILLAR

Progress and Results

Trieste Western Balkans Summit · 12 July 2017

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WESTERN BALKANS PROCESS / BERLIN PROCESS

This is a joint initiative of the 13 European countries. It aims to reconfirm the European commitment to the Western Balkans, consolidate the efforts to integrate the region into the European Union and foster regional cooperation.

Areas covered include: resolution of bilateral issues, rule of law, economic growth and cooperation in education, research and innovation, and inter-societal dialogue.

CURRENT INVOLVED PARTIES

Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Kosovo*, FYRo Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, United Kingdom

European Commission
International financial institutions



WESTERN BALKANS PROCESS JOINT SCIENCE CONFERENCE

PILLARS OF THE PROCESS

Education
Science
Society

Political
Affairs

Economy
Infrastructure
Energy

WESTERN BALKANS SUMMITS
of heads of state and government

2014 Berlin · 2015 Vienna
2016 Paris · 2017 Trieste

JOINT SCIENCE CONFERENCE

The Joint Science Conference is one of the three pillars of the Berlin Process. The standing conference is a dialogue platform between the key stakeholders of the national education and science systems from the Western Balkan and facilitator countries. It was initiated in 2015 and convenes yearly, prior to the Western Balkans Summits.

The 3rd Joint Science Conference will meet from 14-16 June 2017 in Paris, France. The two topics of the conference are:

- » **Investing in Junior Scientists**
Formal proposal for establishing a funding mechanism for junior researchers from the Balkans
- » **Education and Innovation for Jobs and Growth**
Recommendations to optimise the link between education, skills, innovation and jobs for smart growth in the Balkans

DELIVERABLES

The Joint Science Conference issues formal recommendations for the yearly Western Balkans Summits.

The results are summarised in Joint Statements, Final Conclusions or Communiqués. These can be retrieved at:

- » 1st Joint Science Conference (Berlin, 2015):
www.leopoldina.org/en/jsc1
- » 2nd Joint Science Conference (Vienna, 2016):
www.leopoldina.org/en/jsc2

The recommendations were officially recognised by the heads of state and government and inserted into the Final Declarations of the Vienna Summit in 2015 and the Paris Summit in 2016.

STAKEHOLDERS

- » National academies of sciences and arts
- » National rectors' conferences and universities
- » Distinguished scientists, science managers and junior researchers appointed ad personam

JOINT STATEMENT

TURN IDEAS INTO ACTION: INVEST IN JUNIOR SCIENTISTS AND JOBS FOR GROWTH

3RD JOINT SCIENCE CONFERENCE

WESTERN BALKANS PROCESS / BERLIN PROCESS

Paris · France · 14 – 16 June 2017



The 3rd Joint Science Conference of the Western Balkans Process / Berlin Process (JSC-WBP) convened at the French Académie des sciences – Institut de France in Paris to take further the process started in Germany in July 2015 and continued in Austria in May 2016. The outcomes of both the 1st and the 2nd JSC-WBP were summarised in Joint Statements, which were endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the Western Balkans Summits in Vienna (2015) and Paris (2016)¹.

The 3rd JSC-WBP focused on two major topics:

1. **Investing in Junior Scientists and**
2. **Education and Innovation for Jobs and Growth.**

The parties welcome the announcement made by Italy's Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei to hold the next Joint Science Conference of the Western Balkans Process in 2018.

Key Recommendations

1. Establish the **Western Balkans Research Foundation** as a self-governing international organisation, which awards *ad personam* grants to junior scientists to build up excellent research labs and teams in the Balkans, and which supports mobility and interlinking with European counterparts.
2. Develop a **Western Balkans Action Plan for Smart Growth** containing recommendations to optimise the link between education, research and innovation, and the labour market and economic development.

WESTERN BALKANS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

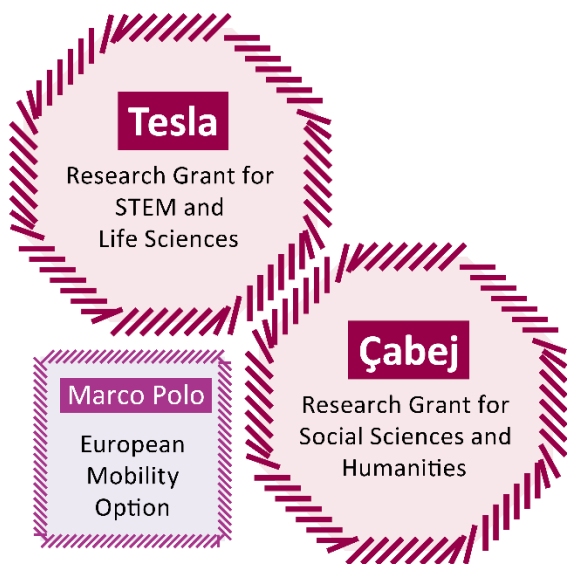
MISSION

- **Reduce brain drain** from the Balkans and **enable brain circulation and brain gain** in Europe
- **Create excellent research labs and teams in the Balkans by *ad personam* grants** with grant portability → increase performance and competitiveness of Balkan research, innovation and higher education
- **Interlink researchers** (labs and teams) within the Balkans and EU – Balkans → countervail science divide in Europe
- **Select grants based exclusively on scientific excellence** → no national quotas, open worldwide to researchers originating from Europe, construct and safeguard academic reputation
- **Create a core of “agents of change”**: spill-overs change national standards, routines, mentalities → alignment with European and international quality / performance standards
- **Use lessons learned**: e.g. ERC-grants in Western Europe proved to have a tremendous influence on competitiveness and performance of the host institutions → emulate to Balkan-specific conditions

BACKGROUND

- Balkan countries have **limited resources, structural problems and small-scaled research & innovation sectors** (compared to EU average) → pool efforts to fund excellent research & innovation capacities
- Access of Balkan scientists to international top-level grants has been reduced so far → raise performance, use tailored instruments for research-based connectivity with peers from the EU
- **Brain drain and labour emigration** is seriously affecting Balkan economies and societies → need of midterm and long-term actions → slow down brain drain and push for brain circulation

WESTERN BALKANS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

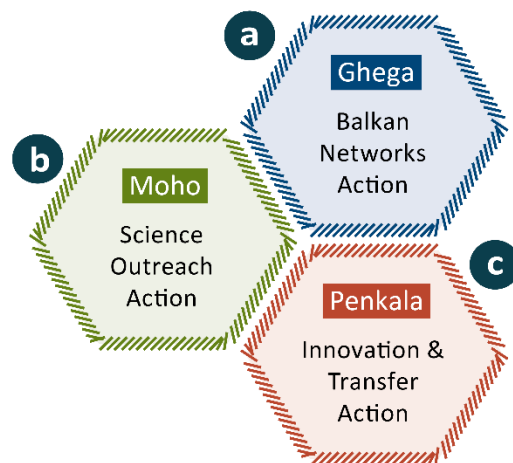


1 Grants

- ↳ Establishment of own excellence team or lab, as a principal investigator (*ad personam* grant)
- ↳ **5 years** investigation-driven research
- ↳ **1-2 years** optional preceding training in the EU
- ↳ Grant amount = 750,000 EUR

- **Grant based at a research organisation in a Balkan country;** principal investigator must spend majority of time there.
- **Minimal requirements:** PhD (certificate in hand), PhD- thesis must be publicised, either printed or electronically (exceptions in case of patents).

FUNDING INSTRUMENTS



2 Add-ons

- ↳ 3 optional actions as add-ons to the Tesla and Çabej Grants
- ↳ Amount per grant ≥ 12,500 EUR

INSTRUMENTS

- *Ad personam* grant for the establishment of own lab or team
- **Grant based at a research organisation in a Balkan country;** principal investigator must spend majority of time there
- **Two tracks for the grants:**
 - Fast track: direct access to grant = 5 years implementation
 - Gain track: preceding 1-2 year mobility in top EU research organisations, followed by grant = 7 years implementation
- **Three optional add-on actions to support:**
 - Establishment of research networks within the Balkans,
 - Outreach of scientific findings in society and
 - Innovation & technology transfer into economy & society
- Instruments and add-on actions named after famous scholars form SEE: Nikola Tesla, Eqrem Çabej, Carl von Ghenga, Andrija Mohorovičić Moho, Eduard Penkala (and/or others)

TARGET GROUP

- In the global competition for the greatest minds, the Foundation **should attract the best of the best, paying particular attention to junior scientists from the Balkans.**
- **Junior scientists** (max. 45 years of age), irrespective of scientific field.

ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

- The Foundation should be **carried by the countries involved in the Western Balkans Process**; at a later stage, other interested countries such as Switzerland or Norway and others could join. The institutional construct allows the participation of further countries.
- The Foundation should be **located in Trieste, Italy**. At a later stage, the seat can be transferred to a Balkan country, upon an open competition.
- Trieste is already the seat of several international science organisations, such as ICTP, ICGEB, Elettra Synchrotron etc. and has a historic link to the Balkans.

Steering Council

Scientific Council + State envoys (1/state & EC) + Other donors or trustees (optional) + College of Auditors
Scientific council has >50% seats Convenes at least once a year

Co-Chair: Foundation President + 1 state envoy

Board: Foundation President + Vice-President + Director-General + 1 state envoy Convenes regularly

Scientific Council

Evaluators / Panel (≥19) 3-4 Subpanels according to major disciplines
Evaluates the applications (2 stage-process with final interview) Convenes as often as necessary

Chair: Foundation President + Vice-President (at least one woman)

Executive Agency

Grantees

Grant Agreement between foundation, grantee and host institution (tailored approach)

Grant Assistance Scheme (individual, flexible)

Grant evaluation & monitoring (ongoing)

- The Foundation should have the status of a **self-governing international institution**.
- A **financial contribution from the European Union** and a cooperation agreement with the European Research Council as well as further collaboration with public and private donors are highly desirable and expected.
- The **administration will be as lean and efficient** as possible.
- The recruitment of the Scientific Council and the administrative staff needs to take place **exclusively according to quality criteria** and must be publicised internationally.