REPORT

ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE

REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

For the period 1 September – 31 December 2017

BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL IN LINE WITH ARTICLE 15 OF THE STATUTE OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION COUNCIL

Sarajevo, 15 March 2018

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The Report on the activities of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat is submitted by the RCC Secretary General to the RCC Board in line with Article 15 of the Statute of the RCC. It covers the period between 1 September and 31 December 2017.

1. Summary of activities

In the reporting period, the RCC Secretariat's activities were focused on the implementation of the Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) for 2017 – 2019 through the flagship approach – skills and mobility, connectivity and competitiveness and on the start of implementation of MAP REA - the Multiannual Action Plan for establishing the Regional Economic Area in WB6. The RCC Secretariat continued to uphold a regional cooperation framework conducive to the implementation of the strategy by actively engaging in regional political and sectorial activities, as well as by maintaining partnerships with regional and international stakeholders involved in supporting the regional cooperation in SEE.

The 33rd meeting of the RCC Board held on 18 October 2017 provided operational guidance and supervision of the organization and accepted the Report of the RCC Secretary General on the activities of the RCC Secretariat for the period April - August 2017. Moreover, the RCC Board: a) adopted Decisions on the dates of the RCC Board meetings for 2018, and on the Budget of the RCC Secretariat for 2018; b) took note of the priorities and calendar of activities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O; c) took note of the progress made in the implementation of the SWP 2017-2019 and RCC's role in the implementation of Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP REA) in the Western Balkans; d) approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the RCC and the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), the extension of the MoU with the European Training Foundation and witnessed a presentation by the Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe Secretariat. The 19th meeting of the Financial Sub-Committee to the RCC Board was held on 14 September 2017. The members of the Financial Sub- Committee reviewed the preliminary financial results of the RCC Secretariat for the year 2017 and recommended to the RCC Board to adopt the draft Budget of the RCC Secretariat for the year 2018.

The RCC Board meeting was preceded by the 25th Coordination meeting between the SEECP Troika, the RCC Secretariat and the EU. The meeting provided a context for discussing the most important activities related to the priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O for 2017-2018 and of the RCC Secretariat, in particular those related to the implementation of the RCC SWP 2017-2019.

Under the motto "SEE 4 Future" and in line with the priorities - enlargement, youth, security, digital agenda, parliamentary cooperation and further enhancement of the economic cooperation in SEE, the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O organized a number of high level events at the outset of its Chairmanship.

The informal meeting of the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs, with the participation of the HR of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the EC, held on 5 September 2017, underlined the importance of continuing the EU enlargement policy and the role of regional cooperation in this respect. The RCC Secretary General presented the RCC's activities on regional economic integration, skills and mobility, the digital agenda, rule of law and security cooperation.

As a follow up to the Western Balkans Summit in July 2017, the RCC Secretariat organized the informal meeting with the MFAs from the WB, which included the participation of the Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, on 20 September 2017 in New York. The meeting was focused on the enlargement process, implementation of MAP and RCC's role and deliverables in this respect.

Moreover, the meeting of the Standing Committee of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly took place on 16 December 2017 in Ljubljana. The participants exchanged views on future activities within the SEECP framework, commended RCC's engagement in fostering a multilayered regional cooperation and witnessed a presentation of the priorities of the incoming Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Overall, the dialogue established between the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O and the RCC Secretariat paved the way for greater synergy, better alignment of priorities and further fostered the regional cooperation process in SEE.

The RCC Secretary General, in the framework of his permanent dialogue with the RCC participants, held consultations with high-level officials from Slovenia in its capacity as the C-i-O of the SEECP, Bulgaria, United Kingdom and the State Department of the U.S.A. The consultations maintained and galvanized support for the activities of the RCC Secretariat in the context of the implementation of the RCC SWP for 2017 - 2019.

In the light of the growing EU focus on the WB and its European integration, the RCC Secretariat has intensified its communication and cooperation with EU institutions and bodies, and in particular representatives of the Western Balkans permanent missions in Brussels, European Commission (DG NEAR, DG CONNECT, DG JUST, DG JRC, DG EMLP, DG CONNECT, DG EAC, DG RD), NATO, CEFTA, European Economic and Social Committee, Friends of Europe and European Policy Centre.

The RCC Secretary General used his high-level meetings with the EU institutions to present RCC's key activities in three flagships, focusing on central areas of MAP, how they feed in the SWP and their value added to the entire SEE Region, including the Western Balkans EU aspirants, EU member states from SEE and other participants from the region. The meetings ensured strong commitment of the EU to the implementation of MAP, support to enhanced regional cooperation and European perspective of the WB.

During the reporting period, the RCC Secretary General participated and addressed high-level events with a regional dimension such as: 12th Bled Strategic Forum (Bled, Slovenia, 4 September 2017); Brdo Process Ministerial Meeting – IISG kick-off conference (Brdo pri Kranju, 8 September 2017); Meeting of the Western Balkans Steering Platform on Research and Innovation (Belgrade, 28-29 September 2017); 7th Belgrade Security Forum (Belgrade, 14 October 2017); Wilton Park Conference, Security, the Western Balkans and the UK: working together to address shared challenges (Wilton Park, 20 – 21 October 2017); Ministerial Meeting on Roma Integration 2020 (Tirana, 10 November 2017); Participation at the Fifth Belgrade NATO Week (Belgrade, 16 November 2017); The Western Balkans High-level Meeting on Environment and Climate Change (Bonn, 17 November 2017); UNCTAD Investment Policy Review for SEE (Geneva, 21 November 2017); 2nd Berlin Global Forum (Berlin, 23 – 24 November 2017); Friends of Europe : Western Balkans at a Crossroads (Brussels, 5 December 2017) and the Rome Investment Forum 2017/Financing Long-Term Europe (Rome, 16 – 17 December 2017).

The Consolidated Multi-annual Action Plan on Regional Economic Area (MAP REA), endorsed in Trieste, on 12 July 2017 put forward a structured agenda for regional economic integration aiming at furthering trade integration, introducing a dynamic regional investment space, facilitating regional mobility, and creating a digital integration agenda. The MAP REA and its related activities were at the core of the RCC Secretariat activities in the period September-December 2017. The RCC Secretariat, in close cooperation with the CEFTA Secretariat and the National Authorities, has undertaken several activities to support the implementation of the MAP REA actions.

The Balkan Barometer Business Opinion Survey 2017 and Balkan Barometer Public Opinion Survey 2017 were officially launched and presented by the RCC Secretariat on 9 October 2017 in Brussels. Both editions are aimed at tracking progress in the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy and at providing data on the most pressing issues in the region.

Furthermore, enhanced cooperation in the areas of justice reform, judicial cooperation, migration, border management and counter-terrorism and radicalization were key topics debated at the EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum, organized under Estonian Presidency with the EU on 26-27 October 2017 in Sofia.

A.   Implementing SEE 2020 Strategy through Flagship Approach

A.1. "Skills and Mobility", encompassing the policy areas of education, employment, mobility, migration and social policy

A.1.1. Removal of obstacles to mobility of students and highly skilled workers in the region: mutual recognition of academic qualifications

- Advancing its Mobility agenda, on 14 December 2017 the RCC organised in Belgrade the Seminar on Recognition of Academic Qualifications. The seminar provided an opportunity to discuss the recognition of academic qualifications from key stakeholders in the process, namely representatives of the Ministries of Education, ENIC/NARIC offices, higher education institutions and students. Back to back with the seminar, the 1st formal meeting of the Joint ERI SEE – RCC Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications took place on 15 December 2017. The Joint ERI SEE - RCC Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications was tasked to prepare, coordinate, monitor and report on the activities aimed at supporting and implementing the commitments outlined in the Multiannual Action Plan on the Regional Economic Area (MAP REA) on recognition of academic qualifications. At the 1st formal meeting of this Joint Working Group the Terms of Reference and the Action Plan on Recognition of Academic Qualifications were discussed by the representatives of the Ministries of Education of the Western Balkans Six economies. The Terms of Reference and the Action Plan of Recognition of Academic Qualifications have been shared with the Ministries of Education and Mobility MAP coordinators on 19 December 2017 for written comments and approval, expected by 15 January 2018.

- As part of the substantial set of measures in Investment, Mobility and Digital Agenda which address the R&D and innovation systems in the Western Balkans, on 6 December 2017 the RCC organised in Brussels a workshop on Smart Specialization for the RCC's Research and Development (R&D) and Industrial Working Group. The meeting was attended by the representatives from the Ministries responsible for R&D and innovation and the representatives from the respective Ministries of economy responsible for industrial policy to discuss the actions on Smart Growth with a focus on the development of Smart Specialization Strategies in Western Balkans Six (WB6). With regards to the coordination and operationalisation of the Smart Growth component of the MAP REA, the participants agreed to have a meeting in spring 2018 in an appropriate format which will include representatives from Ministries of R&D, Economy (but not only industrial policy) and digital innovation, to discuss the overall set of actions in smart growth component and how to support the operationalisation of actions at a regional level.

- The workshop on smart specialisation was preceded by the R&D Ministries participating at the 5th meeting of the EU member states network of national points of reference on Scientific Information which took place on 5 December in Brussels. Western Balkan economies contact points for Open Science and RCC have been invited, together with the EU member states, to present the latest developments and activities in the field of Open Science at this meeting. RCC

supported the participation of 14 participants from the Ministries responsible for research and development from the six Western Balkans economies plus Turkey, who are also participants to the RCC's Open Access Working Group (OAWG). The EC's regular report on the implementation of the Recommendation on Open Access will for the first time include a section dedicated to the Western Balkans. The Western Balkan economies have been also invited to contribute to the revision of the Recommendation on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information and more importantly the initial steps were made to include the Western Balkans into the OpenAIRE National Open Access Desks (NOAD). The EC strongly supported the collaboration of NOADs and NPRs, especially for reporting to the Commission on the OA/OS policies. The EC also supported the initiative for RCC to facilitate the connection with OpenAIRE to see whether participation of Western Balkan economies is possible in the future. One of the items on the Agenda of the meeting was the regular report on the implementation of the Recommendation which will for the first time include a section dedicated to the Western Balkans. The members of the RCC Working Group on Open Science have set an ambitious goal of implementing the Recommendation into their national R&D policies and systems. The work of the Working Group on Open Science has been supported by the European Commission's Directorates-General for Research and Innovation (DG R&I) who have invited the Western Balkans to participate in the regular EU member states' reporting process.

- The **Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP)** - part of the Inclusive Growth pillar of the SEE 2020 Strategy and integrated within the "Skills and Mobility" flagship - is in implementation since March 2016:

  o During the November – December 2017 period, representatives of Public Employment Services (PES) of the Western Balkan economies have delivered on the implementation of the bench learning initiative. This has entailed a combination of self and external assessment of important areas and aspects that affect the performance of PES offices. Workshops and working group meetings have contributed to a better understanding of the process and have enabled PES officials to fill in the national self-assessment template. Six external assessment visits were also conducted by a team of peer assessors (senior PES experts from PES offices from the region and experts). The resulting external evaluation reports will provide a better and more profound understanding of performance management, as well as achievements and main challenges in the operational processes of PES offices.

  o Regarding the peer reviews process of employment policies or programmes, which is modelled against the EU mutual learning exercise, work is underway to produce national and regional reports for the peer review events on employment of people with disabilities in Serbia, self-employment in Kosovo[*] and youth employment in Montenegro. Additionally, the topics for the peer reviews on the other three Western Balkan economies have been identified as follows and implementation will continue in the coming period: internship programme (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), local employment partnerships (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and on the job training for youth (Albania).

  o An analysis of recent trends in the Western Balkan labour markets, focusing on conditions for job creation and factors leading to the employment challenges of the region has been prepared.

  o The demand driven technical assistance instrument of the ESAP project has been utilised by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and Public Employment Services of the Western

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

Balkans. The assistance consisted of the support for developing a single integrated electronic system for all databases under their responsibility, an analysis of the vocational training centres and the initiation of a technical assistance effort to upgrade their Information Technology system in line with EURES requirements in two beneficiaries, while other participating economies are developing further requests.

A.2. The "Connectivity" flagship continues to be an important domain where numerous interventions in the sector of transport, information communication technologies (ICT), energy, environment and climate change were implemented in the reporting period.

A.2.1 Digital integration agenda

- Intensive consultations with the Western Balkan Governments, the European Commission and regional and international stakeholders on regional measures supporting the digital transformation of WB6 through the implementation of the Multi Annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP) continued in various formats.

- As foreseen by the Declaration of the Italian Chair of the Trieste Western Balkans Summit 2017, the RCC initiated a continuous regional multi-stakeholder dialogue on digital transformation which will culminate in a Western Balkans Digital Summit to be organized each year. The preparations for the first Summit have officially started with the establishment in October 2017 of the Steering Committee that consists of the representatives of the WB6 Governments, the RCC, EC, German Government, industry and other stakeholders. The regionally-owned first Summit will be hosted by The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in mid-April 2018, followed by Serbia which will host it in 2019. The established dialogue and the Summit itself are designed as a process which will spur the digital transformation of the region, facilitate necessary digital infrastructure development to go hand in hand with improvement of legal framework and enable reaping various benefits of digitization of WB.

- Moreover, the RCC carried out the stock taking and needs-assessment analysis in the area of digital integration in WB and is presently working on the finalization of the report on status, actions and priorities in areas of digital infrastructure development, improving trust and digital security, enhancing digital skills of citizens and IT specialist through the region and strengthening cooperation and stimulating transformation to digital economy. In cooperation with the EC, RCC commenced work on analysing the impact of abolishing of roaming charges in the EU on WB economies. The findings of this analysis will serve as inputs for development of WB Roaming Roadmap to be presented at Western Balkans Summit in May in Sofia.

- In cooperation with International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the RCC organized a training for representatives of Cyber Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) and initiated a regional dialogue and information exchange among them with the aim of creating regional CSIRTs network in the future, as required by NIS Directive[1].

- During the reporting period, through various initiatives Western Balkans economies were encouraged to take part in current EU digital processes and frameworks (to participate in the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition; to join cross-border Internship programme; to participate in the EU's Cybersecurity Agency work as observers; to join EC's work on preparing WiFi4EU pilots in WB; to participate in the newly established Broadband Competence Office Network; to

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[1] Directive 2016/1148/EU concerning measures for a high common level of security of network and information systems

participate in ENISA activities, at least as observers; etc.). A significant milestone in this period is the opening of the Western Balkans Investment Framework support for digital sector, which will be eligible for technical assistance for broadband connectivity projects in the future.

- Also, the first results of the field visit phase of the World Bank-led study on Western Balkan Digital Highway have been presented to the WB Governments (line ministries and regulators). In addition, the preliminary results of industry-led Study on Potentials and Impact of Digital Transformation in WB6 have been presented to the WB Digital Summit Steering Committee, while the final findings and conclusions of both initiatives will be presented on the occasion of Western Balkan Digital Summit in Skopje, in April 2018.

A.2.2. Sectoral support in environment, energy and sustainable development

- A series of consultations with partners in the environment dimension have continued. As a result of the existing process and work carried out by the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env) as well as conclusions of the Podgorica Declaration, the Western Balkans ministers of environment and climate change convened in a meeting organized by the RCC in November in Bonn, on the margins of the 23rd Conference of Parties (COP23)[2]. The Ministers and high-level representatives adopted the "Bonn Declaration", thereby reconfirming their readiness and commitment to strengthen regional cooperation and make additional efforts to protect and preserve the environment, to mitigate climate impact and increase adaptive capacities on their way towards the EU accession. The Ministers also expressed readiness to coordinate important regional projects through the RWG Env in the future, to ensure cross-sectoral cooperation and integrated energy and environment planning and consideration in line with the EU 2030 climate and energy framework goals.

- With the aim of strengthening regional efforts and cooperation in the area of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the Biodiversity Task Force (BD TF) was established in November 2017 as an implementing body of the RWG Env. The Task Force is composed of experts in charge of biological diversity and nature protection from 6 WB economies and Croatia is participating as observer. This initiative is a result of the cooperation between the RCC, GIZ Open Regional Fund (GIZ ORF) for Biodiversity and IUCN ECARO[3] who acts as the BD TF Secretariat. The BD TF is now in the process of preparation of a regional Biodiversity Work Plan which will identify priorities in this area and which is expected to be finalised by the end of January 2018.

- Two projects of regional importance, developed under the SEE 2020 Strategy (water-food-energy nexus, dealing with establishing balanced and prudent use of the three resources, and Climaproof on integrating climate consideration in road transport infrastructure development) and implemented by the RCC partners, continued with implementation, while coordination and regional ownership will be ensured through the RWG Env in the future.

- The RCC commissioned a Regional Study on Climate Change in the Western Balkans and its Impact on Economic Development, which should evaluate the expected changes of climate in the upcoming decades and asses their impact on certain economic sectors (agriculture, water management, forestry and human health). The Study is in the final phase of preparation and will be ready by the end of January 2018. It will serve and help policy makers and experts in the WB region, providing better informational basis for development of national strategies and legislative frameworks. The Study will assess perspectives and facilitate the meeting of the

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[2] Organized under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
[3] International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

commitments stemming from the Paris Climate Agreement, and/or Climate Change Strategy goals (as for Kosovo*, not being part of UNFCCC).

A.3. The "Competitiveness" flagship activities served to (1) launch the smart specialization and capital markets integration platforms within the WB6 Multi-Annual Action Plan for development of Regional Economic Area, (2) continue the development of investment reform agenda and (3) a number of sectoral activities.

A.3.1. Investment integration

- The Final Regional Investment Policy Review (IPR) benchmark study has been published in November 2017 and publicly presented at the UN Office at Geneva. The IPR Study complements the efforts of the "Berlin Process" in general and in particular the Multi-Annual Action Plan for Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans. Under the MAP, development and implementation of the regional investment reform agenda was stipulated as one of four priorities. The region, under the RCC umbrella, is soon to start working on constituting a set of policies to undergo reforms to better combine competition with cooperation. The investment reform agenda would include a heterogeneous mix of policies, involving a wide scope of stakeholders – such as authorities in charge of labor, tax, fiscal incentives, international investment agreements, joint investment promotion, etc. as well as the private sector.

- The Regional Investment Policy and Promotion project is on track, steered by the RCC's Joint Working Group on Investment (JWGI), implemented by the World Bank and financially supported by European Commission. Baseline data collection within the project is already done, and currently work is taking place on identification and stocktaking of key investment policy barriers in the WB6 with the expected deliverables in the form of FDI mapping report and investor database during 1st quarter of 2018.

- The RCC has intensified activities related to capacity building and knowledge sharing of international investment experts in the form of small scale focused technical workshops on the topics of International Investment Agreements (IIA's) and Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS). During the meeting of the JWGI in November 2017, the RCC and the SEE government experts on investment policy, promotion and dispute settlements have reviewed the actions of the regional investment agenda on investment analytics (mapping and data harmonization), policy reform (through joint regional dialogue on priority policies subject to reform, national reform implementation and monitoring), joint investment promotion (targeted and focused on priority sectors) and investor state dispute settlement (awareness raising and establishment of centralised investment dispute settlement mechanism). Furthermore, the RCC has intensified cooperation of SEE government experts in charge of investment treaties with those from the judiciary and mediation in investment disputes, with the aim to work on the future development of dispute prevention and mediation mechanisms.

- On the occasion of the South East European Investment Committee (SEEIC) meeting held in November in Geneva, the economies were briefed on the ongoing activities within the investment agenda and what is expected in terms of detailed development of activities and implementation of the WB6 Multi-Annual Action Plan for Regional Economic Area. The SEEIC participants have reiterated their support and dedication to implementation of priority

measures through the existing SEEIC platforms (technical/working groups, plenary, and ministerial).

- Together with WB CIF (Western Balkans Chamber of Investments Forum), RCC is preparing a Regional Online Investment Platform (OIP), which shall serve as a one-stop window for foreign and domestic investors looking to invest in the WB. On one hand, the Platform will serve to promote the region as a unique business destination, to inform potential investors about the region and lead them to the investment decision and, on other hand, to make it easier for SMEs to invest as well and help WB6 governments in removing barriers and fostering transparent business environment to growth in the region.

- At the meeting in December 2017 of the Capital Market Development Working Group, the RCC has established a regional platform for SEE financial markets integration, comprised of representatives of line ministries, securities commissions and stock exchanges of the SEE economies. The platform will serve to help identifying the needs on capital markets development based on existing analytics and reform initiatives. This new initiative expressed high level of interest and dedication to work in this particular area under the umbrella of RCC and agreed to invest best efforts in outlining needs for capital markets development and consequently designing a regional strategy for capital markets development, which is anticipated to be rolled out into concrete roadmap by the next WB6 PM Summit.

A.3.2. Industrial Development

Within the reporting period, under the agenda item "**A.3.2.6. Support to sectoral development**":

- The RCC finished the Final Project application for the "Triple P" tourism project and the contract with the EC was signed by the EC and RCC's Secretary General at the end of December. The RCC has engaged in public announcements for hiring the project team and the preparation of the launching event for the project.

- The RCC established a regional dialogue with the aim of knowledge exchange on developing Smart growth strategies based on EU experience and support the development of smart specialization, research and innovation strategies in the WB6 to ensure strategic structural investments and to build competitive advantage. Industrial development efforts will be directed to the MAP measure on smart growth, by alignment of industrial policies with smart specialization.

B. Governance, Rule of Law and Security Cooperation

B.1 "Public Administration Reform"

B.1.1. Public consultations on draft laws and public policy documents

- The RCC finalized the activities aimed at improving public participation practices in the Western Balkans economies. The draft Recommendation on Public Participation, developed and broadly discussed throughout the course of the year, was endorsed at the Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Better Regulations hosted by the RCC on 21-22 September 2017. The document lays down the processes, methods and principles that are recommendable to use in

order to enable a genuine dialogue with those likely to be affected by the policy changes. It was finally endorsed by the Western Balkans ministers in charge of public administration in Tirana on 6 November 2017. The project was supported by ReSPA, SIGMA, Council of Europe, USAID and Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform (WeBER) Project.

- Following the adoption of the Western Balkans Recommendation on Public Participation, in order to streamline its enforcement by national institutions, the RCC has produced the Methodology on Peer Reviews for Western Balkans' Recommendation on Public Participation implementation. The Methodology foresees the processes of creation of teams, bases of assessment, organization of reviews, expected results, indicators, key questions for assessments, and review template report. The document will serve for the follow-up phase of the Recommendation implementation, which will be carried out in 2018 – 2019.

B.2. Rule of Law / Justice reforms

B.2.1. SEE networks (judicial training institutions and associations of mediators), regional trainings and Western Balkans Working Group on Justice (WGJ)

- On 24-25 October 2017, the RCC organized in Zagreb the 2nd Meeting of the SEE Network of Associations of Mediators. The meeting provided information about the European Judicial Network (EJN)/European Law Institute (ELI) project on alternative dispute resolution, similarities and differences but also advantages and disadvantages of mediation and arbitration as tools for enhancement of business-friendly environment.

- As a focal point of the Working Group on Justice, the RCC kept continuous communication with Directorate General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) and DG NEAR to make sure that the activities in this area are based mostly on the EC progress reports in the area of justice (Chapters 23 and 24 for the negotiating EU candidates). At its 8th Meeting on 6-7 December 2017 the WGJ continued its assessment of the ongoing RCC's activities and advised to continue with its focus on judicial training and alternative dispute resolution as tools for reducing court backlog and creating more accountable judiciaries in WB. The members of the WGJ agreed upon the indicators proposed by the RCC and started collecting the requested data in the area of justice.

- The work of the WB Judicial Training Institutions JTIs continued to be focused on enhancing mutual legal assistance between judiciaries in the region, on cross-border cooperation in civil and commercial matters, as well as on improving competences of judges in EU case law and mediation skills, aiming at improving capacity and independency of training institutions. The second meeting of the WB JTIs with European Commission and European Judicial Training Network (EC/EJTN) was held on 6-7 December 2017. It agreed on the need to continue with the support to the institution building processes of training centres and to start implementing the recommendations of RCC's commissioned Study on the existing systems of judicial training in Western Balkans. The Study incorporates a map of ongoing projects in the area of judicial training and proposed measures at regional level to improve independence and support institution building of WB JTI.

- The RCC and GIZ Open Regional Fund – Legal Reforms (GIZ ORF-LR) are continuing the implementation of the 20-months sub-project on 'Improving the Regional Cooperation between Western Balkans' Judicial Training Institutions', targeting the training of trainers for judges and prosecutors at regional level and developing regional database of legal experts in European law. Meetings of the project Steering Committee are held back-to-back with JTIs meetings

B.3 "Anti-corruption"

B.3.1. Support in conducting sectoral corruption risk assessment / anti-corruption assessment of laws

- The RCC presented the developed Checklist for Corruption Risks in Healthcare Sector to relevant anti-corruption authorities in Western Balkans economies. The Checklist enables national institutions to apply their existing mechanisms of risk assessments in public institutions or anti-corruption assessments of laws in a very specific sector. After a number of consultations, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed to apply the Checklist in the field of health insurance through conducting corruption proofing analyses of the main laws and bylaws regulating the sector. The Anti-corruption Agency of Montenegro decided to apply the Checklist in respect of hospitals, and in marketing and distribution of pharmaceutics and pharmaceuticals devices. A specific training on the use of the Checklist will also be delivered to relevant bodies of The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

B.4. Security cooperation

Under the security component of the Stability and Rule of Law, as a part of the EU supported efforts to respond to challenges in P/CVE area, the RCC actively participated at the Kick-off Conference for the Integrative Internal Security Governance (IISG) Initiative, which took place on 8 September, 2017 in Ljubljana. The Conference focused on achievements and challenges of the regional cooperation in the area of the rule of law and security, with emphasis on prevention and countering violent extremism and terrorism. In the same context, the First Coordination Meeting for the IPA II 2016 Regional Action was organized on 19 September 2017 in Ljubljana. The current state of play and forthcoming activities of the IISG were discussed, and the Roadmap for implementation of the Regional Action agreed.

The RCC Secretariat has continued with the implementation of the **Regional CVE-FTF Platform** and support to existing specialized regional security cooperation formats in SEE.

The 7th South East European National Security Authorities Forum (SEENSA) and the 5th Meeting of the "6S" Initiative was organized on 5-6 October 2017 in Belgrade. The participants exchanged information, views and good practices on organizational structure of national security authorities (NSA's), their respective role in national cyber and industrial security strategies as well as on regulatory framework for critical infrastructure protection.

The 9th South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs forum (SEEMIC) at the Directors' level was organized on 7 November 2017. The Open-source intelligence Assessment (OSINT) entitled "Use of Social Networks by Violent Extremists" was adopted and various regional security topics discussed.

In line with Platform's priorities, the regional expert workshop on "Prosecution, Detention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Terrorist Fighters" was held on 28 November 2017 in Rakitje. Participants exchanged views on specific examples and changing trends in P/CVE engagement from national and international perspective.

The Second Regional Coordination Conference in the area of Counter-Terrorism, Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (CT and P/CVE) co-organized by the RCC and Slovenian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office, was held at Brdo pri Kranju, on November 30, 2017. In addition to the work in plenary session, the Conference had separate, simultaneous sessions of the NFP Group and two other regional CT and P/CVE formats: PCC SEE – led CT Network and Slovenia-led CTI Network. The Conference was another step forward in enhancement of regional security cooperation, especially in the CT and P/CVE area. Main findings and recommendations of the newly commissioned RCC study entitled „A Waiting Game: Assessing and Responding to the Threat from Returning Foreign Fighters in the Western Balkans", were also presented at the Conference.

C. Horizontal and supporting activities

C.1. Coordination, monitoring, programming

C.1.1 Programming activities

- The reporting period served to launch the new programming cycle of the SEE 2020 Strategy for the period 2018-2020. The next steps in terms of programing are to implement the consultation process in the beneficiary economies and also with the designated regional dimension coordinators. The next steps also include implementation of the donor activities, including the 4th Annual Donor Coordination Meeting in the Western Balkans.

C.1.2. Monitoring activities

- The RCC held the 5th meeting of the SEE2020 Monitoring Committee which kick started the new monitoring cycle, including the agreement on the new timetable for collection of data on the Strategy's implementation for the Annual Report on Implementation (ARI). For the purposes of the new monitoring cycle, analysis of the main challenges was carried out and ways to address them were identified, based on which the scope and timeframe for 2018 was agreed, including the distribution of roles and responsibilities among national administrations, regional dimension coordinators and the RCC. Another SEE 2020 monitoring tool - Balkan Barometer Survey 2017 – has been finalized and launched on 9 October 2017 in Brussels. Moreover, the launch of the Balkan Barometer Survey for 2018 has also started.

- The next steps in terms of monitoring include collection of the statistical data from national and international sources for the 2018 cycle, collection of activity reports form the RDCs and preparing the first draft of the BB 2018 Survey.

C.1.3. Coordination activities, grants

- The successful candidates that responded to the 3rd Call for Proposal under the small grants program finalised the implementation of their contracts by 31 December 2017; the preparations for the 4th Call for Proposals started;

- The coordination process for the new programing and monitoring cycles with the regional dimension coordinators (RDCs) was held in the reporting period, through the SEE2020 Coordination Board, which took place in Vienna beginning of December 2017.

C.1.4. Horizontal activities related to the MAP REA

- During the reporting period the national coordination mechanisms for the MAP REA were established. The National Coordinators and Component Contact Points were appointed. The first meeting of the MAP Coordinators was held in Brussels, on 31 October 2017 to review the progress on the MAP measures and present future activities and deliverables. In addition, B2G discussions were held back to back with the first MAP NCs meeting to ensure greater synergies among different actors. Following the conclusions of the first meeting, the Guidelines on Governance, Coordination and Reporting for the MAP REA were endorsed by the MAP National Coordinators. A shared calendar of activities on MAP REA is launched to keep all actors informed and updated and other tools, such as the leaflet and video on MAP REA, were produced to increase visibility and awareness on REA.

- The RCC, tasked with the overall coordination and monitoring of the MAP REA, initiated the drafting of the Stock Taking and Needs Assessment report to take stock of the measures and resources needed to implement the key objectives set out in the MAP. National consultations on needs assessment in 4 economies are completed, with two more to be completed early 2018.

- The PM Sherpa's meeting held on 18 December 2017 reviewed the progress per MAP pillars and discussed progress in the connectivity agenda. The preparations for the Donor Coordination meeting and drafting of the methodology on MAP monitoring and reporting was launched in 2017 - a very first draft of the concept for the Donor Coordination meeting and the main outline of the methodology were prepared.

On the **Roma Integration 2020 programme**, under the RCC framework, the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team continued with the cycle of Public Dialogue Forums on Roma integration, co-organized by the Action Team and the governments in Ankara, Sarajevo and Pristina. At the forums, the National Roma Contact Points and inter-ministerial bodies, along with the Action Team, discussed the progress in the implementation of the Roma integration policies and the plans for the upcoming period, notably in terms of the upcoming budgeting and reporting requirements.

On 21-22 September 2017, the second Task Force meeting of the Roma Integration 2020 was held in Belgrade. The National Roma Contact Points from the region, along with the European Commission, the Open Society Foundations and the RCC representatives participated at this meeting. The project Action Team presented the report from the implementation of the project by the date, while the participants assessed the project implementation and provided an input to the formulation of the second phase of the project which is currently being negotiated. The process of monitoring and reporting covering the year of 2016 was elaborated and the Task Force adopted the monitoring and reporting template as final, agreeing to follow up by introducing the template as part of the official Roma integration policy. Finally, the Task Force also agreed that in the upcoming period the Action Team should pay more attention to providing assistance to the governments in more efficient public budgeting for Roma integration policies.

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team also organized a regional conference titled "Filling in the Budget Gaps in Roma Integration Policies" in Tirana on 10 November 2017. Around 60 officials from the enlargement region participated at the conference and debated with representatives of several significant donor organizations on Roma integration budgeting priorities, cycles, requirements and opportunities, with specific focus on the financially most demanding areas – employment and housing.

On communication, the RCC Secretariat has continued with implementation of its triannual Communication Strategy which reflects the new agenda of the organisation, focusing primarily on promotion of overall RCC's activities with special attention dedicated to awareness raising and promotion of the latest core activity – MAP REA for WB6. The primary objective is to keep building

the understanding on what the RCC does, increasing political, financial as well as public support for its activities, but also to keep raising awareness of the organisation and the regional cooperation process in general, building and promoting the SEE image based on the RCC's key mission postulates.

The RCC Secretariat has produced a number of promotional materials, such as videos, brochures and infographics with the goal of explaining RCC products – Balkan Barometer, activities – MAP REA and projects – Roma Integration 2020 and ESAP. These focused materials as well as the user-friendly website combine information for different target audiences and provides overall picture of what RCC is, what are the major fields of organization's work, goals etc. The RCC Secretariat continued to maintain partnership relations with relevant regional initiatives and organisation's in promoting activities of common interest.

The last quarter of 2017 included summarizing of the monitoring results introduced with the 2017-2019 Communication Strategy. The monitoring process measured results achieved against the targets set at the end of 2016, which included significant increase in quantitative indicators as well as introduced the qualitative ones. The categories measured include: Website page views, Total number of website visitors, Average website session duration, Website bounce rate, Media reports, Media reports on RCC programming activities, Media advisories, press releases and news items and Social Media – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The results show that the RCC communication activities have yielded desired results and the targets were met and exceeded.

2. Update on progress in implementing SWP 2017-2019

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
Component A. Implementing the SEE 2020 Strategy through the flagship approach				
A.1. Skills and Mobility				
A.1.1. *Removal of obstacles to mobility of students and highly skilled workers in the region*	*A.1.1.1. Seminar on Mutual recognition of academic qualifications* and *the 1st formal meeting of the Joint ERI SEE – RCC Working Group on Recognition of Academic Qualifications* 14-15 December 2017, Belgrade	The representatives of the Ministries of Education and Research of the Western Balkans economies discussed the Terms of Reference and the Action Plan on Recognition of Academic Qualification *in the WB.*	- The representatives of the Ministries of Education and Research in this Joint Working Group agreed on the draft Terms of Reference. - The ToR will be shared with the Ministries of Education and Mobility MAP coordinators on 19 December 2017 for written comments and approval is expected by 15 January 2018.	Finalized
	A.1.1.2. 5th Meeting of the Commission expert group on National Points of Reference (NPR) on Access to and Preservation of Scientific Information, 5 December 2017, Brussels	The RCC and representatives of the Ministries in charge of Science presented and discussed the latest developments and activities in the field of Open Science at the 5th annual EU meeting of the network of National Points of Reference on Scientific Information (NPR).	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia have submitted national reports on the implementation of measures outlined in the Recommendation to the EC and will therefore be a part of the regular EU reporting on the implementation of the Recommendation.	Finalized
	A.1.1.3 Workshop on Smart Specialization, 6 December 2017, Brussels	Representatives from the Ministries responsible for R&D and innovation and the representatives from the respective Ministries of economy responsible for industrial policy discussed the actions on Smart Growth with a focus on the development of Smart Specialization Strategies in Western Balkans Six	Participants agreed that it would be important to use the 2018 to start work on operationalizing the smart specialization coordination mechanism in economies where they are still not set to be able to use the MB IPA from 2019. With regards to the coordination and	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
		(WB6). Each economy gave an overview of developments on smart specialization in their economy.	operationalization of the Smart Growth component of the MAP REA the participants agreed to have a meeting in spring 2018 in an appropriate format which will include representatives from Ministries of R&D, Economy, but not only industrial policy, and digital innovation to discuss the overall set of actions in smart growth component and how to support the operationalization of actions at a regional level;	
A.1.1.4. Western Balkans open and connected science				
A.2. Connectivity				
A.2.2. Digital integration	*Establishment of the Western Balkans Digital Summit Steering Committee (1ˢᵗ meeting), 17 October 2017, Sarajevo*	- Western Balkans Digital Summit Steering Committee established. - Roles and responsibilities in preparation of the WB Digital Summit agreed among WB economies and partners.	The preparatory work for the Western Balkans Digital Summit to be organized in Skopje, 18-19 April 2018, launched.	Finalized
	Regional Cyber Drill – ALERT (Applied Learning for Emergency Response Teams), 21-23 November 2017, Chisinau	In cooperation with ITU, a training is organized with the aim to: - Enhance communication and incident response capabilities of the participating teams. - Continue collective effort in mitigating cyber threats among the regions' national Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs).	Strengthened capacities of national emergency response teams to respond on cyber incidents and eliminate cyber threats.	Finalized
	1ˢᵗ WB6 meeting of Computer Security Incidents Response	- Regional consultations and exchange platform on computer incidents established.	Established regional cooperation of CSIRTs as foreseen by NIS Directive (Directive on measures	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	Teams (CSIRTs), 21 November 2017, Chisinau		for a high common level of security of network and information systems).	
	Regional Stock Taking Meeting on the Digital Integration, 7 – 8 December 2017, Brussels	- Identifying reforms needed to implement the MAP objectives under Digital Integration Component. - Identifying main activities under implementation in WB and mapping main projects. - Identifying existing instruments and resources, as well as resources needed for MAP implementation. - Identifying the most urgent reform measures required to meet commitments under MAP.	Smooth implementation of the Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area (MAP) in the area of Digital Integration.	Finalized
	2ⁿᵈ Meeting of the Western Balkan Digital Summit Steering Committee (Western Balkans Digital Summit 2018, Stock Taking Meeting), 19 – 20 December 2017, Berlin	- Discussion on the concept, pillars, structure, and identification of potential speakers, and topics to be covered at the Western Balkans Digital Summit 2018. - Consultations on possible dates for the Summit, communication and main deliverables of the Summit.	The first Western Balkans Digital Summit to be organized in Skopje, 18-19 April 2018.	Finalized
	Industry-led Study on Potentials and Impact of Digital Transformation in WB6	- Research team (Ms. Maruška Vizek, The Institute of Economics, Zagreb; prof. Florian Bieber, Karl Franzens University Graz; and Mr. Vladimir Gligorov, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (WIIW) performed preliminary analyses which are presented at the WB DS SC meeting.	Guidance and recommendations on how to maximize economic and other benefits of digitization in the Western Balkans.	On-track
A.2.3. Sectoral support in environment, energy	*Constitutional meeting of the Biodiversity Task Force,*	*- Establishing of the Biodiversity Task Force.* *- Adoption of Rules of Procedures.*	*Strengthened regional cooperation in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and*	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
and sustainable development	*14 November 2017, Belgrade*	- *Initiating regional cooperation in development of the Biodiversity Work Plan.*	*implementation of a Regional Biodiversity Work Plan.*	
	Ministerial Meeting: The 5th Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment 17 November 2017, Bonn	- *Continuing coordination of the Regional Working Group on Environment, all participants present to the meeting.*	*The next ministerial meeting announced for autumn 2018. Draft ministerial declaration and draft Work Plan for the RWG Env presented by RCC.*	Finalized
	Study on Climate Change in Western Balkans and its Impact on Economic Development	- *Structure of the Study agreed with the consultants.* - *First draft of the Study developed with climate change models and two scenarios developed by the end of the 21st Century.*	*Proposals for decision makers and recommendations for legal and strategic framework improvements for adaptation to expected climate change.*	On-track
A.3. Competitiveness				
A.3.1. Investment Integration	*Regional Benchmark Study: Regional Investment Policy Review,*	Final IPR published	Regional Investment Policy Review officially published and launched.	Finalized
	Regional Programme; Investment Policy and Regional Integration	Workplan for project finished. M&E for overall project done. Baseline data collection in place.	Commencement of the first component of the project Regional investment reform agenda and framework in first priority area Identification and stocktaking of key investment policy barriers in the WB6.	On-track
	A.3.1.2. Workshop on International Investment Agreements (IIAs): "Reforming the IIA network of SEE economies: challenges and opportunities", 12 October 2017, Geneva	The discussions were focused on the identification of the main obstacles in IIA regime, the key challenges and on possible means of cooperation within the region (exchange of experts, regional meetings etc.)	It was agreed that MAP REA Investment component should include stocktaking of the existing issues/challenges across the region in the area of IIAs and BITs, and formulate/propose concrete reform measures in response to these challenges. These measures could become an integral part of the region's investment reform	Finalized Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
			agenda.	
	A.3.1.4. Workshop on Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), 2 November 2017, Vienna	Discussions took place on the main obstacles and key challenges of ISDS and possible means of cooperation within the region.	Creating awareness of ISDS reforms needed and improvement of coordination mechanisms within the economies. Challenges like the inexistence of centralised ISDS office, ad hoc systems, insufficient capacity of national ISDS team, need for exchange of experts, regional meetings etc., were identified.	Finalized
	A.3.1.5. Meeting of SEEIC CEFTA Joint Working Group on Investments (JWGI), 3 November 2017, Vienna	The meeting discussed in detail the activity plan envisaged for implementation of the WB6 MAP REA in the area of investments' policy reform and promotion, including the timelines and deliverables expected until the London WB6 Summit.	Investment related data that need to be collected for the database, as well as the existing barriers to investment were identified and agreed.	Finalized
	A.3.1.6. Meeting of South East Europe Investment Committee (SEEIC), 22 November 2017, Geneva	SEEIC economic teams discussed the priorities, activities, and anticipated deliverables in implementation of Multi-Annual Action Plan for Regional Economic Area within the investment component, including the upcoming implementation of the "Triple P" tourism project.	The meeting endorsed the work done at the level of technical structures of the SEEIC (working groups) and reiterated support to MAP REA implementation through SEEIC structures.	Finalized
	A.3.1.7. Meeting of WB6 Capital Market Authorities: "Diversification of financial systems to boost investment", 19 December 2017, Vienna	The meeting discussed the set-up of a regional platform serving the regional integration of financial markets.	Regional platform for SEE financial markets integration established. Need for Analysis on capital markets development and needs assessment for designing of a regional strategy for capital markets development identified.	Finalized
A.3.2. Industrial Development	*"Triple P" Tourism Project*	Final steps on filing the project application were concluded and the proposal submitted to the EC.	Grant contract for the Tourism project signed. Implementation of the project to commence in	On-track

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
		Final decision taken by the EC in December 2017	January 2018. First step: launching the vacancies for the Project Leader and Project Assistant	
	Tourism Expert Group meeting	Postponed for Q3-4, upon commencement of the implementation of "Triple P" Tourism Project	No outcomes for the reporting period	Postponed
	Workshop on Smart Specialization, 6 December 2017, Brussels	Specific national priorities national needs to ensure tailor made support to the development of the smart specialization strategies in the region were discussed.	Ongoing policy initiatives in the R&D and innovation sector as well the industrial and economic policies identified. .	Finalized
Component B. Governance, Rule of Law and Security Cooperation				
B.1. Public Administration Reform				
B.1.1. Public consultations on draft laws and public policy documents	*Building capacities of relevant public authorities in conducting public consultations on legislative drafting*	The main output of the activity - Western Balkans Recommendation on Public Participation was finalized and endorsed by the Regional Group on Better Regulations and by the Western Balkans ministers in charge of public administration. As a follow-up of the Recommendation endorsement, and in order to ensure its enforcement by national institutions, the Methodology for Peer Reviews was developed, which puts the basis for the follow-up phase of the public participation activity.	The Western Balkans Recommendation lays down the processes, recommended methods and tools to enable a genuine dialogue with those likely to be affected by the policy changes. The document serves as a practical guide on how to efficiently organize public consultations, and represent a solid source for governments when improving their public consultations processes. As a long term outcome, the RCC envisages to provide knowledge and skills for governments to design policies and legislation in an inclusive manner, through organization of peer review missions to assess the implementation of regional standards on public participation	Finalized
B.2. Justice				
B.2.1. SEE networks, regional trainings and Western Balkans	*2nd Meeting of the SEEAM Network, 24 - 25 October 2017, Zagreb*	The meeting gathered the heads of associations of mediators and representatives of ministries of justice in SEE to discuss possibilities for better	The need for more regional trainings for judges in mediation skills and improved cross-border cooperation among mediators, arbitrators and	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
Working Group on Justice		regional/cross-border cooperation and creating business-friendly environment. Good practices and lessons learned were exchanged and the need for public awareness raising and greater involvement of judges/prosecutors/lawyers in the mediation and arbitration process was expressed.	judiciaries was identified. Awareness of the WB economies raised on the importance of using the mediation in the investor state dispute settlements (ISDS) and establishment of proper ISDS mechanism within the national economies.	
	Meeting of the WGJ, WB6 JTI directors, SG EJTN and representatives of DG JUST and DG NEAR *Finalised Study on the existing systems of judicial training in WB, 6-7 December 2017, Brussels*	The meeting gathered the WB6 Judicial Training Institution directors, EJTN SG and the representatives of the EC. It served to exchange information about the on-going and planned activities and projects in the judicial training area and to identify activities and processes that are complementary. The meeting discussed also the study on the existing systems of judicial training in the WB.	- contribution to better alignment and avoidance of duplication of complementary activities, better use of available resources. - Study on the existing systems of judicial training in the WB (including the mapping of ongoing projects in WB judicial training and recommendations at regional level) is finalised. Inputs and comments from the RWGJ participants included in the final version. - RCC tasked to develop the regional judicial training programme 2019-2022.	Finalized
B.3. Anti-corruption				
B.3.1. Support in conducting sectoral corruption risk assessment/anti-corruption assessment of laws	*Corruption risk assessments in healthcare sector*	The RCC developed a Checklist of Corruption Risks for Healthcare Sector, describing the possible corruption risks in Hospitals, Outpatient Providers, Laboratories, Imaging Services, Pharmacies, Human Organ Transplantation, Medical Research, Licenses & Permits, etc. As a follow-up, the Checklist was presented and discussed with the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Anti-corruption Agency of Montenegro and the relevant bodies of The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	- The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agreed to apply the Checklist in the field of health insurance through conducting corruption proofing analyses of the main laws and bylaws regulating the sector. - The Anti-corruption Agency of Montenegro decided to apply the Checklist in respect of hospitals and marketing and distribution of pharmaceutics and pharmaceuticals devices. - A specific training on the use of the Checklist has been agreed to be delivered to relevant bodies of The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	On-track

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
			These activities represent the planned measures for 2018.	
B.4. Security cooperation				
B.4.1. Supporting the existing security cooperation mechanisms in SEE	*7th South East European National Security Authorities Forum (SEENSA) and 5th Meeting of the "6S" Initiative, 5-6 October 2017, Belgrade*	Exchange of information, views and good practices on: current organizational structures of NSA's; role of NSA's in National cyber security strategies; industrial security and regulatory framework for critical infrastructure protection.	Agreement on main topics to be discussed at the next meeting. Exploring further possibilities for organizing thematic expert workshops. Obtaining certified software for data exchange.	Finalized
	The SEDM Ministers of Defence Meeting, 11 October 2017, Batumi	Update on SEDM activities, projects and achievements in priority issues obtained within the process. Discussion on newly emerging challenges, such as terrorism, cyber and hybrid threats.	Further enhancement of military cooperation among participants from SEE. Support for Euro-Atlantic integration of SEE aspirants.	Finalized
	9th South East European Military Intelligence Chiefs Forum (SEEMIC), 7 November 2017, Budva	Draft of Open Sources Intelligence Assessment (OSINT) discussed. Various regional security topics discussed. Debate on the way forward regarding future actions.	OSINT assessment "Use of social networks by violent extremists" adopted. Agreement on future activities and cooperation agreed.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	8th Regional Meeting of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Commissions (SALW) and the 8th Regional Meeting of the South East Europe Firearms Experts Network (SEEFEN), 20-24 November 2017, Skopje	Exchange of information on the progress achieved in the implementation of the national SALW control activities, including legislation, revision of SALW control strategies, stockpile safety and security, destruction, record keeping, armed violence prevention and countering of illicit trafficking, arms export control and challenges encountered in the process of implementation.	Enhanced coordination, tighter policies on arms control; intensified cooperation and continuous confidence building among institutions and experts, both at national and regional level.	Finalized
B.4.2. Addressing the emerging security challenges in the region (CVE-FTF Platform)	*17th Meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Police Cooperation Convention for South East Europe, 7 September 2017, Ljubljana*	New Secretary General appointed. Discussion on technical and political challenges to enhanced regional police cooperation. Exchange of views on respective roles to be played by PCC, Europol and Interpol. Possibilities for further EU's technical assistance to law enforcement agencies in Western Balkans explored.	Decision on automated data exchange. Continued financial, technical and human resources support for the PCC SEE Secretariat.	Finalized
	Brdo Brijuni Process Ministerial Meeting – Kick off for the Integrative Internal Security Governance Initiative (IISG), 8 September 2017, Brdo pri Kranju	Achievements and challenges of the regional cooperation in the area of the rule of law and security discussed, with emphasis on prevention and countering violent extremism and terrorism.	Adoption of the IISG Structure and Terms of Reference. Appointment of the Head of IISG.	Finalized
	First Coordination Meeting for the IPA II 2016 regional action	Current state of play and forthcoming activities of the IISG introduced and discussed. Exchange of	Roadmap for the implementation of the regional action agreed.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	"Support to Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans", 19 September 2017, Ljubljana	information between the partners on current and forthcoming activities in P/CVE area. Draft Joint Rules of Procedure for IPA II 2016 discussed.		
	Regional Expert Workshop "Prosecution, Detention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters", 28 November 2017, Rakitje	Key findings of the RCC commissioned Study "Awaiting Game-assessing and responding to the threat from returning foreign terrorist fighters in the Western Balkans" presented and discussed. Presentation of the IISG, its structure and core activities. Specific examples of P/CVE engagement from national and international perspective explored. Gender perspectives in P/CVE analyzed.	Conclusions on changing trends in violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism (VERLT) in SEE.	Finalized
	Head of RCC LO`s participation at "Drivers and catalysts of radicalisation in Europe and the impact on the EU's neighbourhood policy", 28 November 2017, Brussels	Presentation of the RCC`s work on P-CVE	Promotion of RCC work and networking	Finalized
	Second Regional Coordination Conference in the area of CT and P/CVE, 30 November 2017, Brdo pri Kranju	Situation, trends and challenges in VERLT analyzed. The state of play of the RCC SEE Regional P/CVE Platform and the Western Balkans Counter Terrorism Initiative presented and discussed. Key findings of the RCC commissioned Study "A Waiting Game" introduced, followed by debate.	Conclusions and recommendations for further action by the RCC and other international organizations and relevant national authorities adopted, based on the results of deliberations of three regional CT and P/CVE networks.	Finalized
	Fourth Meeting of the SEE Group of National Focal Points for P/CVE, 30 November 2017, Brdo pri Kranju	Comprehensive exchange of info, views and good practices in P/CVE from national and international perspective. Changing trends in P/CVE – FTF considered.	Specific conclusions on various aspects in the P/CVE-FTF area adopted, highlighting strengthening of national coordination mechanisms, domestic drivers of radicalization and make best use of the RCC commissioned study.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
Component C. Horizontal and supporting activities				
C.1. Programing, monitoring and coordination				
C.1.1. Programming activities	*SEE 2020 Strategy Programing process 2018*	The initial draft programming document for 2018-2020 developed and sent for consultations.	The programming cycle for 2018 successfully started.	Finalised
C.1.2. Monitoring activities	*Balkan Barometer 2017*	Balkan Barometer 2017 Survey document finalised, published and distributed.	Balkan Barometer 2017 report successfully finalised.	Finalized
	Balkan Barometer 2018	Balkan Barometer 2018 Survey implementer selected and survey started.	Balkan Barometer 2018 on field activities successfully started.	Finalized
	2018 data collection cycle	The 5th SEE2020 Monitoring Committee meeting held.	The data for 2018 monitoring cycle started to be collected from national, regional and international sources.	Finalized
C.1.3. Coordination activities, grants	*The 3rd Call for proposals under the RCC Small Grant Facility*	Project awarded with grants implemented.	Project (3rd Call) completed	Finalized
C.1.4. Horizontal activities related to MAP REA	*1st meeting of the MAP National Coordinators, 31 October 2017, Brussels*	Review the main developments of relevance to the MAP, discuss the key governance, monitoring and reporting aspects of the MAP and agree on the next steps that are to be taken in 2017 and onwards.	Endorsement of the Guidelines on Governance, Monitoring and Reporting	Finalized
	PM Sherpa's meeting - 18 December 2017, Brussels	Review the progress per MAP pillars and discuss progress in the connectivity agenda	Progress on the MAP REA implementation updated	Finalized
	The initiation of the Stocktaking and Needs Assessment Report on MAP REA	Take stock of the measures and resources needed to implement the key objectives set out in the MAP	Report on Needs Assessment for the implementation of the MAP REA as a whole	On-track

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
C.2. Political Department activities				
C.2.1. Strengthening cooperation between the SEE governments and with the EU				
C.2.1.1. Assist SEECP and SEECP C-i-O	*Informal Meeting of the SEECP Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 5 September 2017, Bled*	Presentation of the priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O; Discussion on the next C-i-O's; Exchange of views on the current situation in the SEE region, parliamentary and security cooperation.	Firm support of the SEECP participants for the priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O, European perspective of the RCC aspirants and enhanced regional cooperation.	Finalized
	25th Coordination meeting between the SEECP Troika, RCC Secretariat and EU, 17 October 2017, Sarajevo	Information on the most important activities related to the priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O for 2017-2018 and of the RCC Secretariat, in particular those related to the implementation of the RCC Strategy and Work Programme (SWP) 2017-2019	Greater synergy and cooperation between the SEECP Troika, the RCC and EU. Support to the priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O and the RCC Secretariat.	Finalized
	33rd RCC Board Meeting, 18 October 2017, Sarajevo	Acceptance of the Report of the Secretary General on the activities of the RCC Secretariat for the period April – August 2017; Adoption of the decision on the dates of the RCC board meetings for 2018; Adoption of the Decision on the Budget of the RCC Secretariat for 2018; Briefing on the realized and planned events of Slovenian SEECP C-i-O; Presentation of Police Cooperation Convention for SEE;	Political support for the implementation of the activities under the RCC SWP for 2017 - 2019.	Finalized
	Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of SEECP (SC PA SEECP), 16-17 December 2017, Ljubljana	Discussion on work and efficient functioning of the SEECP Parliamentary Assembly between the sessions - re-energizing SEECP PA; RCC's activities and priorities for 2018;	Steady support for the SEECP PA and RCC's activities.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
C.2.1.2. Consultations of the Secretary General with SEECP and RCC participants	*Western Balkans Six Foreign Affairs Ministers Working Breakfast, in the presence of Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, 20 September 2017, New York*	The implementation of MAP; RCC's deliverables by the end of 2017 and priorities for 2018 in this respect; Enlargement – state of play and future prospects;	Sound support for the implementation of MAP and RCC's activities;	Finalized
	Consultations with the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, 22 September 2017, New York	Exchange of views on the latest developments in the SEE region, process of Euro-Atlantic integration and RCC's activities.	US support to the activities of RCC.	Finalized
	Consultations with the Deputy Prime Minister and MFA of Bulgaria, 26 October 2017, Sofia	Discussion on priorities of the forthcoming Bulgarian Presidency with the European Union, RCC's activities - implementation of MAP REA, enlargement perspective of RCC aspirants, RCC's Anniversary.	Strong commitment of Bulgaria to the European perspective of the RCC aspirants and support to RCC's activities. Agreement on future cooperation.	
	Consultations with the Coordinator in the FCO for the London Summit within the framework of the Berlin Process, 30 October 2017, London	Briefing on RCC's activities focused on MAP, SEE 2020 trough flagship approach, security and JHA cooperation; Preparations for the London Summit in 2018;	UK's support and commitment to Berlin process and EU enlargement to the Western Balkans. Agreement on future cooperation.	Finalized
	Meeting with the Speaker of National Assembly of Slovenia, 29 November 2017, Ljubljana	Priorities of the Slovenian SEECP C-i-O, RCC's activities and the role of the SEECP PA.	Sinergy between SEECP C-i-O and the RCC Secretariat. Support for the RCC's activities	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
				Finalized
C.2.1.3. Maintain the dialogue with the EU institutions	*Meeting of RCC SG with Director for the WB at the DG NEAR, 14 September 2017, Brussels*	Briefing on the RCC SWP 2017-2019 activities. Exchange of views on the steps to be taken with respect to MAP REA implementation;	Strong commitment of the EC to RCC's activities and to the coordination process in implementation of MAP REA.	Finalized
	Meeting of the RCC SG with senior management (Head and Deputy Head) of DG NEAR D.5. Unit, 14 September 2017, Brussels	Agreement on the steps to be taken with respect to MAP REA implementation	Exchange of views, update and coordination of activities with EC	Finalized
	Meeting of the RCC SG with EEAS Director for Western Europe, WB and Turkey, 15 September 2017, Brussels	Briefing on the main results and the way forward in the implementation of SWP 2017-2019; Exchange of views on the recent developments in SEE.	Support for RCC's activities, fostered regional cooperation and the EU integration process of RCC aspirants.	Finalized
C.2.1.4. Support to parliamentary activities related to the EU acquis and the SEE 2020 Strategy	No activities held in the reporting period.			
C.2.2. Broadening links and strengthening partnerships with other regional stakeholders				
C.2.2.1. Participation of SG to high-level events	*12th Bled Strategic Forum, 4-5 September 2017, Bled*	Impact of globalization and digitalization on modern societies; Debate on the economy and security issues.	Strategic vision and leadership in ensuring progress while respecting fundamental freedoms: democracy, the rule of law and human rights.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	Brdo Brijuni Process Ministerial Meeting – Kick off for the Integrative Internal Security Governance Initiative (IISG), Brdo pri Kranju, 8 September 2017	Achievements and challenges of the regional cooperation in the area of the rule of law and security discussed, with emphasis on prevention and countering violent extremism and terrorism.	Adoption of the IISG Structure and Terms of Reference. Appointment of the Head of IISG.	Finalized
	Presentation of Balkan Barometer Survey, 9 October 2017, Brussels	Official launch and presentation of Balkan Barometer 2017 – Balkan Barometer Business Opinion Survey and Balkan Barometer Public Opinion Survey. Panel discussion tackling key priorities in South East Europe.	Tracking progress in the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy and public attitudes on key issues. Contributed to RCC's visibility.	Finalized
	7th Belgrade Security Forum, 14 October 2017, Belgrade	Debate on Balkan security issues within the European and global security framework; Presentation of Balkan achievements and dilemmas to the participants in the European and global security debate	Bringing the European and global security debate to the Balkans; Calls for rebuilding rule of law as a cornerstone of stability in Europe.	Finalized
	1st Meeting of National MAP REA coordinators, 31 October 2017, Brussels	Discussion on the future work on MAP REA implementation	Raising awareness and agreement on future cooperation.	Finalized
	Wilton Park Conference: Security, the Western Balkans and the UK: Working together to address shared challenges", 20-21 October 2017, Wilton Park	Thematic discussion on developing a shared understanding of key security and rule of law challenges; Identification of new approaches to tackling these challenges and ways to improve collaborative working amongst the Western Balkans Six, the UK and also with key international partners.	UK's preparation for security component at the next Western Balkans Summit in 2018. Commitment to make progress on security and justice issues.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs, 26-27 October 2017, Sofia	The way forward in judicial reform, migration and border management, counter-terrorism and radicalization.	Strong commitment of the EC to the rule of law reforms in the WB and intensified security cooperation.	Finalized
	Participation at the Fifth Belgrade NATO Week, 16 November 2017, Belgrade	Debate on new geostrategic environment, increased cooperation between NATO and the EU, as well as its significance for the Western Balkans.	Promotion of stability, security and Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans.	Finalized
	Ministerial Meeting: The 5th Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment Bonn, 17 November 2017	Continuing coordination of the Regional Working Group on Environment, all participants present to the meeting.	The next ministerial meeting announced for autumn 2017. Draft ministerial declaration and draft Work Plan for the RWG Env presented by RCC.	Finalized
	Signing ceremony with ETF, 22 November 2017, Brussels	Presentation of RCC's work and identification of possible area for future cooperation.	Promotion of RCC's work and strengthening of cooperation with relevant EU organizations.	
	Second Regional Coordination Conference in the area of CT and P/CVE, Brdo pri Kranju, 30 November 2017	Situation, trends and challenges in VERLT analyzed. The state of play of the RCC SEE Regional P/CVE Platform and the Western Balkans Counter Terrorism Initiative presented and discussed. Key findings of the RCC commissioned Study "A Waiting Game" introduced, followed by debate.	Conclusions and recommendations for further action by the RCC and other international organizations and relevant national authorities adopted, based on the results of deliberations of three regional CT and P/CVE networks.	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
	Friends of Europe – EPC Summit: "Western Balkans at a Crossroads", 5 December 2017, Brussels	Presentation of RCC's work, especially with respect to MAP REA; Debate on the future of Western Balkans, focused on democracy, peace and stability, as well economic development and integration.	Promotion of the WB and the RCC.	Finalized
	NATO (SEE Group) Briefing, 14 December 2017, Brussels	Presentation of RCC's work with an emphasis of activities in the security cooperation.	Promotion of the RCC's activities.	Finalized
	Sherpas meeting, 18 December 2017, Brussels	Presentation of RCC's work, especially with respect to MAP REA.	Raising awareness about RCC's work and agreement on future cooperation.	Finalized
C.2.2.2. Work with media/communications	*RCC as the gold sponsor of the 5th International Festival of High School Theatre – JUVENTAFEST, 9-13 September 2017*	For the second year in a row the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) provided support to young regional talent gathered around International Festival of High School Theatre – JUVENTAFEST.	Awareness raising and fostering regional cooperation in the area of culture by partnering with the growing cultural events in the region.	Finalized
	Promotion of the 2017's edition of Balkan Barometer, 9 October 2017, Brussels	Official launch and presentation of Balkan Barometer 2017 – Balkan Barometer Business Opinion Survey and Balkan Barometer Public Opinion Survey. For this occasion video and infographics have been produced, and media in the region and in Brussels animated to join the promotion.	Achieving better understanding on what the RCC does and increasing general awareness of the RCC activities. Even after the promotion, a number of media reports have been recorded on Balkan Barometer. Media from all over the region still, 4 months after the launch, are quoting RCC Balkan Barometer	Finalized

Objective	Description of main activities planned in the reporting period	Main OUTPUTS/deliverables/results in the reporting period	Main OUTCOMES of the achieved results	Status of completion
			2017.	
	RCC supported BiH's theatre performance, 21 December 2017, Belgrade	Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) supported a guest performance of 'Divlje meso' ('Proud flesh') by Sarajevo National Theatre in Belgrade's Yugoslav Drama Theatre.	Awareness raising and fostering regional cooperation in the area of culture.	Finalized
	Interviews with Secretary General and other RCC staff members	Interviews organized with regional and international media, including regional Aj Jazeera Balkans, Deutsche Welle, RTRS, etc.	Achieving better understanding on what the RCC does and increasing general awareness of the RCC activities.	Finalized
	Promoting the most relevant activities of the Secretary General, the Program and the Political departments, as well as ESAP and Roma Integration 2020 projects and Grantees	Press coverage included following a number of RCC activities conducted by the Secretary General, Political and Program departments, resulting in 47 news items and press releases, and more than 2200 media reports in September-December period.	Achieving better understanding on what the RCC does and increasing general awareness of the RCC activities.	Finalized
	Production of public information materials	RCC has produced video and leaflet on MAP REA for WB6, video and infographics on Balkan Barometer 2017, videos on RCC's ESAP and Roma Integration 2020 projects, as well as an updated version of Security cooperation brochure.	Achieving better understanding on what the RCC does and increasing general awareness of the RCC activities.	Finalized

3. Management and operations

A remaining open issue related to the setting-up of the RCC Secretariat concerns the implementation of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat, which regulates the status of the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels.

The Kingdom of Belgium has conditioned the implementation of relevant provisions of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat providing for the fiscal privileges and immunities of the Head and Deputy Head of the RCC Secretariat's Liaison Office in Brussels with the issuing of an official authentic interpretation concerning the implementation of Article 17.1.(d) of the Host Country Agreement by the Parties to this Agreement in which the principle of taxability of the officials of the RCC Secretariat in their countries/places of origin and/or permanent residence would be explicitly confirmed. After a consultation procedure initiated by the RCC Secretary General in August 2008 it became evident that the adoption of an interpretative declaration amending the Agreement would not be acceptable to some of the Parties to the Host Country Agreement, as they consider that such declaration would run counter to the spirit of the current provisions of the Agreement and would lead to its de facto amendment. In light of the principles of general international law, the only recourse in this situation would be to proceed with amending the Host Country Agreement accordingly, in light of the request from the Kingdom of Belgium. This, however, remains subject to the will of the Parties to the Host Country Agreement. In this view, the RCC Secretary General sent a communication to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in early January 2009, proposing to the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a Party to and, at the same time, a depositary of the Host Country Agreement to consider the possibility of initiating the process of amending relevant provisions of the Agreement in order to provide for requested confirmation of taxability. This proposal of the RCC Secretary General is still under consideration by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The RCC Liaison Office keeps regular contact with the Protocol of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the ratification process of the Headquarters Agreement between the Kingdom of Belgium and the RCC Secretariat (signed in 2008).

During the reporting period, there were two completed recruitment processes: the post of Head of Political Department and the post of an Expert on Regional Economic Integration.

4. Key challenges in the reporting period

The situation with regard to risks and challenges to the implementation of regional cooperation is remained and also for the foreseeable future will basically be the same. RCC will work to obtain adequate government representation and/or timely action from the beneficiaries' side. Previous experience shows that in addition to sometimes unclear mandate, the lacking of proper capacities and expertise of nominated participants to take part in various RCC-facilitated processes, as well as the multifaceted challenges the economies of the region are facing domestically tend to move away the attention from cooperation at regional level.

The streamlining of the regional cooperation mechanisms, helped by the study initiated and commissioned by the European Commission's DG NEAR, could perhaps address at least partially those concerns and challenges.

5. State of financial contributions to the RCC Secretariat's budget for 2017

Contribution	Commitments	Contributions	Date Received
Contributors (Donors)			
Austria	50.000,00	50.000,00	3-Jun-17
Czech Republic	50.000,00	50.000,00	17-May-17
Federal Republic of Germany	50.000,00	50.000,00	25-Apr-17
Hungary	50.000,00	50.000,00	17-Feb-17
Italy	50.000,00	50.000,00	23-Oct-17
Ireland	50.000,00	50.000,00	30-May-17
Latvia	50.000,00	50.000,00	30-Jan-17
Norway	50.000,00	50.631,43	8-Aug-17
Sweden	50.000,00	50.076,12	11-Dec-17
Switzerland	50.000,00	50.000,00	3-Apr-17
United States of America	60.000,00	62.417,00	3-May-17
Total contributing countries donors:	**560.000,00**	**563.124,55**	
European Commission	**2.500.000,00**	**2.499.838,00**	**4-Jan-17**
South East Europe Contributors			
Albania	60.000,00	60.000,00	11-Oct-17
Bosnia and Herzegovina	60.000,00	60.000,00	23-Feb-17
Bulgaria	140.000,00	140.000,00	14-Feb-17
Croatia	80.000,00	80.000,00	10-Mar-17
Greece	140.000,00	140.000,00	4-May-17
Kosovo*	40.000,00	39.920,00	9-Nov-17
Moldova	40.000,00		
Montenegro	40.000,00	40.000,00	26-Apr-17
Romania	140.000,00		
Serbia	80.000,00	80.000,00	27-Feb-17
Slovenia	80.000,00	80.000,00	27-Feb-17
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	60.000,00	60.000,00	22-Dec-17
Turkey	140.000,00	140.000,00	25-Apr-17
Total South East Europe Contributors:	**1.100.000,00**	**919.920,00**	
Total Committed Funds	**4.160.000,00**	**3.982.882,55**	

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

6. Annex: RCC Annual Work Plan for 2017

Component A. Implementing the SEE 2020 Strategy through the flagship approach
Objective: Greater economic integration through easier flow of capital, people, goods and services within SEE and between SEE and the EU

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
A.1. Skills and Mobility						
A.1.1. Increased labour mobility in the Western Balkans						
A.1.1.1. Removal of obstacles to (short-term) mobility of professionals in the region						
1.1.1.1. 5th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications		x			Events/ conferences	*The Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications works towards opening negotiations on an international agreement on recognition of professional qualifications in prioritized sectors of health and construction. In 2017 the joint working group is expected to recommend the start of negotiations in one or all of the prioritized professions.*
1.1.1.2. 1st Meeting of the negotiating group (Health)				x	Events/ conferences	
1.1.1.3. 2nd Meeting of the negotiating group (Construction)				x	Events/ conferences	
1.1.1.4. 6th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications			x		Events/ conferences	
1.1.1.5. Technical assistance: Comparative study on positioning of stakeholders					Professional services	
1.1.1.6. Technical assistance: Independent legal consultant				x	Professional services	
1.1.1.7. Technical assistance: Two independent mediators for negotiation process (one for health & one for construction)				x	Professional services	
A.1.1.2. Creating preconditions for automatic recognition of qualifications						
1.1.2.1. 1st Meeting of the International Expert Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications			x		Events/ conferences	*The Ministries of Education of WB, as well as Croatia and Slovenia, have agreed to work towards creating conditions for automatic recognition of academic qualifications. In October/November a seminar on recognition of academic qualifications is planned.*
1.1.2.2. 2nd Meeting of the International Expert Group on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications, back to back with a Seminar on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications in SEE				x	Events/ conferences	
1.1.2.3. Technical Assistance on Automatic Recognition of Qualifications.				x	Professional services	
A.1.1.3 Mobility of high-skilled labour (PhD, researchers, academics) in SEE						
1.1.3.1. Preparatory meeting on mobility of PhD, researchers and academics in SEE			x		Events/ conferences	*RCC commissioned a study on mobility of the WB PhD students and researchers. The study will be presented at a seminar in June and should result in setting up a working group on developing better policies for mobility of researchers.*
1.1.3.2. Technical Assistance on mobility of PhD candidates, researchers and academics in SEE				x	Professional services	

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
1.1.3.3. Training on EURAXES				x	TAIEX[4]	
A.1.1.4. Western Balkans open and connected science						
1.1.4.1. 1st Working Group meeting on the Open Science		x			Events/ conferences	*Following the EU Competitiveness Council conclusion to open access of publically funded scientific publications and data by 2020, the WB economies have committed to the same goal and have set up a Working Group on Open Science aimed at supporting the economies in developing measures, policies and the infrastructure for Open Science.*
1.1.4.2. Training of the National Contact Points on Open Science		X			TAIEX	
1.1.4.3. Technical Assistance on Open Science				x	Professional services	
1.1.4.4. Joint Working Group meeting on Open Science and Mobility of Researchers				x	Events/ conferences	
A.2. Connectivity						
A.2.1. Developing economic corridors						
2.1.1. Enterprise-level analysis of IT industry, linkages and export potentials		x			Professional services	*Regional assessment of IT industry growth potentials and recommendations for further development.*
A.2.2. Digital integration						
2.2.1. Meetings of Regional platforms on roaming and broadband		X		x	Events/ conferences	*Extended Regional Roaming Agreement; assessed market impact of the Regional Roaming Agreement; enhanced capacities and regional exchange of practices in key areas of digital single market framework.*
2.2.2. High level ICT Forum on Digitalization of Western Balkans				x	Events/ conferences	
2.2.3. Market impact assessment of the regional roaming agreement			x		Professional services	
2.2.4. Capacity building on digital single market framework (roaming, broadband, cyber security, etc.)		X	x		TAIEX	
A.2.3. Sectoral support in environment, energy and sustainable development						
2.3.1. Meetings of Regional Working Group on Environment and its structures		X		x	Events/ conferences	*Strengthened institutional capacities and cooperation among SEE economies in the area of environment and climate change and coordinated regional approach in implementation of three important regional projects (nexus, biodiversity and climate proofing in road infrastructure development); establishment of structured sustainable policy dialogue at highest political level among WB economies and EU MS; supporting low-carbon development of the WB region through enhancing sustainable use of energy in the transport sector, promotion of energy efficiency, as well as renewable (electricity and advanced biofuels) and alternative energies for mobility purposes; support to the WB region in achieving mandatory*
2.3.2. Environment Ministerial meeting (Podgorica Initiative)			x		Events/ conferences	
2.3.3. Targeted capacity building for Regional Working Group on Environment and its structures (TAIEX)		X	x		TAIEX	
2.3.4. Assessments of climate and environmental challenges in SEE		X		x	Professional services	
2.3.5. Regional policy dialogue in rural development				x	Events/ conferences	
2.3.6. Study on sustainable use of energy in Western Balkans transport sector			x		Professional services	

[4] The mark "TAIEX" in the column "Type of Intervention" indicated that this is at the stage of proposal from RCC, whose implementation is conditioned by the outcome of negotiation with potential financing and schemes, including TAIEX.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
2.3.7. Regional meeting on energy management platform (EMP)		x			Events/ conferences	*energy saving targets (9%) through establishment of regional energy management platform (software, training and network) for public sector.*
2.3.8. Software development for the EMP			x		Professional services	
2.3.9. Piloting, testing, training and documentation of the EMP				x	Professional services	
2.3.10. Regional event to present the results of the EMP (depending on availability of funding in second half of 2017)				x	Events/ conferences	
A.3. Competitiveness						
A.3.1. Investment Integration						
3.1.1. Meetings of SEEIC Working Group on Investments (technical meetings on the matters of investment policies and promotion)		x		x	Events/ conferences	*Regional investment reform agenda developed and implementation commenced.*
3.1.2. E-permitting Working Group Session (technical meetings on implementation and maintenance of electronic systems for construction permits and spatial planning)	x		x		Events/ conferences	
3.1.3. Business Friendliness Working Group Session (technical meetings on setting and implementing the standards for business friendliness and improving municipal services to business)	x		x		Events/ conferences	
3.1.4. SEEIC Plenary Session (plenary meetings of the SEE's economic teams, represented by the officials from the ministries of economies, endorsing the findings and recommendations of technical working groups for further implementation)		x		x	Events/ conferences	
3.1.5. SEEIC Ministerial Meeting (annual meeting of the ministers of SEE economies, providing political support in the form of joint statement for the regular annual recommendations of the SEEIC's work in the areas of investments, industry, and sectors of priority)				x	Events/ conferences	
3.1.6. Support to investment conferences (Support to one big regional business/investment conference aimed at investment promotion of SEE)				x	Professional services	
A.3.2. Industrial Development						
3.2.1. Meeting of the food and beverages expert group (technical meeting on the matters hindering development of the sector, developing proposals for their mitigation, and developing a regional supply chain in the sector)				x	Events/ conferences	*Regional industrial policy coordinated and strategic sectors supported through creation of regional value chains along the economic corridors.*
3.2.2. Meeting of the tourism expert group (technical meeting on the matters hindering development of the sector, developing proposals for their mitigation, and developing a regional joint offer/product in the sector)			x		Events/ conferences	
3.2.3. Meeting of the ministers of tourism (providing political support to development of joint regional		x			Events/ conferences	

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
product in tourism)						
3.2.4. Meetings of the industrial policy expert group (expert meetings on improvement and harmonization of industrial policies in SEE)		x		x	Events/ conferences	
3.2.5. Regional assessment study in support to the industrial development working group (follow up of economic corridors diagnostics and regional analysis of economic zones) (				x	Professional services	
3.2.6. Support to sectoral development (tourism routes mapping and food and beverage supplier database) -study in support to work of the sectoral working group				x	Professional services	
Component B. Governance, Rule of Law and Security Cooperation						
Objective: Better governance, improved functioning of the rule of law and enhanced security in SEE						
B.1. Public Administration Reform						
B.1.1. Public consultations on draft laws and public policy documents						
1.1.1. Development of the Regional Practical Guidelines/Recommendations for Public Consultations on draft laws and public policy documents				x	Professional services	*Codification in a regional standard of best practices on designing policies and legislation, enabling an inclusive and active participation of society.*
1.1.2. Workshops on the draft Regional Practical Guidelines/Recommendations for Public Consultations on draft laws and public policy documents	x		x		Events/ conferences	
1.1.3. Regional Conference to endorse the Regional Practical Guidelines/Recommendations for Public Consultations on draft laws and public policy documents				x	Events/ conferences	
1.1.4. Designing and printing the publication with the Regional Practical Guidelines/Recommendations for Public Consultations on draft laws and public policy documents				x	Professional services	
B.2. Justice						
B.2.1. SEE networks, regional trainings and Western Balkans Working Group on Justice						
2.1.1. Meetings of SEE Judicial Training Institutions Network/Platform		x		x	Events/ conferences	*Functional platforms for exchange of experiences in judicial training and mediation in SEE; coordinated activities in the area of training and mediation; reduced court backlog, improved skills, competence and effectiveness of judges and prosecutors in EU law.*
2.1.2. Rule of Law Forum "European Convention on Human Rights, art. 14 – Freedom of Expression"– in cooperation with CSOs (participants: WB constitutional and supreme courts judges, governmental agents and directors of judicial training institutions)	x				Events/ conferences	
2.1.3. Meetings of Working Group on Justice, as a structure approving and evaluating RCC activities in the area of justice	x			x	Events/ conferences	

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
2.1.4. Meeting of SEE Associations of Mediators Network/Platform				x	Events/ conferences	
2.1.5. Development of training materials in cross-border cooperation (EU procedure and legislation)	x				Professional services	
2.1.6. Regional trainings in EU law and trainings of trainers for judges and prosecutors in cooperation with EIPA and SEE Schools of Law	x			x	Events/ conferences	
B.3. Anti-corruption						
B.3.1. Support in conducting sectoral corruption risk assessment / anti-corruption assessment of laws						
3.1.1. Training of relevant national authorities and NGOs on conducting corruption proofing of legislation according to the RCC's Methodology				x	Events/ conferences	*Corruption risk assessment/anti-corruption assessment of laws carried out as recommended by studies developed by RCC in three economies.*
3.1.2. Development of a comprehensive Guideline/Checklist of corruption risk in healthcare sector for conducting sectoral corruption risk assessment/anti-corruption assessment of laws	x				Professional services	
3.1.3. Technical assistance to governments in applying the Checklist/ Guideline and Regional Methodologies				x	Professional services	
3.1.4. Regional Event on Corruption Risk Assessment and Anti-corruption of Laws				x	Events/ conferences	
B.4. Security cooperation						
B.4.1. Supporting the existing security cooperation mechanisms in SEE						
4.1.1. SEENSA/working group meeting	x				Events/ conferences	*Specific topics (such as industrial security) discussed and recommendations made.*
4.1.2. SEEMIC Expert working group meeting		x			Events/ conferences	*Agreed Draft OSINT Assessment.*
4.1.3. SEEMIC meeting - main conference				x	Events/ conferences	*Adopted OSINT Assessment; debate on main security challenges in SEE; guidance for further SEE military intelligence services cooperation.*
4.1.4. SEENSA meeting			x		Events/ conferences	*Stock-taking of the current state of cooperation between SEE NSAs, debate and guidance for further cooperation, especially in vetting procedures, and education and training.*
B.4.2. Addressing the emerging security challenges in the region (CVE-FTF Platform)						
4.2.1. Meetings of the RCC Group of National Focal Points for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Southeast Europe (NFP CVE-FTF Group)	x			x	Events/ conferences	*Stock-taking of the current state of CVE efforts and cooperation in the region, exchange of examples of good practice, guidance for future CVE work.*

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
4.2.2. Regional expert workshop on the role of education system and civil society in prevention of radicalization		x			Events/ conferences	*Conclusions to serve as a basis for policy recommendations for future curricular and extracurricular activities in prevention of youth radicalization in SEE.*
4.2.3. Regional expert workshop on prevention and suppression of online radicalization and violent extremist propaganda (depending on availability of funding in second half of 2017)			x		Events/ conferences	*Exchange of good practices and recommendations on how to prevent online radicalization and counter online violent extremist propaganda.*
4.2.4. Commissioning a Study on rehabilitation and reintegration of former terrorists and violent extremists			x		Professional services	*To serve both as a preparation for the corresponding Workshop and to inform the debate at the next NFP CVE-FTF Group Meeting.*
4.2.5. Regional expert workshop on disengagement and de-radicalization of former terrorists				x	Events/ conferences	*Conclusions to serve as a basis for policy recommendations for the development of effective programmes of disengagement and de-radicalization of former terrorists.*
4.2.6. Regional P-CVE Coordination Conference (co-organized with PCC SEE and other partners)				x	Events/ conferences	*Creating synergies and enhanced CVE results with limited resources, better inter-organizational cooperation and avoidance of unnecessary duplication.*
Component C. Horizontal and supporting activities						
Objective: Positioning the RCC as the main focal point for regional cooperation and the preeminent resource for governments, private sector, donors and the civil sector						
C.1. Programming, monitoring and coordination						
C.1.1. Programming activities						
1.1.1. SEE 2020 Programming Committee Meetings	x		x		Events/ conferences	*Establish or maintain functioning programming process for the successful implementation of SEE 2020 Strategy.*
1.1.2.. 3rd Meeting on Donor Coordination in the Western Balkans	x				Events/ conferences	
C.1.2. Monitoring activities						
1.2.1. SEE 2020 Monitoring Committee Meetings		x		x	Events/ conferences	*Enable evidence-based policy making and a shift from activity based to result oriented monitoring.*
1.2.2. Balkan Barometer 2017				x	Professional services	
1.2.3. WIIW database - membership fee			x		Professional services	
1.2.4. Amadeus subscription				x	Professional services	
C.1.3. Coordination activities, grants						
1.3.1. 3rd SEE 2020 Governing Board Meeting		x			Events/ conferences	*Establish or maintain functioning coordination mechanisms with the governments, private sector, business community and civil society for the successful implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy.*
1.3.2. SEE 2020 Coordination Meeting				x	Events/ conferences	
1.3.3. Support to horizontal activities (short term technical assistance)	x	x	x	x	Professional services	
1.3.4. RCC Grant Facility		x		x	Grants	
1.3.5. Support to national coordination activities	x	x	x	x	Events/ conferences	
C.2.Political Department activities						
C.2.1. Strengthening cooperation between the SEE governments and with the EU						
C.2.1.1. Assist the SEECP and SEECP C-i-O						

PLANNED ACTIVITIES	TIMEFRAME				TYPE OF INTERVENTION	EXPECTED OUTCOME
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
2.1.1.1. Meetings of the RCC Board	x	x		x	Events/ conferences	*Operational guidance and supervision of the RCC; acceptance of the regular reports of the Secretary General; decisions pertinent to the activities of the RCC Secretariat and overseeing their implementation.*
2.1.1.2. Coordination Meetings between SEECP Troika, RCC Secretariat and EU	x	x		x	Events/ conferences	*Review of the developments pertaining to regional cooperation in SEE and provision of recommendations; harmonization of the priorities of the SEECP C-i-O with the Strategy and Work Programme of the RCC.*
2.1.1.3. RCC Annual Meeting		x			Events/ conferences	*Strategic coordination and further development of the regional cooperation processes; endorsement of the Annual Report of the Secretary General of the RCC for 2016 - 2017.*
C.2.1.2. Consultations of the Secretary General with SEECP and RCC participants						
2.1.2.1. Regular political dialogue with the RCC participants	x	x	x	x	Consultations	*Political support to the activities of RCC.*
C.2.1.3 Maintain the dialogue with the EU institutions						
2.1.3.1. Regular dialogue with the EU institutions and EU Member States	x	x	x	x	Consultations	*Ensuring close association of the RCC work with the EU enlargement agenda as well as better coordination of joint efforts.*
2.1.3.2. Informal meeting of the MFAs from the Western Balkans with the EU Commissioner				x	Events/ conferences	*Support towards the EU accession goals of the Western Balkans region.*
C.2.1.4. Support to parliamentary activities related to the EU acquis and the SEE 2020 Strategy						
2.1.4.1. Inter-parliamentary Conference on Trans-European Networks Policy and Connectivity Agenda (Organized by European Parliament)		x			Events/ conferences	*Raising awareness of SEE parliamentarians on the new trans-European network policy and its reflections to the region.*
2.1.4.2. Inter-parliamentary Conference on Stability and Growth in South East Europe (Co-organized with European Parliament and the Croatian Chairmanship of the SEECP PA for 2016 - 2017)				x	Events/ conferences	*Contributing to the dialogue between EP and the Parliaments from the SEE region in the context of the European integration process.*
C.2.2. Broadening links and strengthening partnerships with other regional stakeholders						
C.2.2.1. Participation of SG to high-level events	x	x	x	x	Events/ conferences	*Streamlining the regional cooperation in SEE and promotion of RCC activities; deepening of regional cooperation through stronger partnerships with all concerned stakeholders.*
C.2.2.2. Work with media/communication	x	x	x	x	Communication with media	*Increasing public awareness and support for the RCC activities.*
C.2.2.3. Support to the Winter School on Diplomacy (Organized by Diplomatic Institute of Bulgarian MFA)	x				Events/ conferences	*Raising awareness of the young diplomats on the regional cooperation in SEE.*
C.2.2.4. Diplomatic Training Seminar (Co-organized with the Diplomatic Academy of the Croatian MFA)		x			Events/ conferences	*Support to improving diplomatic skills of young diplomats from SEE, as a mechanism for achieving the EU standards and criteria.*

7. List of Abbreviations

ALERT	Applied Learning for Emergency Response Teams
ARI	Annual Report on Implementation
BB	Balkan Barometer
BDTF	Biodiversity Task Force
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
C-i-O	Chairmanship-in-Office
COP	Conference of Parties
CSIRT	Cyber Security Incident Response Teams
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CT	Counter- terrorism
CVE	Countering of Violent Extremism
CVE-FTF Platform	South East Europe Regional Platform for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Recruitment of Foreign Terrorist Fighters
DG	Directorate-General
DG CONNECT	Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DG EMPL	Directorate – General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
DG JRC	Directorate-General Joint Research Centre
DG JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG RTD	Directorate- General for Research and Innovation
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EJN	European Judicial Network
EJTN	European Judicial Training Network
ELI	European Law Institute
EIPA	European Centre for Judges and Lawyers
EMP	Energy Management Platform
ENIC	European Network of Information Centers
ENISA	European Union Agency for Network and Information Security
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Policy Centre
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
ESAP	Employment and Social Affairs Platform
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EURES	European Employment Services
EUROPOL	European Police Office
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTF	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GIZ ORF	GIZ Open Regional Fund
GIZ ORF MMS	GIZ Open Regional Fund - Modernization of Municipal Services
GIZ ORF-LR	GIZ Open Regional Fund for Legal Reform
HR	High Representative
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IISG	Integrated Internal Security Governance
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
IIA's	International Investment Agreements
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance

IPR	Investment Policy Review
ISDS	Investor State Dispute Settlement
IT	Information Technology
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JTI	Judicial Training Institutions
JWGI	Joint Working Group on Investments
JWGMRPQ	Joint Working Group on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications
JUVENTAFEST	International Festival of High School Theatre
MAP REA	Multi-annual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area in the Western Balkans 6
MARRI	Migration, Asylum and Refugees Regional Initiative
MC IPA	Multi-Country Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFP CVE-FTF Group	RCC Group of National Focal Points for Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism Leading to Terrorism and Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Southeast Europe
NIS	Network and Information Systems
NOAD	National Open Access Desks
NPR	National Point of Reference
NSA	National Security Authority
OA	Open Access
OAWG	Open Access Working Group
OIP	Online Investment Platform
ORF	Open Regional Funds for South East Europe
ORF LR	Open Regional Fund for South East Europe – Legal Reform
OS	Open Science
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSINT	Open Sources Intelligence Assessment
PA	Parliamentary Assembly
PES	Public Employment Services
PCC SEE	Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe
P-CVE	Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism
RAI	Regional Anticorruption Initiative
RACVIAC	RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
R&D	Research and Development
RDC	Regional Dimension Coordinator
ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
RWG Env	Regional Working Group on Environment
RWGJ	Regional Working Group on Justice
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SC	Standing Committee
SEDM	South East Europe Defence Ministerial
SEE	South East Europe
SEEAM	South East European Association of Mediators
SEE 2020	South East Europe 2020 Strategy: Jobs and Prosperity in a European Perspective
SEECP	South-East European Cooperation Process
SEECP PA	South-East European Cooperation Process Parliamentary Assembly
SEEFEN	South East Europe Firearms Experts Network
SEEIC	South East Europe Investment Committee
SEELS	South East European Law School Network
SEEMIC	South East Europe Military Intelligence Chiefs
SEENSA	South East European National Security Authorities
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise

SWP	Strategy and Work Programme
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the EC
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	Western Balkans
WB CIF	Western Balkans Chamber of Investments Forum
WBCTi	Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism Initiative
WeBER	Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform
WGJ	Working Group on Justice
WIIW	The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies