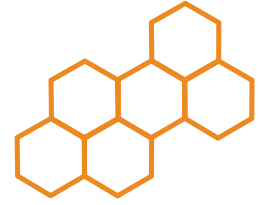




**03**  
**April**  
**2023**

# beeEFB Buzz



We are excited to share the latest Buzz News with you! A warm welcome to 13 new Alumni Members of our community! Congratulations to Bojana, Eldin, Andrea, Aida, Dušan, Gordana, Margareta, Kostian, Mariola, Luka, Chrysa, Andrijana, and Romina for their hard work and achievements with the beeEffect programme. You are joining a group that acknowledges your dedication and we are curious to see how the skills you bring will shape our Network in the future!

Our blast from the past takes us back to the EFB Community Training Programme in 2013! Fast-forward ten years later, news from EFB takes you to Prishtina, Kosovo. In cooperation with IDESE, EFB organizes the 2nd convention in “Engaged Democracy Convention vol.2 Engage, Inspire, Empower!” Finally, yet importantly, a formal introduction to the new beeEFB Alumni Board members is well-ordered! Have fun reading and keep in touch with the Network!

## News from the EFB

The European Fund for the Balkans (EFB) and the Institute for Democratic Engagement Southeast Europe (IDESE) are organizing the “Engaged Democracy Convention vol.2 Engage, Inspire, Empower!”, which will take place on May 17 to 20, 2023, in Pristina, Kosovo. The first Engaged Democracy Convention 2021 in Belgrade under the slogan “Engage, Inspire, Empower!” was a starting point in creating a space of trust for sharing experiences, and good practices and for establishing the Engaged Democracy Initiative (EDI) network. The “Engaged Democracy Convention vol.2” in Pristina will take the network a step further: it will aim towards creating and effectively connecting local-level needs and activities on a regional level.



The main goal of the second EDI Convention is to gather members of the EDI network in one place to continue and deepen the work from the last Convention and plan the future activities.

**The Convention in Pristina will be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect, meet new activists from all across the region and explore new venues for cooperation and common actions. If this is a topic of your interest and you want to get engaged drop an e-mail to [elena.petkovska@balkanfund.org](mailto:elena.petkovska@balkanfund.org)**



## 2nd Annual Event, Skopje, North Macedonia

The 2nd beeEFB Alumni Network annual event, held in Skopje, North Macedonia, from 3-5 March 2023, gathered more than 70 Alumni from Turkey, Serbia, Romania, Montenegro, Kosovo, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and North Macedonia, the host country. The Event was also an opportunity to welcome the 13 beeEffect participants from the 2022/2023 cohort into our community.

**Aleksandra Tomanić**, Executive Director of EFB welcomed the participants and emphasized the many accomplishments achieved during last year. She supported the beeEFB initiatives, such as the new beeEFB effect program launched last year and the engagement of active beeEFB Alumni.

In addition, **Mr. Franz Karl Prüller**, Chair of the EFB Steering Committee (ERSTE Foundation), greeted the participants **"from Bee to bees ☺"** He noticed the enthusiasm, the energy but also the commitment to give back, to reach out from this network as an evidence that something very beautiful continues and will continue to come out of this group. He expressed his confidence that the beeEFB Alumni network is standing on its own feet now, which will create possibilities to work together for the region.



**The objective of the annual event was to shape the relevant patterns aiming to influence the further engagement and closer collaboration between Alumni.**

Through this annual event, we wanted to create a safe space for conversations that go across countries and different sectors and to talk together about how we tackle EFB programs proactively, rather than being in a reactive state.

**Mr Darius Polok**, Managing Director of International Alumni Center (IAC), provided an interactive presentation of the multi community networks that put focus on understanding the key actors in a Network. Mr. Polok highlighted that developing connections, trust and community building through coordinated action creates space for different levels of involvement.

The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the various possibilities to learn and empower the Network.

You can find the complete [2nd Annual Event report](#) please follow this link

# Meet our new Alumni!

## Andrijana Lazarević



### Your experience from the Annual Event!

When I think back to the Annual Event held in Skopje, I remember feeling a sense of joy and connection as I spent time with amazing individuals who share my passion for positive social change. The discussions and presentations were insightful and inspiring, and I left feeling motivated and confident that we can make a real difference together. One of the highlights for me was the final session focused on planning future activities, as it gave me the opportunity to brainstorm and collaborate with others who share my vision for a better region.



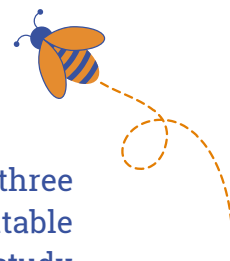
**The words of one of the speakers, Mr. Darius Polok, that "build constellations, not the stars" resonated with me and captured the essence of BeeEFB and connecting with the alumni network.**

### What did it mean to you to become a part of the EFB Alumni Network?

Being part of the EFB Alumni Network means being part of a community that provides support, guidance, and inspiration and offers opportunities for collaboration and collective action. It means having access to a valuable network of like-minded individuals who are passionate about making a difference and are committed to continued learning and growth. As one of the BeeEffect mentors, the great Irena Myzeqari Hoxhaj stated, "I have always believed in the #payitforward effect; my mentors made me a mentor", and I hope to continue this chain of giving back to the community by becoming a mentor myself in the future, as a part of the EFB Alumni Network. **#nopressure** ofc!

### Share your favorite memory/moment from the past year with beeEFB Network.

Collaborating with like-minded individuals, my dear Bees, from diverse backgrounds and sharing our experiences and knowledge was truly inspiring and rewarding. The support and encouragement we received from each other were amazing. The opportunity to learn from experts (from the network) in various fields and acquire new skills and knowledge has been invaluable. Having a mentor through the program has helped me identify areas for growth and development, which has been extremely beneficial.



The exchange activity in Sarajevo was also a memorable experience. Spending three days with my mentor and participants from the program was an unforgettable experience, and the Tufahije were fantastic! The memories I shared with my case study team will remain with me, reminding me of how we met, worked, and grew as friends.

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**If I had to choose one of my photos, this would be it. It's not the best, but I guess it's the one with the most representative background 😊**

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## **Blast from the past 2013**

### **EFB Community training – Think and act as a European**

The European Fund for the Balkans in cooperation with the European House (Hungary) organized a medium-scale EFB Community Training Programme in 2013, which was held both in Hungary and Slovakia. The priority of this training programme was to reach the other side and the broader European context, by thinking and acting in a European manner.

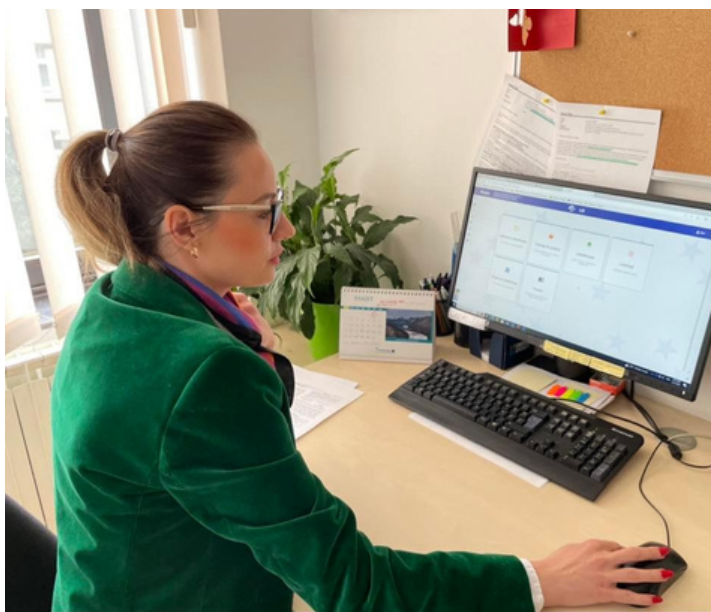


The project brought together 15 community members from the 7 Western Balkan countries including Croatia by treating them as EU citizens on an equal footing and on a partnership basis into the current mainstream of European policy-making processes. Participants were introduced to cross-border cooperation projects, EU-funded initiatives, and platforms through a series of focused training and practical field visits.

## My EFB story

As a part of the Fellowship Program for Government Officials 2017/18, my host institution was the Office of the Government of Republic of Slovenia for Legislation. Prior applying for the program, my home institution was at the beginning of developing an information system for alignment of the national legislation with the EU acquis as one of the main criteria for a country which aim to join the European union. So, the general goal of creating an information system was to support the European integration process and to digitalize the process of alignment of legislation.

This was the main reason for me to choose this Office for my fellowship. My main goal was to become familiar with the Legal Information System of the Republic of Slovenia (PIS). It is important to point out, that during my fellowship, the Office was in the phase of developing a new, more effective and user-friendly applications called MOPED and it was the perfect moment for my fellowship program. I had the opportunity to work directly in the existing PIS system, see how the new information system is being developed, and test its functionalities.



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Upon my return home, the first step was to present the program of my internship to my colleagues, and in detail the way PIS works, as well as the application MOPED. This was a real challenge because my task was to present the functionalities of both applications which I worked on for almost three months, through a PowerPoint presentation.

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Soon after that, my home institution established a special team responsible for the preparation of an information system for alignment. Thanks to the knowledge and information I gained during my fellowship, I was a part of this team.

After two years of preparing and developing the system, my home institution, the Directorate for European Integration, with the support of Sweden, presented on 14 February 2023 the first **Legal Information System – LIS**. The established IT system will improve efficiency and accelerate the process by reducing the time needed for the preparation of alignment instruments (table of concordance), optimization of the process verification and confirmation of compliance, optimization of terminology and translation process, open access to data on alignment which will increase the transparency of the process.



Considering that five years have passed since my fellowship, I must emphasize that the experience and knowledge I gained by participating in the program contributed to the development of a very important IT system for my country in the European Union accession process.

**Nejra Hiroš**

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fellowship  
Program for Government Officials 2017/18  
EFB Alumni Network Member



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## Meet the new 2023 - 2024 Board Members



**Armela Maxhelaku**  
EFB Fellowship  
Programme 2017/18



**Amin Šepić**  
EFB Fellowship  
Programme 2013/14



**Hatidža Jahić**  
Leadership Development  
Programme 2009/2010



**Ivan Jovetić**  
Leadership Development  
Programme 2007/2008



**Konstantina Karydi**  
Leadership Development  
Programme 2008/2009



**Migena Kalthi Karaj**  
EFB Fellowship  
Programme 2008

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For your ideas, questions, comments - email us at [efbalumni@gmail.com](mailto:efbalumni@gmail.com).

May the hive  **Bee** with you!