

ROUNDTABLE

Enhancing Mobility-Driven Research and Innovation in Western Balkans for Sustained Economic Growth and Convergence with the European Union

5 June 2025, 14:30 – 17:00

Venue tbc / Hybrid Event

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/46-DvEyTSmW-sxqV16YWeQ>

BACKGROUND

To build up on our efforts to strengthen mobility-driven research and innovation in the region, as a result of the achievements within the [Mobility thematic working group](#) that SCIDEV led in 2023, within [Civil Society and Think Tank Forum 2023 \(CSF2023\)](#) of the [Berlin Process](#), we are implementing a follow-up project dedicated to enhancing mobility-driven research and innovation in the Western Balkans (WB6) for sustained economic growth and convergence with the European Union (EU), supported by the [Open Society Foundations - Western Balkans \(OSF-WB\)](#).

The “[Enhancing Mobility-Driven Research and Innovation in Western Balkans For Sustained Economic Growth and Convergence with the European Union](#)” project aims to contribute to the European and regional research and innovation agendas and influence decision-makers to increase investments and create more opportunities for mobility-driven research and innovation (R&I), while contributing to a stronger research and innovation ecosystem across the Western Balkans.

Building synergies with the [Joint Science Conference of the Berlin Process](#) and the [Chairs’ Conclusions of the Leaders’ Summit in Tirana in October 2023](#) and using the momentum of the [New Growth Plan of the EU for the Western Balkans](#), SCIDEV continues to contribute to research and dialogue around the region’s integration into the European Research Area and sustainable economic development through science, technology, and innovation. This discussion is also framed by the opportunities presented by the EU’s New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, the planning of the new [Framework Programme](#) and [Competitiveness Fund](#) of the EU and the [European Political Community Summit](#) in Tirana.

This event brings together key stakeholders, researchers, and policymakers to reflect on and advance the role of mobility-driven research and innovation in the Western Balkans. It will present key insights from the research work of SCIDEV throughout the project, featuring presentation of the projects’ policy briefs, and provide a platform to push forward concrete recommendations to decision makers.

We invite you to join this conversation and contribute to shaping a more integrated and innovative research landscape for the region.

This event is part of the Open Society Foundations | Western Balkans initiative #IGNITA, a collaboration among regional civil society organisations to create a hub for stakeholders focused on regional cooperation and EU integration. Discover more about IGNITA [here](#).

Discover more about SCIDEV’s project [here](#).

AGENDA

14:15 – 14:30 | Participants Registration and Coffee

Welcome desk opens and coffee is served/Online participants join the ZOOM webinar.

14:30 – 14:50 | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Moderated by **Dea Elmasllari**, Project Manager, SCIDEV

Blerjana Bino, Executive Director, SCIDEV

Klodjan Seferaj, Program Manager at Open Society Foundation - Western Balkans

Odeta Barbullushi, Resident Professor, Department of European Transformation and Integration Studies, College of Europe, Tirana Campus (tbc)

Jenni Lundmark, European Union Delegation in Albania

14:50 – 15:50 | Advancing Research and Mobility in the Western Balkans: Research Insights and Success Stories

Moderated by **Abi Dodbiba**, Senior Expert, SCIDEV

Keynote Speeches

Adele Marsullo, Policy Assistant, the Commissioner for Enlargement (tbc)

Armela Dino, Policy Analyst, and Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain

Inputs and insight presentations from SCiDEV's experts

- **Alba Brojka** on *Mobility Opportunities and Implementation of Agreements Signed as Part of the Berlin Process*
- **Mrika Hoxha and Venera Gudachi** on *Participation of WB6 in the Horizon Europe 2025-2027 Programme and Planning for the EU's Framework Programme*

Success Stories R&I Albania

- **Françeska Korançe**, EIT Community Officer Albania on European Innovation and Technology Community Hub in Albania and opportunities for the R&I ecosystem (tbc)
- **Enrik Keco**, Project Manager, Albanian-American Development Fund, on BRIGE by READ - Boosting Research and Integrating Diaspora for Growth in Education (tbc)

15:50 – 16:50 | Increased Investment in Mobility Driven Research and Innovation in WB - Policy Pathways for Sustained Economic Growth and Convergence with the EU

Moderated by **Abi Dodbiba**, Senior Expert, SCIDEV

- **Ana Vezyroglou**, Deputy to the Regional Strategy and Investments, Western Balkans Unit, DG Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood (tbc)
- **Bernhard Fabianek**, DG Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe Association
- **Lucian Brujan**, Senior Scientific Officer for International Relations at the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina (tbc)
- **Ralf Hanatschek**, DLR German Aerospace Center (tbc)
- **Elke Dall**, Senior Expert on Science and Innovation Policy, Center for Social Innovation (tbc)
- **Gazela Pudar Draško**, Board Member of the Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and Western Balkans and Director, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory (tbc)

16:50 – 17:00 | Recommendations for the Path Forward

Orkidea Xhaferaj, Digital and Innovation Policy Expert SCIDEV

17:00 | Refreshments and Networking