

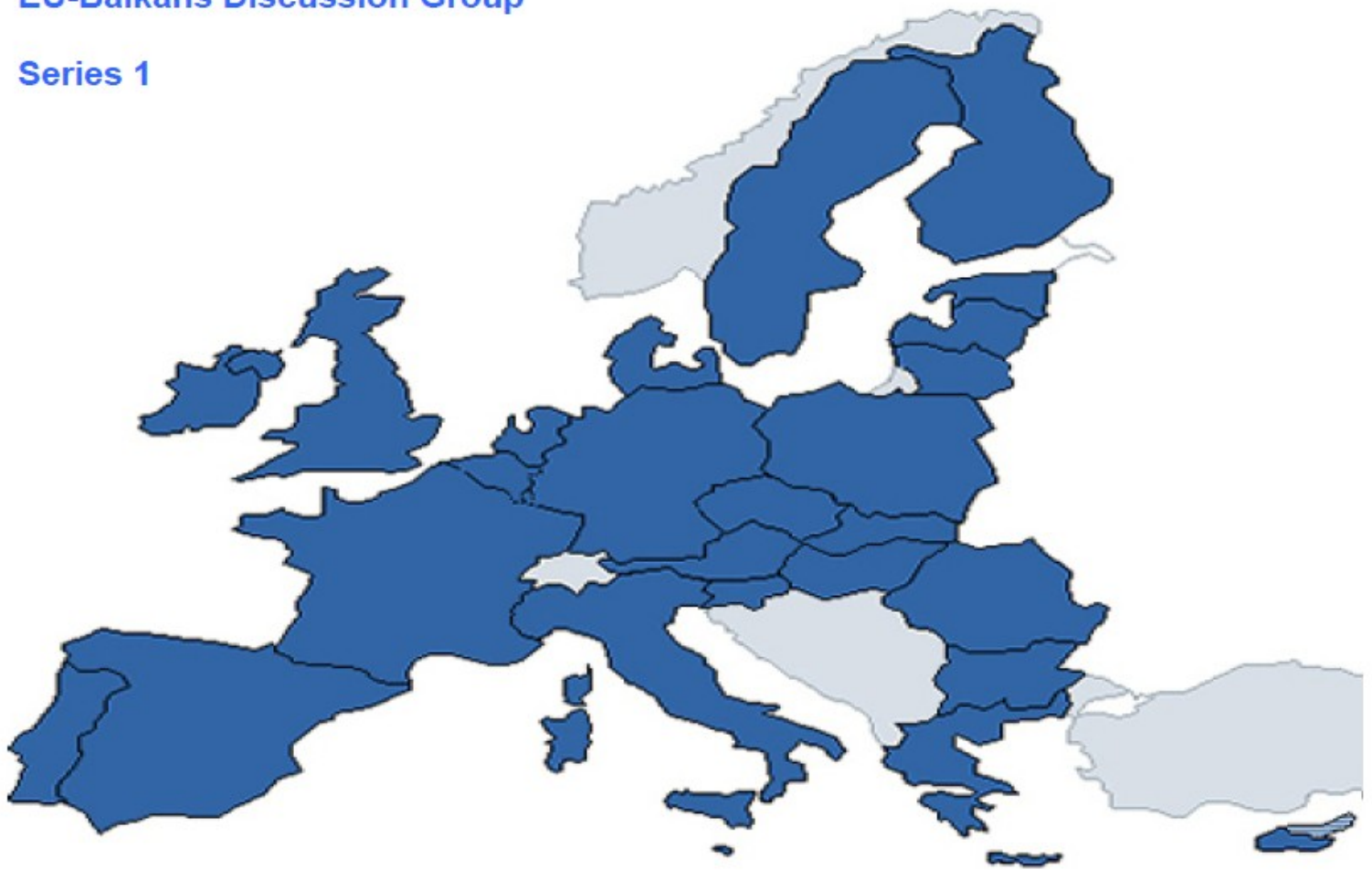


# IBDE

International Business and Diplomatic Exchange

EU-Balkans Discussion Group

Series 1



International Business and Diplomatic Exchange

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## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE**

The International Business and Diplomatic Exchange (IBDE) is a not-for-profit organisation designed **to enhance global business and diplomatic partnership** through facilitating dialogue between business and the diplomatic corps - to their mutual advantage

The IBDE's main activities are directed towards facilitating regular and constructive dialogue between diplomats and the business community. IBDE offers consultative forums as a rapid response to diplomatic and business needs, facilitating cross-fertilisation of ideas between business people, diplomats and academics ensuring that expertise is diffused across professional boundaries. IBDE is a 'just in time' organisation, responding and adapting its services to the expressed needs of its membership, in particular the smaller nations, thus enabling them to have an impact beyond their current sphere of influence.

Since consultation is at the heart of the integration process, each IBDE project can act as a facilitator in the dialogue between business and diplomacy. IBDE will pursue its project by rigorously maintaining its political, cultural and religious neutrality, remaining within the limits set by the law.

### **EU-Balkans Discussion Group**

#### **BACKGROUND**

**European integration stands alongside comprehensive and sustainable growth as overarching goals for the Balkans. Therefore, socio-economic development, sound public finance, external assistance management, enhanced consultation among all stakeholders and anti-corruption should be considered as major regional priorities. That is, regional cooperation and the pursuance of sound economic policies in order to attract more foreign direct investment are fundamental for the region's progress towards European integration.**

Numerous donors, such as United Nations, World Bank, EBRD etc, provide assistance in the Balkans for carrying out reforms, developing policy, translating international commitments to national programmes, supporting service delivery and decentralization, meeting gender equality commitments and supporting a market economy. The EU supports governments in addressing those challenges arising from the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), the World Trade Organization, and other trade agreements. Capacity building and policy support will continue to enable Balkan governments to develop trade and to attract foreign direct investment. The private sector should be encouraged to engage in socially inclusive activities and to promote corporate social responsibility.

As the Balkans progress towards European integration the IBDE EU-Balkans Discussion Group is one of those rare opportunities which enables key players from the international business and diplomatic community to provide input on these issues in a constantly changing world economic picture. These rapidly changing socio-economic developments are a clear indicator that in today's globalised economy good governance is a fundamental necessity for sustainable development and effective poverty reduction.

**The magnitude and complexity of these challenges requires greater cooperation and constructive dialogue among all stakeholders within a civil forum.**

The specific rationale of the IBDE 'EU-Balkans Discussion Group' is to encourage a transparent and open discussion between business and diplomacy as two of the main pillars in today's global interaction. Ultimately, the IBDE EU-Balkans Discussion Group aims to contribute toward enhancing regional integration into EU markets, particularly since Western Balkans transport corridors are increasingly becoming relevant to the European market. This can be a direct route towards further European integration.

#### **MEETINGS**

**EU-Balkans Discussion Group** meetings are organised through a planned annual program but will also be responsive to input from participants, as well as to issues that suddenly arise and dominate the international/regional political and business agenda. They are open to EU/Balkans Heads of Mission, senior UK

government officials as well as senior business executives with an interest in Southeast Europe only. Conclusions from our meetings and seminars will be offered in our reports and disseminated to respective governments only at the request of the IBDE Supervisory Board.

## **Financing**

- IBDE requires initial financing through the provision of seed funding by businesses and embassies as well as other donors
- Ongoing financing is provided by a system of annual contributions through income from membership, conferences, seminars, investment forums, research, publications, application to trusts, foundations, governments, embassies, corporate and other sponsors, which are strictly regulated.

Contributors and participants are not paid fees because every activity ensures mutual benefit, so that forums are very cost effective