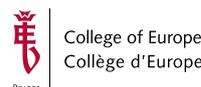


Initiative for coal regions in transition
in the Western Balkans and Ukraine

Coal regions exchange programme

June 2021



Coal regions exchange programme

The coal region-to-region exchange programme is an opportunity for regions to start direct, one-to-one dialogues, connect with different stakeholders, learn from each other and transfer knowledge. The possibility to explore peers' experiences and reflect about own challenges and developments will help to accelerate coal regions' clean energy transition.

The exchange programme is part of the [Initiative for coal regions in transition in the Western Balkans and Ukraine](#), and is implemented by the [European Commission](#) via the initiative's secretariat.

Who can participate?

Coal regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine and the EU can participate in the exchange programme.

Programme benefits

To enable a direct and beneficial exchange, participating regions will be paired based on their interests and expertise. As part of the programme, they can benefit from **study visits, knowledge exchange, expert support**, and other opportunities to share experiences.

Participating regions from the Western Balkans and Ukraine will get tailored and specific inputs from experts supporting the exchanges. They will also access advice from their EU pairs, as the EU regions can share their specific knowledge and good practices, through hands-on learning opportunities offered within study visits.

Participating EU coal regions will have the opportunity to reflect on their transition so far. Guided by inputs from experts and methodological tools, they can evaluate their own work and map out next steps. The experts can give further input on how the EU coal regions can achieve those identified steps and speed up their local just transitions.

The programme is also a **networking opportunity**, as the participants can access a network of regions from the Western Balkans, Ukraine, and the EU, as well as interact with the European Commission and six more international organisations leading the initiative: the [World Bank](#), the [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#)

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

(EBRD), the [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB), the [Energy Community Secretariat](#), Poland's [National Fund for Environment Protection and Water Management](#), and the [College of Europe in Natolin](#).

Rules and requirements

Priority will be given to pairs made up of one coal region from the Western Balkans and Ukraine and one from the EU. However, the programme is flexible and needs-based, so alternative figurations are also possible, for example

- a pair that consist of two regions from the Western Balkans and Ukraine
- EU regions that are frontrunners in smart specialisation or renewable energy to join and share their innovations
- various entities (such as public authority, energy company, trade union, NGO, research institution) to apply

The length of the exchange will depend on the needs and capacities of participating regions and available resources. The programme offers up to 20 regions three options: participation in long-, medium- or short-term exchanges. The differences between these options are presented in the table below.

	Duration of exchange (indicative)	Number of meetings	Number of topics covered
Long-term exchange	1 year	2 meetings, 2-3 days each (hosted by each region in the pair)	Up to 4
Medium-term exchange	3-6 months	1 meeting, 2-3 days (hosted by one of the regions in the pair)	1-3
Short-term exchange	3-4 months	1 meeting, 1 day (hosted back-to-back with a related event)	1

Depending on the interest and needs of participating regions, topics will be selected to be explored in-depth. For example, they might include

- closing and repurposing coal-related sites and infrastructure
- designing an effective governance model to support a transition process in a region
- developing of an engagement strategy and setting up a series of transition dialogues
- conceptualising economic diversification for a coal region as a means for long-term job creation

The exchange in each pair will be guided by a **facilitator** from the initiative's secretariat. Together with the regions, the facilitator will help define the focus of the exchange, objectives, key challenges, areas for which expert input is needed, as well as collaboratively develop agendas of meetings. Several **experts** will contribute to each exchange by sharing their knowledge on the topics selected by the regions.

How to apply?

To join the programme, interested participants are invited to apply by following three steps described below.

1. Form a group of region representatives (a "delegation") that fits the following criteria
 - is led by a public authority from the coal region or by a suitable local entity (such as energy company, trade union, NGO, research institution) that submits a letter of support from a public authority in their region
 - engages other relevant stakeholders, including from industry, labour groups, civil society organisations, academia
 - consists of up to 7 representatives of the region
 - demonstrates gender balance within the delegation
2. Fill out a suitable application form from provided on the programme [webpage](http://www.europa.eu) (www.europa.eu > Energy > Topics > Oil, gas and coal > Coal regions in the Western Balkans and Ukraine > Coal regions exchange programme or <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/coal-regions-in-the-western-balkans-and-ukraine/coal-region-exchange-programme>)
3. Submit their applications as PDF documents to the initiative's secretariat via email: exchangeWBUA@coalregions.eu. The deadline for submitting applications is **15 September 2021**.

Note that for applying and participating in the exchanges, some of your personal data will be required. Read the privacy statement on the programme [webpage](#) for details.

All applicants will be informed about the results of the selection process within one month after the application deadline. Selected regions will be suitably matched to initiate effective pairings. The starting point of each exchange will be defined based on the needs and interests of participating regions.

Financial support

The exchange programme is resourced to finance the region-to-region exchange including travel and accommodation of up to 7 representatives per participating region. No other activities are funded as part of the programme.

For further details about the coal region-to-region exchanges, please contact exchangeWBUA@coalregions.eu