



# The ERA Fund for the Western Balkans and Ukraine

Essential Support on the Path to EU Accession

# What is the Fund?

The ERA Fund for the Western Balkans and Ukraine is an initiative of the Friends of ERA Association to support capacity-building and greater access to EU law training for all legal practitioners in the countries next in line to join the European Union, i.e. both the candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and potential candidate country (Kosovo\*) in the Western Balkans, as well as the candidate countries of Moldova and Ukraine.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

# Why is it needed?

The countries targeted by this Fund have experienced – or are still experiencing – war, economic hardship, corruption and other challenges.

The prospect of joining the European Union offers a ray of hope. Yet the process is long, and it is important that legal practitioners in the countries concerned acquire the understanding and tools to prepare for accession, as well as the perspective that this process will reach a successful conclusion.

Equally, respect for the rule of law must become embedded in the legal culture of these countries, which requires a high level of knowledge, mutual trust and accountability in the legal system.

# How can you contribute?

1.

## Single donation of an amount of your choice

You can choose to support the Fund as a whole, allowing your donation to be used for the purpose for which it is most needed.

2.

## Regular annual donation of an amount of your choice

You can make a longer-term difference by renewing your donation every year.

3.

## Donation to support a specific cause

You can specify how your donation is used, subject to ERA's agreement and in the interest of the Fund as a whole. For example, you can choose to support:

- an activity in/for the Western Balkans with the possibility to specify which countries you wish to support
- an activity in/for Ukraine
- an activity on a specific topic of your choice (Rule of Law, Gender based violence, etc.)

ERA may also identify specific projects in need of support.

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Every cent you donate will be used for the purpose that you have chosen to support. This is thanks to the fact that the Fund will be administered by the Friends of ERA Association, so no new administrative structure will be created. Activities supported by the Fund will be prepared and implemented by ERA and its experienced staff.

With the support of the Transnational Giving Europe network, ERA will ensure that donations to the Fund will be recognised as charitable donations with any fiscal benefits that this may entail according to the

donor's country's law. Donors to specific causes will receive regular bi-annual updates on how their donation is being used. Donors to specific causes/countries will receive regular bi-annual updates on how their donation is being used. Other Donors will receive an annual report.

Decisions on projects to be supported by the Fund will be taken by the Executive Board of the Friends of ERA Association based on a proposal by the Management Board of ERA.

# What will the fund do?

To bring the judiciary and legal professions in the Western Balkans, Moldova and Ukraine closer to the EU legal community, the Fund will support projects that, on the one hand, provide opportunities for trainers to visit the main centres of EU law and, on the other hand, bring high-quality EU law training to practitioners in those countries and in their own languages.



EU law training requires knowledge and expertise. The experience of working in a European context can prove invaluable in understanding how EU law affects daily legal practice in the Member States. In order to support the development of high-quality EU law training at national and local level, the ERA Fund for the Western Balkans and Ukraine will fund one-week study visits for trainers at ERA, as well as to the Court of Justice and other European institutions.

At ERA, we have 30 years' experience in developing EU law training. By covering the costs of such study visits, the Fund will allow people responsible for training the legal professions in the target countries to take home valuable knowledge and expertise for the future.

The cost of organising a study visit varies according to the number of participants and price of travel from their countries of origin, but – as an example – the estimated average budget for a group of 10 participants is €15,000.



To fulfil our mission to provide EU law training to the (potential) candidate countries, ERA must cooperate with local training actors to bring our training programmes to practitioners at national level. Organising high-quality European training programmes at a price that is accessible to practitioners in those countries will be a challenge, however.

The aim of the ERA Fund for the Western Balkans and Ukraine is to ensure that all legal practitioners in the

(potential) candidate countries, whatever their income, can benefit from locally delivered, high-quality EU law training programmes. By providing part of the funding for such programmes, the Fund will keep participants' contributions affordable and accessible to all.

The cost of organising a one-day face-to-face training seminar ranges from €5,000 to €10,000, depending on the number of external speakers and whether simultaneous interpretation is required.





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