

# Resilience and Sustainability of Regional Cooperation Initiatives in SEE6

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## Thematic event

December 08, 2020 | 11.00 – 12.15 | Zoom Platform

Regional cooperation constitutes a cornerstone of European Union policy towards the South East Europe Six (SEE6) region. Initiated in the mid '90s, the regional approach was designed to serve as an impetus for the European integration of SEE6 countries. Over time, the regional cooperation activities experienced a shift from reconciliation and good neighborly relation towards other sectors such as infrastructure, economic growth, social development, culture, environment, etc. A number of regional cooperation initiatives (RCI) such as platforms, structures and networks have been set up in many sectors and levels.

With the Berlin process, the sector-based regional cooperation got a new impetus. New sectors and actors entered the scene. Increased cooperation in transport, energy and digital connectivity, on youth, on regional market became keywords. Riding the waves of globalization, 3<sup>rd</sup> party actors appeared as well. Business actors, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders set up their own regional cooperation initiatives.

But at the same time, many other initiatives have not lived to the initial expectancies. After the set up moment and a couple initial activities, they've slowed down and some have faded away. In general it can be said that RCI set up, intensity of activity and survival rate has varied according to the political momentum, availability of support, and/or the perceived need of regional actors to advance in certain sectors of regional agenda.

The fact is that up to now, no comprehensive or up-to-date research on the development extent of regional cooperation in the region is publicly available. The exact number and a consolidated dataset of the existing regional cooperation initiatives remain still to be explored. This information is all the more relevant now when regional integration has become paramount for the progress of SEE6 towards EU membership.

It is in this context that CDI supported by the Government of Luxembourg, has identified, scanned, assessed and classified more than 90 RCI. Those initiatives are grouped by sector, membership, HQ location, year of creation, and are hosted in a web-based platform that is publicly accessible, called Observatory of Regional Cooperation (ORC).

ORC is dedicated to the observation, collection of empirical data, analysis and promotion of regional cooperation in the South East Europe. It contributes to the resilience and sustainability of an all-inclusive regional cooperation. Starting from a "photo" of RCI scene made in 2016, we have updated the RCI list, improved our toolbox, introduced dynamic and included data on institutional good governance wherever available.

ORC tries to answer the question on what is crucial for the SEE6 RCI initiatives to be relevant, resilient and sustainable.

## PROGRAMME

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**11.00 – 11.05 Welcome**

**11.05 – 11.15 Regional Cooperation – a View from Luxembourg**

Philippe Donckel | Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia

**11.15 – 11.25 SEE6 Regional Cooperation and Accession Negotiations**

Tanja Mišćević | Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council

**11.25 – 11.35 The Many Faces of Regional Integration in SEE6**

Gazmend Turdiu | Director of Regional Affairs and Neighboring Countries, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Albania

**11.35 – 11.45 Presentation of the Observatory of Regional Cooperation**

Ardian Hackaj | Director of Research, Cooperation and Development Institute

**11.45 – 12.10 Q/A session**

moderated by Nemanja Todorović Štiplija | Editor-in-Chief of European Western Balkans

**12.10 – 12.15 Closure**