



## Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

Head Office Tirana  
Palace of Congresses, Dëshmorët e Kombit Boulevard  
1000 Tirana, Albania

Website: [www.rycowb.org](http://www.rycowb.org)

E-mail: [office@rycowb.org](mailto:office@rycowb.org)

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STARTS

### **RYCO starts working**

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), a regional organisation headquartered in Tirana, started working in its full capacity on Tuesday, 4 July. RYCO Secretary General Đuro Blanuša will participate this year's Western Balkan Summit in Trieste together with the high-level officials of the region and EU member states on 12 July where he will present the first youth exchange program for youth from the Western Balkans.

Invited by the European Commission, RYCO will also participate at the EU-Western Balkans Forum on Youth. This event will be organised on 11-12 July 2017 alongside the Western Balkans Summit in Trieste. The Forum aims to build on previous discussions among young people, youth workers, youth leaders, and other relevant stakeholders involved in youth policy.

The first open call for regional projects supported by RYCO will be launched in October 2017. In the forthcoming period, all information on RYCO's work will be available at the web page [www.rycowb.org](http://www.rycowb.org)

As RYCO stands for diversity, its officials in Tirana and the local branches in the capitals in the region is a diverse team of professionals coming from all over the region. Earlier this year, the first Deputy Secretary General Fatos Mustafa from Kosovo\* was appointed.

RYCO tends to be a good example of regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and strengthen the Berlin process, peaceful and democratic cooperation in the region. From the very beginning, RYCO will take care of a high intercultural, educational and content-related quality in the provided bilateral or multilateral youth exchange programs. With its exchange programs, RYCO aims to enhance mutual understanding of cultural differences and development of mutual respect as well as joint responsibility for the region and Europe among the Western Balkan youth. Through its approach RYCO fosters constructive dealing with the past and supports the process of reconciliation in the region.

In cooperation with researchers, universities and other institutions, RYCO will promote intercultural research for the region in order to better respond to actual everyday situations, perceptions and needs of young people. It is also looking for close cooperation and partnership with institutions and civil society from the European Union in order to anchor the European idea in the Western Balkans. In dialogue with European partners, already existing experiences and inspirations from the field of international youth exchange will be used.

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\*This designation is without prejudice to position on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration on Independence.

ENDS

For further information, please visit RYCO website [www.rycowb.org](http://www.rycowb.org)

Communication Officer: Nikola Ristić



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E-mail: [office@rycowb.org](mailto:office@rycowb.org)

+381 63 486 449

[nikola.ristic@rycowb.org](mailto:nikola.ristic@rycowb.org)