



1st TRAIN Alumni Conference



Berlin,
27-30 June 2013



TRAIN Alumni Conference

Research and Advocacy in a Challenging Policy Environment: Sharing experiences from the Western Balkans

Berlin, 27-30 June 2013

Registration deadline: 6 May 2013

Since it was launched in 2010, the TRAIN programme reached over 50 researchers from more than 20 think tanks in the Western Balkans. It is thus high time to use the potential lying in this growing pool of policy analysts and think tanks and bring together different “TRAIN generations” for an exchange of ideas and best practices.

Against this background, we cordially invite you to join us for the

1st TRAIN Alumni Conference

from 27-30 June 2013 in BERLIN!

Background and objectives

Effective policy advocacy, strategic focus, evidence-based decision making... This may sound very nice in theory, but how do these concepts work out in practice? And how do they work in the particular policy environment of the Western Balkan countries?

The first TRAIN Alumni Conference will gather participants from the 2010-2012 editions of TRAIN to present, discuss and analyze concrete examples of policy research and advocacy, tried and tested in the Western Balkans context.

Concretely, the conference aims to offer TRAIN alumni participants a forum to

- get to know participants from the other years and their respective organizations;
- share their experiences on the research and advocacy activities they have conducted in the past years and months;
- present examples of successful policy research and policy advocacy, as well as obstacles to it, and to identify critical factors of success and failure;
- undertake a reality check of different advocacy concepts and their suitability within the Western Balkans' context;
- exchange with Berlin-based experts and policy makers;
- seek peer advice on planned or ongoing research projects and develop fresh ideas for future activities;
- explore possibilities for future coordination and cooperation.

Programme outline

| | <i>Thursday, June 27</i> | <i>Friday, June 28</i> | <i>Saturday, June 29</i> | <i>Sunday, June 30</i> |
|-----------|---|--|--|---|
| Morning | | Joint Panel of TRAIN participants 2010-2013: <i>Good Practices in Policy Advocacy – examples from the Western Balkans</i> *** | <i>Keynote Speech:</i> Think tank work in the Western Balkans – is there such a thing as effective advocacy? <i>Guest speaker tbd</i> *** | |
| Afternoon | Arrival of participants | Panel discussion with representatives from Berlin-based institutions and CSOs <i>Topic tbd</i> *** Meeting with German policy makers (Foreign Office/ Chancellery/ Bundestag) | <i>Panels I & II:</i> <i>Topic tbd in line with expressed interests</i> *** <i>Research fair:</i> Presentation of planned or ongoing research projects | Departure of participants / free time in Berlin |
| Evening | 18.00: Informal get-together 20.00: Joint dinner with TRAIN participants 2010-2013 | Joint dinner with TRAIN participants 2010-2013 | <i>Outlook: future alumni activities</i> Goodbye dinner with TRAIN alumni participants | |
| | TRAIN participants 2010-2013 | | TRAIN participants 2010-2012 | |

Framework: The conference will kick off with an informal get-together and opening dinner on Thursday evening. Participants of the TRAIN 2013 midterm-seminar, which will precede the alumni conference, will join alumni participants for dinner as well as the first conference day.

The conference programme will allow for both the formal and informal exchange of participants with researchers and representatives from the Berlin policy scene, as well as the debate of ideas and best practices among TRAIN alumni researchers, structured along concrete examples.

The gathering ends with a goodbye-dinner on Saturday evening, June 29. Sunday is reserved for the departure of participants, or simply to enjoy the day in Berlin.

Conference contributions: To provide for a structured exchange of best practices, participants are asked to contribute to the conference by presenting a particularly relevant example of a research or advocacy activity conducted by their think tank (independently or in cooperation with partner organizations) for instance on one of the following topics:

- *Approaches from various advocacy areas:*
 - Cooperation with media
 - Social media campaigns
 - Policy advocacy through formal channels (working groups etc.)
 - Cooperation with EU institutions
 - Domestic coalitions and cross-country cooperation
 - ...

- *Approaches from various thematic areas:*
 - Rule of law, good governance, institution-building
 - Local and regional development
 - ...
 - Environmental issues, energy and transport
 - Bilateral relations and regional cooperation

- *Proposals on further thematic and advocacy areas are very welcome.*

Modalities of participation

Participation in the TRAIN Alumni Conference is open to any researcher who took part in the TRAIN Programme 2010, 2011 or 2012. In addition, researchers participating in TRAIN 2013 will join alumni researchers for the first conference day.

Every alumni participant should prepare a short presentation (10-15 minutes) on the chosen topic in one of the conference panels. The specific thematic emphasis of the conference panels will be defined in accordance with the participants' proposals for contributions.

Travel arrangements and accommodation:

DGAP will bear the costs related to the participation in the alumni conference, including travel allowances, accommodation and meals, for at least one researcher per think tank. Costs for a second participant from the same think tank will be covered within the limit of available places.

Travel arrangements are **self-organized**. DGAP will reimburse **travel costs up to 300 € per participant** (upon submittal of original receipts/electronic invoices). In exceptional circumstances, DGAP might be able to cover higher travel costs. Please contact Theresia Toeglhofer directly if you are unable to find adequate transportation within the indicated budget frame.

Reservation of accommodation is made by DGAP.

Registration for the conference is binding. Possible costs arising from the cancellation of participation are to be borne by the participant/participating think tank (e.g. eventual cancellation fees for accommodation, airplane tickets, etc.).

How to register

To register for the conference, please send a scanned copy of the completed and signed registration form by **6 May 2013** at the latest via email to Theresia Toeglhofer: toeglhofer@dgap.org

Looking forward to seeing you soon in Berlin!