



Dear beeEFB Network Alumni,

As the year draws to a close, we want to express our deepest gratitude to all of you for your unwavering support and active participation in our organization's initiatives throughout the year. Your dedication has been instrumental in creating a vibrant and thriving community.

Whether it was your enthusiastic involvement in our **joint initiatives** or **beeEffect program**, or your energetic presence at **national meet-ups**, your contributions have not gone unnoticed. Your engagement has enriched the experiences of fellow Alumni and played a crucial role in fostering a sense of unity within our organization. We are specifically thankful to mentors in the beeEffect program who transcend this message to new members of our bee Network.

As we reflect on the accomplishments during this year, we are excited to announce the upcoming opportunities for 2024. The informal **call for proposals is now open**, and we encourage you to share your ideas for initiatives and activities that will further enhance our community. Your innovative suggestions have always been the driving force behind the success of our programs, and we look forward to seeing what inspiring initiatives/projects you have in mind for the upcoming year.

On a more personal note, we extend our warmest wishes to each of you for the upcoming year. May it be filled with joy, success, and new opportunities. Your journeys and collective achievements continue to inspire us, and we are privileged to have you as part of our ever-growing family.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community, and here's to another year of shared successes and meaningful connections.

We are wishing you a joyous holiday season and a successful New Year 2024!

Warm regards,
beeEFB Board

Milena Stefanović

European Fund for the Balkan

The story about the influence of social networks is a never ending story and the phenomenon of social networks in years to come will be subject of debates and scientific analysis. Some are claiming that its potential is overrated, while others claim that networks are the most powerful tool for spreading information. I admit, that I am a bit old fashioned, and that I enjoy much more socializing with real people than using social media networks and platforms to “socialize”.

The meaning of social networks if we talk about human ones, not online platforms, vary, and it can have different values to different people. To me, **beeEFB Alumni Network** was from the begging of my work at the EFB, something unique and in my view, it is the biggest social capital regional civil society organization can have.



In my view, the investment in individuals is always a good idea, since the people are those who are developing societies, inventing, discovering, transforming.

For many of us, being involved in different capacities in the Community and programs around it, was truly transformational experience. Nowadays, I keep listening from ex fellows how the **LDP and Fellowships were life-changing experiences**, and I'm glad that the **beeEffect programme** is trying to follow this path by using one simple recipe, that is obvious but not very common in Alumni networks around the world.

The specific value or uniqueness of the beeEFB Alumni Network is that it has never been an average network of either professional or personal relationships. It is rather an exceptional combination of both, having strong professional perspective while at the same time dedicating time to create personal relationships. In short, values of respect and openness are shared, while having fun and learning from each other is a must.

Superpower we have as a network is love and respect for each other, and I hope we will continue to nurture it.

Connecting the Dots

The event “**Connecting the dots**” organized by the Alumni Network of the European Fund for the Balkans Development and Leadership Programme was an opportunity for different professionals from diverse fields in art sector to share their personal story in the Balkans connecting the dots of their steps, choices and achievements and present part of their work inspired by and created in the Balkans. It was an honour for Balkans Beyond Borders to be invited and present its story in **Timisoara** where the event was held on the 18th of November. BBB was represented by **Vasiliki Maltasoglou**, co-founder of the organization. The event succeeded to present a real Balkan experience having all these artistic stories of Balkan journeys co-shared.



Balkans Beyond Borders (BBB) was born -created- in 2010 at the LDP programme, so it can be considered as an EFB child, and since 2011 it has been working independently promoting its idea and mission to foster cooperation and creation in the Balkans. BBB brought together a Balkan mix of young graduates yet professionals to co-create and it changed our lives making them “richer” and at the same time it gave us the opportunity to offer a safe and creative space for young creators to improve their career and collaboration perspectives.

The goal of the BBB Festival and all activities of BBB was to enhance cooperation among young Balkan people by awakening their emotions and raising their awareness effectively. Therefore, we concluded that short films were the right means to do so, because they encapsulate in a short time a whole microcosmos to be shared and shape identities. With a special focus in pressing contemporary issues, we achieved to bring every year a wide selection of Balkan short films to different audiences in the Balkan region and beyond having covered so far, the 90% of the Balkan region. It celebrates **Balkan diversity** thus maximizing its regional impact on promoting the Balkan culture and European values.



Cooperation is not only the goal of BBB but it is a vital part of our existence. Balkans Beyond Borders has invested time and effort in creating a network of young active and creative people from the Balkans and beyond in order to support and promote the BBB idea. Therefore, through fruitful collaborations we overcome the difficulty of reaching new audiences every year and we continue growing the BBB cultural and creativity hub.

Vasiliki Maltasoglou
Balkans Beyond Borders (BBB)



THE BEE
EFFECT
PROGRAMME

The mentor - mentee meetings

Participants of the beeEffect Programme were very active in a past month. Mentor met their mentees in their home town and they shared short stories about their experience. Enjoy it!

Dunja Pejić & Suela Tahiraj

Rovinj, Croatia

Suela's visit was an absolute delight! With big smiles and even bigger curiosity, we dove into conversation and exploration the second we met. We must've spent a good ten hours together in those two and a half days, lost in a world of a million questions that seemed to unlock crucial answers along the way. It was a time of encouragement and support; I urged her to seek, explore, and leave her fears behind. The lessons learnt were as profound as they were simple: the unknown is exhilarating, experimentation is key, and believing in your ability to successfully handle disruptions is crucial.





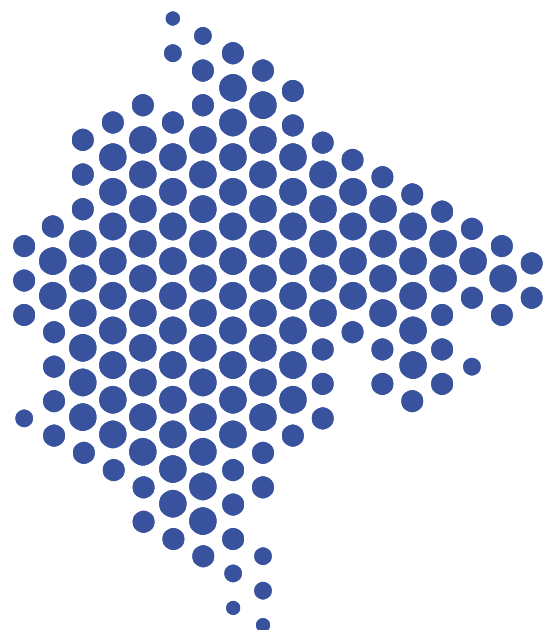
Donjet Gjoka & Daniel Josifovski

Thessaloniki, Greece

Daniel and I decided to step out of our comfort zones for our in-person learning & networking exchange. We were convinced that it would strengthen our bond and help us bolster our relationship. And it did! As a result, we met in Thessaloniki with another mentoring couple, Chrysa and Edisona. It was a remarkable experience as we conducted joint sessions which ultimately resulted in a highly positive and energised atmosphere. Throughout the whole trip we combined aspects of getting to know each-other better, achieving the set goals and exploring the city, its gastronomy and of course nightlife. Among countless smiles, laughter, curiosities and sharing, I must say it was an inspiring experience!

beeEFB Alumni Annual Event 2024: A Focused Gathering in Montenegro

As we close another year, we are excited to share news about the upcoming **beeEFB Alumni Annual Event**, set to take place in the beautiful city of **Podgorica, Montenegro**. This year, we are taking a more focused approach to the event, highlighting our commitment to fostering deeper collaboration and more tangible outcomes within our community.



This exclusive, invitation-only gathering will be held from **February 22 to 25, 2024**, and is designed to bring together individuals who have been notably active in beeEFB's activities over the past year, as well as those who have demonstrated a strong interest in contributing to our alumni network. This selective strategy ensures that the event remains dynamic, engaging, and productive, aligning with our goals of meaningful participation and impactful collaboration.

Please note that invitations to this event will be personalized and sent out to selected alumni. This approach is in line with our desire to create a more efficient and outcome-oriented meeting, concentrating on those who have significantly contributed to our progress and are keen to drive forward our community's initiatives.

While attendance is by invitation, we encourage all members of our alumni network to stay tuned for updates and follow-up information. We are dedicated to keeping our community informed and engaged, valuing the continuous exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Your understanding and support in making this event a focused and fruitful gathering are greatly appreciated.

The beeEFB Board



For your ideas, questions, comments - email us at efbalumni@gmail.com.

May the hive **Bee** with you!