



Welcome to the Chamber Partnership Western Balkans Newsletter.

After a turbulent six months since the start of our project, we are happy to give you the first update on our various project activities that focus on strengthening the regional network of the WB6 chambers of commerce and their interregional association, the “Chamber Investment Forum”.

The Chamber Partnership Western Balkans is a 3-year project funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation. This initiative aims to foster regional integration and contributes to the implementation of the “Regional Economic Area” in the Western Balkans.

Due to the Corona crisis, we had to reshuffle our project plan and digitize many activities. And even though the crisis came with many uncertainties and slowed down processes, the chambers and the project team made the best of it, and we were still able to advance the development of platforms, products as well as the organization of various online events.

Thank you for your involvement and cooperation with us. We are looking forward to continuing on this path and, if you wish, we will keep you updated on our project activities via [LinkedIn](#) and this newsletter.

Best regards,
Sophia Kluge, David Piegazki, Olga van Zijverden

IN THIS ISSUE:

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STUDY REGARDING “NEARSHORING POTENTIAL”

UPDATE OF THE INVESTINSEE-WEBSITE

WEBINARS FOR CHAMBERS AND MEMBER COMPANIES

DIGITAL SIGNATURE PLATFORM FOR CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN

DESIGN THINKING WORKSHOP

FUNDING MAPPING

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Chamber Partnership Western Balkans



Regional economic study on “Nearshoring potential”



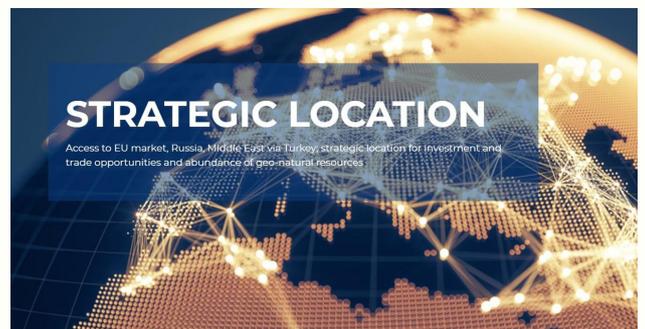
The close connection of the chambers of commerce to their member companies offers valuable insights into the WB6 business community. That is particularly valuable in times of crisis and potential changes in the economic environment.

The Corona crisis brought up the hot topic of “reshoring” and “nearshoring”, meaning the reorganisation of value chains to increase the economy's resilience to potential future crises.

Together with the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw), we will analyse the potential of nearshoring considerations of German companies for the Western Balkans economies and how to use it.

Update of the investinSEE-website

The six markets of the Western Balkans countries are relatively small and fragmented. However, to seize their full potential on a global scale, the region aims to appear as “one investment region”. To those who consider investing in the Western Balkans, the investinsee-website offers comprehensive information about the location factors of the WB6.



With the help of our project, the website was expanded and covers now two more topics: A section on Special Economic Zones (SEZ) in the region and an overview of Digital Innovation Hubs (Smart SEE). Furthermore, the platform is now available in the national languages of the WB6 in addition to English.

Webinars for chambers and member companies

Time	Topic
13:45 – 14:00	REGISTRATION AND LOGIN
14:00 – 14:10	WELCOME
14:10 – 14:20	INTRODUCTION
14:20 – 14:50	Aim and Objectives of the Webinar REGIONAL COOPERATION SO FAR Who cooperated with whom on what and how so far?
14:50 – 15:30	IMPROVEMENT OF COOPERATION How can regional cooperation between Chamber be improved (Objectives, Methods)
15:30 – 15:45	PRIORITY METHODS AND TOOLS
15:45 – 15:55	NEXT STEPS What are the practical next steps to improve our cooperation?
15:55 – 16:00	CLOSING

We utilized the time during the Corona crisis to organize various webinars:

- Online Survey Training for chamber staff
- Webinars for member companies on “Financial ways out of the crisis”

Digital signature platform for certificates of origin



A crucial joint project of the chambers of commerce is the digitization of signatures on certificates of origin for international trade. The introduction of digital signatures will reduce non-tariff trade barriers and accelerate the movement of goods. To support this long-term goal, we already got in contact with an experienced German IT firm who is ready to counsel us on handling technical specifications and requirements for a regional solution of a digital signature platform for certificates of origin.

Design Thinking Workshop

Design Thinking is a great tool to gain new perspectives on how to deal with a crisis such as the current one. Therefore, we organized a four-week Design Thinking workshops for chamber staff to develop ideas on how the chambers can continue to offer targeted services despite declining turnover and how the organizations can adapt their communication accordingly.



Digital pin boards allowed us to carry out even such interactive processes. And many sticky notes and clustered priorities later, the concept of an "Information Speed Dating" platform slowly crystallized to connect companies in the region with all relevant stakeholders. The idea is that companies need to obtain reliable information about new regulations quickly and easily.

Funding Mapping



In the past few years, the European Union and European and US development agencies have invested in total approximately 6 billion euros in numerous projects in the countries of the Western Balkans. To get a clearer picture of the financed sectors and ongoing cross-border projects we mapped the funding activities and wrote an article about the potential of further regional integration. You can find the infographic and the accompanying article [here](#).