

## **Europe Goes Local in the Western Balkan region – “Buddy Support System”**

### **Call for an expert**

The SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre is seeking an expert to design and facilitate the implementation of the *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System” between municipalities in the Western Balkan region<sup>1</sup> and other countries.

#### **Background**

The [SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre](#) (SALTO SEE) established by the European Commission, supports cooperation with the Western Balkan countries within the Erasmus+ Programme (youth field) and the European Solidarity Corps. Through these programmes, SALTO SEE promotes European cooperation in the field of youth and contributes to the broader development and recognition of youth work and volunteering across the Western Balkan region.

[Europe Goes Local](#) is a platform and a strategic cooperation framework between different countries within the two Programmes. Its mission is to strengthen local youth work and youth work policy in line with the [European Youth Work Agenda](#), which was established during the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2020. The Agenda aims to reinforce and further develop youth work practices and relevant policies across Europe.

The *Europe Goes Local* platform brings together a wide range of partners, governmental and non-governmental, engaged in developing youth work and youth policy at the local level. It fosters dialogue, cooperation, and learning through various national and international activities. Municipalities across Europe are the primary target group. The initiative promotes youth work and youth policy development as outlined in the [European Charter on Local Youth Work](#).

#### **Europe Goes Local in the Western Balkan countries**

Since 2021, SALTO SEE has been actively involved in the *Europe Goes Local* platform by providing expert consultation and guidance to selected municipalities in the Western Balkan region on the development of local youth work and youth (work) policy. In addition, SALTO SEE organises and facilitates the participation of these municipalities in international support and learning activities.

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<sup>1</sup> **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo** (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence)

## **Europe Goes Local “Buddy Support System” in the Western Balkan region**

Municipalities participating in *Europe Goes Local* in the Western Balkan region have frequently expressed the need for more opportunities to connect, network, exchange practices, and establish partnerships with municipalities from other countries. The *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System” has been designed to respond to this need.

The system matches municipalities from the Western Balkans with interested municipalities from other, primarily *Europe Goes Local* partner, countries and guides them through a facilitated cooperation process. Each paired group will carry out activities that address their shared priorities in the field of local youth work development and its European dimension. These needs will be identified and analysed prior to the matching.

The concept for the Buddy Support System builds on a [similar support measure](#) previously developed by SALTO SEE to assist organisations within the European Solidarity Corps.

### **Working process and task description**

The expert is expected to develop and implement the *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System” in close cooperation with SALTO SEE and the local coordinator of *Europe Goes Local* in the Western Balkan region. While the concept will draw inspiration from the existing “Buddy Support System” used within the European Solidarity Corps, it will require adaptation to reflect the distinct aims, objectives, and target group of this initiative.

The core structure of the “Buddy Support System” will remain: identifying municipalities interested in participating, pairing suitable partners, defining a cooperation framework for each pair, and organising online meetings to monitor progress.

Specific tasks of the expert:

- Co-developing the “Buddy Support System” concept, including its objectives, structure, and activities, together with SALTO SEE and the local coordinator of *Europe Goes Local* in the Western Balkan region.
- Actively contributing to the identification and engagement of suitable municipalities (primarily from *Europe Goes Local* partner countries) and encouraging their application in the “Buddy Support System”.
- Developing a working framework and concrete cooperation steps for the municipal pairs, ensuring they can collaborate independently while regularly monitoring their progress in cooperation with SALTO SEE and the local coordinator.
- Planning and facilitating three online meetings at the start, midpoint, and conclusion of the process together with SALTO SEE and the local coordinator.
- Preparing and delivering a final report summarising the implementation and outcomes of the *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System”.

The task will involve participation in 3–4 preparatory and follow-up working meetings online (each lasting approximately two hours) together with SALTO SEE and the local coordinator of *Europe Goes Local* in the Western Balkan region.

## Profile of the Expert

The selected expert should demonstrate:

Knowledge and/ or professional experience in:

- the development of youth work and youth (work) policy;
- working with municipalities and/or other local youth work actors;
- democratic and participatory processes involving young people;
- international and European youth work;
- the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps;
- designing and delivering educational or capacity-building activities.

Competencies:

- pedagogical and creative skills for designing inspiring learning environments, including in online settings;
- analytical skills to gather, interpret, and synthesise information and to develop innovative solutions;
- strong organisational skills, including the ability to work independently, take initiative, and meet agreed deadlines;
- proven ability to design and deliver educational activities for target groups and frameworks similar to those addressed by the *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System”;
- excellent communication skills in English, both written and spoken.

## Time involvement and fee:

The *Europe Goes Local* “Buddy Support System” concept development will be initiated in December 2025. The first two-hour online preparatory meeting with the selected expert, SALTO SEE, and the local coordinator of *Europe Goes Local* in the Western Balkan region will take place in the third week of December (exact time to be agreed with the expert), resulting in a concept proposal. The remaining online meetings will be scheduled at mutually convenient times for all team members in 2026.

The involvement of municipalities in the Buddy Support System will take place between March and September 2026, and the working process and timeline for the team will be organised accordingly.

The Europe Goes Local “Buddy Support System” is implemented entirely online.

The selected expert will act as the main responsible person for the project. A representative of SALTO SEE and the local coordinator of *Europe Goes Local* will play advisory roles and will participate in internal meetings as well as meetings with the municipalities.

The total fee for the assignment is 3,300 EUR (calculated at EUR 330 per ten full working days). A payment of EUR 990 will be made in 2025, with the remaining amount paid in 2026.

Contracts will be concluded with legal entities. Two service contracts will be issued to the organisation represented by the selected expert: one in December 2025 and another in January 2026.

### **Application procedure, enquiries, and contact details**

Interested applicants are invited to fill in the online [application form](#) by **11 December 2025 at 12:00**. The selection results will be communicated to all applicants by **12 December 2025**. For more information:

- Maija Lehto (SALTO SEE) [maija.lehto@movit.si](mailto:maija.lehto@movit.si)
- Dragan Atanasov (the local coordinator of Europe Goes Local in the Western Balkan region) [atanasov.dragan@gmail.com](mailto:atanasov.dragan@gmail.com)

More information about Europe Goes Local is available at <https://www.europegoeslocal.eu/about/>.