



15 Years of Success

15 Years Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme of German Business for the Countries of the Western Balkans

„The secret of success lies in investing into education. Education, training, knowledge, are the major driving forces of progress“ – Zoran Djindjic, 2002

The Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme of German Business for the Countries of the Western Balkans was established 15 years ago. The Programme aims at preserving the legacy of the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Serbia – Zoran Djindjic, who was assassinated in 2003. For Zoran Djindjic, young people and their education, experience and motivation were the greatest potential of any country. The Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme of German Business, with its clear focus on education and training of young people, follows the ideas of the pro-European Serbian Prime Minister.

The Internship Programme was established after the assassination of Zoran Djindjic in 2003 in a joint initiative by the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (OA) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The programme is implemented on behalf BMZ by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Responsible for the implementation is the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (OA), in Serbia in cooperation with the Zoran Djindjic Foundation.

The programme initially focused on advanced trainings of Serbian students. Since 2007, it has been continuously expanded beyond national borders and offers today annually up to 75 well-educated and highly motivated young professionals from the seven programme countries – Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia – the opportunity to gain practical experience through three to six month internships in German companies in Germany. The aim of the programme is to give the scholarship holders an insight into market economy and corporate culture in Germany and to build up broad regional and global contacts. Over the past 15 years, the Internship Programme has developed into a regional programme covering education, economic development and regional reconciliation.

Supported by institutions from organized business, development assistance and the German embassies in the countries of the region as well as regional educational institutions, the Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme has become a very successful best-practice example of a regional Public-Private Partnership. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provides monthly scholarships to cover the costs of living. Additionally, the participating companies provide the internship position/s and mentoring during the internship and cover the costs for accommodation and insurance. Over the past 15 years, more than 150 leading German companies have been participating in the Internship Programme.

Due to the regional approach of the project, the Internship Programme contributes to practical training and further education of young and cosmopolitan people who think across borders and shape the economic development of their home countries. “The countries of the Western Balkans lie practically on our doorstep and are important partners for German development cooperation”, says BMZ Parliamentary State Secretary Hans-Joachim Fuchtel. “Youth plays a key role in shaping the future of this region - we rely on them. Therefore, we have established the Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme, which has been carried out since 2003 by the BMZ together with the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations and which is open to young motivated students interested in Germany.”

Upon their return home, the scholarship holders become members of programme’s lively regional Alumni Network and thus remain connected to each other, to Germany, German culture and economy. The Alumni Network, which currently consists of more than 640 members, promotes regional cooperation and helps to further develop



its network. The Alumni Network offers a pool of highly qualified young professionals, who work in leading German, international and local companies as well as in institutions in the region.

In a joint initiative, the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development are supporting the economic transition of the region and the establishment of a regional network of well-educated young talents.

„Today we can look back on 15 successful years of the Zoran Djindjic Internship Programme. The programme is an excellent example of successful cooperation between German business and the national German development cooperation as well as cooperation between Germany and South Eastern Europe“, says the chairman of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations, Wolfgang Büchele. „Our programme makes a small but decisive contribution to sustainable confidence-building between the countries of the Western Balkans and supports the cross-border integration of South Eastern Europe.“



Zoran Djindjic, Primeminister of Serbia and Klaus Mangold, former chairman of the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations Klaus Mangold, World Economic Forum in Salzburg, 2002



Scholarship holders of Gernation 2017 in front of the BMZ office in Berlin



Scholarship holders during their internships at Robert Bosch GmbH in Renningen, 2017



Workshop of the Alumni-Network in Sarajevo, 2017

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