



BANCA D'ITALIA  
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## EU funded Programme for Strengthening the Central Bank Capacities in the Western Balkans with a view to the integration to the European System of Central Banks - Phase III

### Launch event for the programme

On 26 February 2026, Banca d'Italia hosted the launch event of a three-year EU-funded programme aimed at supporting central banks and banking supervisory authorities in EU candidate countries and potential candidates from the Western Balkans<sup>1</sup>. The initiative follows a similar programme that was successfully completed in 2025<sup>2</sup>.

The programme involves 19 central banks from the European System of Central Banks (ESCB)<sup>3</sup>, with the European Central Bank also contributing. The Deutsche Bundesbank acts as programme coordinator. The European Union funds the initiative with a €3 million budget under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA III).

The event was opened by Ms Chiara Scotti, Deputy Governor of Banca d'Italia, who underlined how, in a context of renewed political tensions, interna-



tional technical cooperation can play a key role in strengthening institutions, building trust, and reinforcing the values underlying the European and international order.

Mr Giulio Venneri, Deputy Head of the Unit for Enlargement Strategy & Coordination at the European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement and Eastern Neighbourhood, emphasized the central role of the rule of law as a core element of the enlargement process and underlined the programme's contribution to building credible and independent central banks.

Mr Martin Dinkelborg, Director of the Centre for Central Bank Dialogue at the Deutsche Bundesbank, highlighted the progress made by beneficiary institutions in moving closer to EU standards, as well as the cooperative nature of the programme, in which donors and beneficiaries work on an equal footing to achieve a common goal.



In the subsequent panel session, representatives from the Western Balkans shared their



▶ Watch the meeting highlights

thoughts on past achievements and discussed new perspectives for the ESCB programmes.

The second day was devoted to the first Programme Steering Committee meeting<sup>4</sup>, during which the project's institutional framework was illustrated and discussed, with a focus on the programme structure, communication strategy, and financial arrangements.

The programme includes 21 training events, two high-level policy workshops, and one policy seminar (Component I), as well as six bilateral measures for each beneficiary (Component II). Activities under both components will be carried out in parallel.

Within this framework, Banca d'Italia will organize a high-level meeting on payment systems, a training event on Suptech, and four bilateral activities on different topics with the central banks of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia.

<sup>1</sup> See [Press release](#). The recipient institutions are: Bank of Albania, Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banking Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Banking Agency of Republika Srpska, Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo, Central Bank of Montenegro, National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia, and National Bank of Serbia.

<sup>2</sup> The second phase of the programme was successfully concluded in September 2025, see the [International Technical Cooperation Newsletter No. 25](#). The first phase was conducted in 2019-2021.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, the central banks of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

<sup>4</sup> The Programme Steering Committee is made up of members appointed by each of the participating institutions – both donors and beneficiaries. It is entrusted with managing the programme, reviewing its progress, giving guidance and taking decisions whenever required. It meets quarterly.



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*The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of Banca d'Italia*