

**Project title:** *“Enhancing Youth Cooperation and Youth Exchange in the Western Balkans 6” supported by the European Union (EU)*

**Background:**

RYCO is an intergovernmental organisation that stewards and promotes regional, cross-border and intercultural cooperation within and among its six Western Balkan Contracting Parties. The Agreement on Establishment of RYCO was signed by the WB 6 Prime Ministers at the WB Summit held in Paris, on 4 July 2016, within the Berlin Process. RYCO’s unique governance system brings together government and civil society representatives to ensure young people are represented at all levels within the organisation. Its Local Branch Offices ensure RYCO is represented in all the six Contracting Parties, while its Head Office is the organisational hub situated in Tirana.

**Programme Mission:**

RYCO’s programme focuses on creating opportunities for young people to engage in activities that build mutual understanding and reconciliation in the civic, social, educational, cultural and sports domains. RYCO initiates and participates in policy making and advocates for reform. It supports the development of a political and social environment that empowers and facilitates youth exchange. In pursuing its mission, RYCO will demonstrate its commitment to human rights, human dignity and the building of peace based on mutual respect and trust.

RYCO’s programming is boosting the competencies of young people, civil society and schools in the region. RYCO is funding initiatives that connect schools and civil society organisations in the region. It invigorates and enhances constructive dialogue. It enables and stimulates intercultural learning and builds mutual understanding. These non-formal education investments are strengthening the competences of young people and encouraging their active citizenship. RYCO supports civil society organisations, schools, and other partners to provide youth from the region with training and cooperation opportunities. The organisation is working closely with partners to assist them in building effective and enduring relations of confidence and cooperation between governments and civil society, and to encourage and foster their capacity to support youth exchange investments.

RYCO is implementing the project “Enhancing youth cooperation and youth exchange in the Western Balkans 6” financed by the European Union. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the process of reconciliation in the region of the Western Balkans Six by enhancing youth mobility, cooperation and activism. The project will support RYCO in the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2019-2021 through grouping its efforts to promote and achieve opportunities for young people to engage in regional activities that build mutual understanding and reconciliation in the civic, social, educational, cultural and sport sectors.