

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Sustaining public services in times of crises: Decentralized approach

Crises mark a turning point in life of municipalities, and the key to being well prepared to face various complex emergencies lies within them. Providing accessible, inclusive and affordable public services is fundamentally important for effective crisis management.

The state normally has a leading role in the provision of both basic social services and also justice and security. In emergency and political crisis contexts, as in Lebanon, however, the central government often fails to reinforce core public service delivery, and intervene in such vitally important areas as utilities (access to electricity, water and sanitation, waste & sewage management), sustainability, safe means of transport, as well as public security and infrastructure. Hence local and regional authorities need to fall back on subsidiarity and assume the responsibility and work to ensure the safe continuation and even improvement of local public service provision to protect lives and wellbeing of their respective communities. Lebanon is increasingly engaging in fragile situations which require tailored approaches, sustained attention and action by the local stakeholders and international community. There is a strong need for broadening understanding of *what* and *how* local public services should be to effectively respond to existing challenges, as well as building resilience for future ones. Collaborative, proactive and timely efforts by decision makers and public are and will be key to boosting local economic empowerment, advancing communities' right to a dignified urban life, and promising young people a future in their own country.

Having this consideration in mind, and in order to strengthen capacity of the local European People's Party partner Lebanese Forces, the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI) in cooperation with the Eduardo Frei Foundation (EFF) is launching the call for application for its upcoming 3-day seminar entitled "**Sustaining public services in times of crises: Decentralized approach**" to be held between **27-29 October, 2023 (Friday – Sunday) in Beirut, Lebanon (exact venue tbc).**

Participants:

Up to 16 young politicians or political professionals between 22 – 35 years of age, such as **members (candidates) of municipal councils / members of local party boards / municipal administrators / those responsible for local projects** of the Lebanese Forces party, or for a limited number of place independents. They will be selected on the basis of individual applications endorsed by the party.

I. Goals and objectives of the project

Aims of the project:

During 3 day seminar the participants will:

- *analyze the capacities and capabilities of municipalities for delivering quality public services, identify major bottlenecks and provision challenges, and areas most vulnerable to the crises' impact;*
- *explore opportunities for boosting local development, resilience and adaptability within the given economic and political context;*
- *learn how to better engage and communicate with relevant stakeholders;*
- *familiarize with international and local good practices and local governance models, reflect on*

ways to adapt them at the local and regional level having in mind country specifics and status quo, while enriching professional/political networks;

- *develop ideas and strategies for addressing gaps and improving quality of public service provision and work out viable solutions (policies) for supporting the service delivery in times of crisis.*

Working language: English only

Pre-requisites of participation:

- Strong written and oral English proficiency
- A demonstrated connection to municipal decision making as elected official, candidate, local party functionary, administrator, advisor or NGO stakeholder

II. Application process

The online application form must be filled before the **deadline of Monday, October 9, 2023**

The following need to be attached to the application form:

- **A 1-2 min video presentation on the following topic:**
“Main public services issues in my municipality and my proposed solutions”
- **A letter of reference in English**, signed and printed with official letterhead from the delegating party (not a youth/student organization!), signed by a responsible official such as the Secretary General or International Secretary

We will consider complete application packages only!

Deadline for applications: **Monday, October 9, 2023**

III. Terms and conditions of admission

Attendance and active participation in every session of the seminar is mandatory from the first to the last day of the event to best support the aims of the project.

Financial arrangements:

- The costs of the course, including lectures, trainings as well as costs of full-board and lodging (for those from outside the **BEIRUT** area) in double rooms will be covered by the organizers.
- Participants should have their travel costs be covered by their delegating party, or by themselves.

IV. Contacts

Responsible persons:

Evgenia Jarabik, Project Manager evgenia.jarabik@schuman-institute.eu

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Should you require any further information about the series, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Gábor Berczeli
Director