

Open Call



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION For Freedom.
Western Balkans

BAZA – Balkanska Ženska Akademija

Empowering women to shape tomorrow

*powered by The Alliance of Her
of the ALDE Party*

Part I: 16-19 April 2026 (in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Part II: 15-17 May 2026 (online)

Part III: 12-14 June 2026 (in Serbia)

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom is the liberal political foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany. For more than thirty years, it has been promoting open and tolerant societies, civic engagement and the rule of law in the Western Balkans with the aim of strengthening democratic and pluralistic principles and thus actively supporting the countries' European integration with its liberal values of freedom, peace and tolerance.

Our mission is to create change by empowering women to pursue their political ambitions. We believe that gender equality can only be ensured through adequate political representation not only in parliaments and councils, but also within liberal parties themselves. For liberals, there is no doubt that society as a whole is only served if the female part of society can develop as freely both politically and socially as their male counterparts.





Recognizing that the social circumstances are far from ideal, we strive to prepare women as best we can for their commitment to change. Even if we cannot immediately change the framework, we can empower those who will work to do so. We do this in the belief that there is a desire in the region for cross-border collaboration among strong women who support each other, offer advice and support, and want to reform their respective societies in the same way.

"BAZA - Balkanska Ženska Akademija" supports women in their quest to dismantle the gender barriers that stand in their path, and to fight every day for a future shaped by their voices. We offer tailor-made training modules within a four-month academy so that talented, ambitious liberal women can develop to the best of their abilities at all stages of their political journey. Eventually, we support female change makers to fearlessly and creatively advocate towards more gender equal politics in the Western Balkans, with a focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia.

As of this year, BAZA is being implemented as an official Alliance of Her format, which means it is no longer just a stand-alone regional academy but part of a wider European liberal network dedicated to strengthening women's political leadership. In practical terms, participants gain access to a recognizable ALDE-linked platform, higher visibility and credibility for their work, and opportunities for exchange beyond the Western Balkans, including connections to mentors, speakers, and alumnae from across Europe. It also means BAZA follows shared quality standards and a clearer pathway from training to real political participation through liberal partner structures.

What is BAZA – Balkanska Ženska Akademija?

"BAZA – Balkanska Ženska Akademija", organized by FNF Western Balkans, is a three-part empowerment program for up to 18 women. It is mandatory for participants to fully participate in all three sessions.

- Session I takes place in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 16-19 April 2026 and lasts one day longer than Parts II and III.
- Session II takes place online from 15-17 May.
- Session III takes place in Serbia from 12-14 June.

Events will be held in extraordinary environments to ensure maximum focus on the issue at hand.





Programme

Session I – Personal Growth and Political Communication

- Introduction and integration activities
- Self-confidence as a core
- Developing your personal brand
- Building your profile within your party
- Political messaging and communicating your brand
- Public Speaking driven by values
- Effective cooperation with traditional media
- Being a spokesperson on issues

Session II – Political Strategy and Community Building

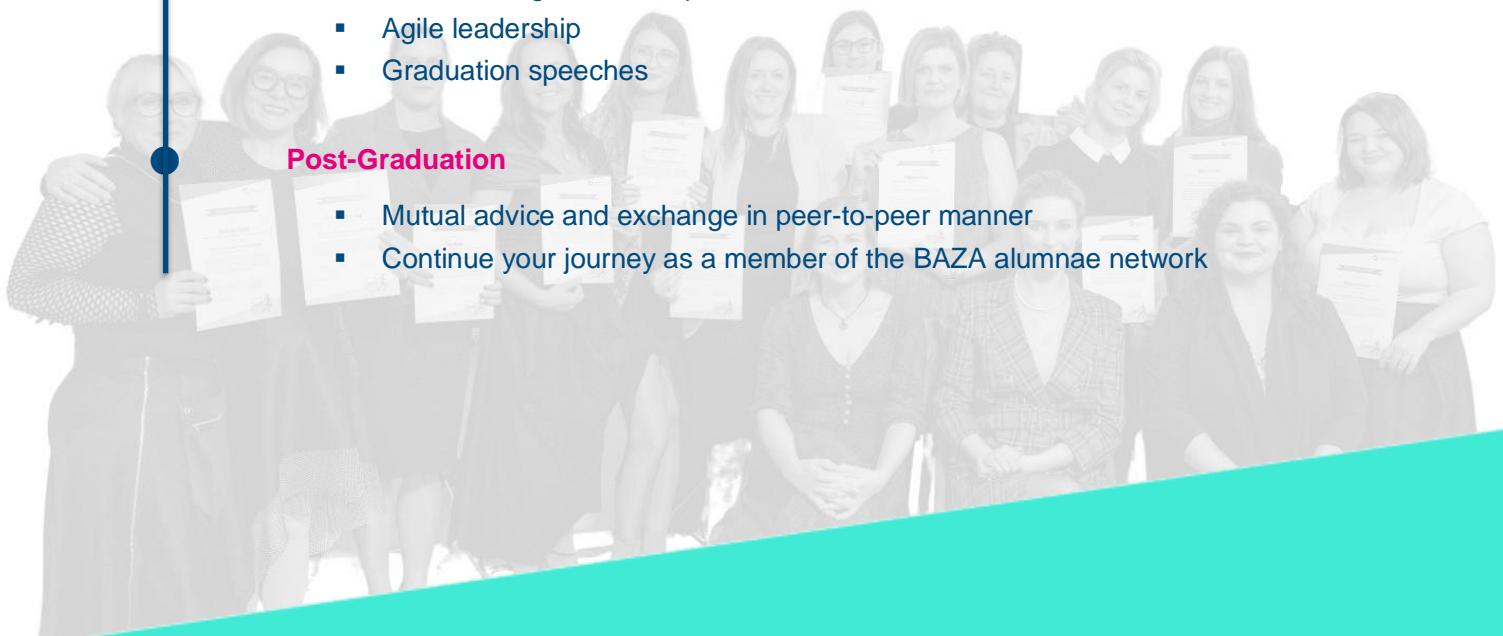
- Building your political house - answering the “Why?”
- Refining your goal and creating a plan
- Online Public Speaking Studio
- Social media & online engagement

Session III – Getting ready to Lead and Succeed

- Building your political house – roofing ceremony
- Navigating the “traps of power”
- Crisis management and personal resilience
- Agile leadership
- Graduation speeches

Post-Graduation

- Mutual advice and exchange in peer-to-peer manner
- Continue your journey as a member of the BAZA alumnae network





In a nutshell

- Meet like-minded liberal companions and exchange to increase your impact.
- Three modules in two states (BiH, SRB) and an online event to learn about each country's peculiarities.
- Experience stunning venues chosen to allow participants to focus, reflect, and connect.
- Get inspired by intimate "fireside chats" with remarkable female role models.
- Complete an innovative academy program tailored to your political and personal needs and demands.
- Become part of the supportive BAZA alumnae network and find your peer for long-lasting bonds.

Language

Working languages are English and BHS. Knowledge of English is compulsory.

How to apply?

Applications are open until 27 February 2026. Just fill out the application form at

<https://forms.gle/f4guPqoFbvzD7G1H6>

and you will hear from us!

A selection committee will review all uploaded applications and conduct one-on-one online interviews with preselected applicants. This way, we ensure that the most committed and team-oriented participants are given an opportunity for personal empowerment.

A confirmation of participation will be sent by mid-March so participants can prepare in time for the first session from 16-19 April 2026 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.





Meet our Facilitators



Joanna Burnos

Entrepreneur | Member of the Alliance of Her Advisory Board

Joanna Burnos is the Director of “BAZA – Balkanska Ženska Akademija”. She is the Founder of LEADERIS Institute. Team Europe Direct expert. Co-creator and co-host of “Departament Kobiet” podcast. Supportive leader and motivational speaker. Specialist in the field of diversity, equity and inclusion. Academic lecturer. She also gained professional experience in an international financial corporation and consulting company.

Joanna is a member of the Program Council of the European Economic Congress in Katowice and Horizon CEE, The Alliance of Her Advisory Board, Association of Polish Economists and Women in International Security. Alumna of Kozminski University, Master in Psychology in Management and European Academy of Diplomacy where she specialized in EU Diplomacy. She was also an Erasmus scholarship holder at Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management. Panelist, speaker, and author in the field of personal development, women's leadership, DEI and foreign policy.

Ivana Fundurulić

Teacher | Alumnae of the Alliance of Her 2022

Ivana is a mathematics and physics teacher from Zagreb. Her passion for teaching is complemented by a drive for continual learning and knowledge-sharing, actively seeking out new projects that foster growth and enlightenment within her field. Ivana made history as the first female president of the University's Mountaineering society "Velebit", breaking barriers since its establishment in 1950, showing her leadership skills beyond the academic realm.





In 2019, Ivana stepped onto the political stage. Today, she holds several key roles within the party “Centar”: organizational secretary, secretary of the party’s Zagreb branch, and the head of the party’s educational committee. Throughout all her ventures, Ivana persistently advocates for education, women’s rights, and environmental preservation. Her interest in these areas not only reflects her professional expertise but also defines her personal convictions and shows consistent investment in empowering her students, promoting gender equality, and protecting the environment for the benefit of future generations.



Jasmina Mršo

Consultant | Member of the Alliance of Her Advisory Board

Jasmina Mršo is an expert in working with political foundations and political parties and a skilled capacity-building trainer and moderator who worked on many local and international projects. She offers strategic support to the European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP).

Jasmina is also the Secretary-General for the Liberal Southeast European Network (LIBSEEN). She was an elected local councillor in Sarajevo for Naša stranka. She describes herself as a “political nerd” with a formal educational background in pharmacy and a passion for gender equality activism.

Vukosava Crnjanski

Director | Long-time Women Empowerment Coach

Vuka has worked as a trainer and practitioner since 2004, providing capacity-building in advocacy, public outreach, campaigning, strategic planning etc. Her work extends to political parties, non-governmental organizations, government officials, media outlets, and institutions on a local and international scale.

As the founder and director of the Belgrade-based NGO CRTA, she focuses on the development of inno-





vative and practical mechanisms for citizen engagement. Her organization plays a key role in advocating for an open, accountable, and democratic government in Serbia. Her contributions to democracy and innovation have earned her international recognition. In 2013, she was awarded the W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award by the National Democratic Institute. Under her leadership, CRTA received the OSCE 2018 Democracy Defender Award for promoting democracy and defending human rights. Additionally, the NGO earned the 2018 Commissioner for Information of Public Importance Award for its contribution to free access to information in Serbia. In 2023, Vuka was awarded the National Order of Merit of France, in the rank of a knight.

Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the director of “BAZA – Balkanska Ženska Akademija” Joanna Bournos at info@leaderis.com.

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