

## PRESS RELEASE

### **16 December 2021 – The Deutsche Bundesbank, together with 19 national central banks of the European System of Central Banks, the European Central Bank and the European Commission, complete EU-funded programme to support central banks and banking supervisory agencies in EU candidate countries and potential candidates from the Western Balkans**

Together with 19 national central banks of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the European Commission, the Deutsche Bundesbank today held the closing event of an EU-funded programme for the benefit of the Bank of Albania, the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Banking Agency of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Banking Agency of Republika Srpska, the Central Bank of the Republic of Kosovo, the Central Bank of Montenegro, the National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia and the National Bank of Serbia. The aim of the programme was to further strengthen the institutional capacities of the final beneficiary institutions, notably by enhancing their analytical and policy tools and by transferring the best international and European standards into national practices. The European Union (EU) allocated €2 million to the programme from its Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II).

During the final Programme Steering Committee meeting and the closing event organised today by the Deutsche Bundesbank, Professor Joachim Wuermeling, Member of the Executive Board of the Deutsche Bundesbank, underscored: *“This programme is a prime example of a truly collaborative approach from the ESCB. By acting collectively and in unison, the ESCB has proven itself to be a strong partner in the central banking community and stands ready to support our colleagues from the Western Balkans in their efforts to achieve the highest standards for the benefit of their economies and their people.”* Mr Florian Hauser, Team Leader in the European Commission’s Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, underlined: *“The programme represents an important contribution to improving economic governance in the Western Balkans. It supports the preparation of central banks in the Western Balkans for their integration into the European System of Central Banks.”*

Over a period spanning 33 months, the Deutsche Bundesbank, 19 national central banks and the ECB organised an intensive regional training programme on key central banking and supervisory issues, with 20 training events for 360 experts. The training focussed particularly on the areas of banking supervision, financial stability, financial consumer protection and financial inclusion, recovery and resolution, monetary policy, payment systems, statistics, compliance and EU integration, governance policies, accounting and internal audit. There were also two policy workshops for decision-makers on the resolution of non-performing loans and governance issues. In addition, the programme implemented bilateral measures and internships benefiting the six Western Balkan EU candidate countries and potential candidates, which were defined in the meetings of the Programme Steering Committee. Representatives of the beneficiary institutions highlighted important achievements, for example in the areas of financial consumer protection, foreign reserve management, international relations, payment systems, prevention of money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism, resolution of financial institutions and statistics.

Despite the exceptional circumstances arising from the pandemic, the programme was successfully implemented in full. This was thanks to the constant support of the European Commission, as well as the highly accommodating attitude of all of the programme members and experts involved. During the pandemic, digitalisation and IT-driven tools substituted traditional face-to-face meetings, but some sacrifices had to be made in personal interaction and relationship building.



The programme was carried out by the Deutsche Bundesbank in partnership with the Nationale Bank van België/Banque Nationale de Belgique, Българска народна банка (Bulgarian National Bank), Česká národní banka, the Bank of Greece, the Banco de España, the Banque de France, Hrvatska narodna banka, the Central Bank of Ireland, the Banca d'Italia, Lietuvos bankas, the Banque centrale du Luxembourg, the Magyar Nemzeti Bank, De Nederlandsche Bank, the Oesterreichische Nationalbank, Narodowy Bank Polski, the Banco de Portugal, Banca Națională a României, Banka Slovenije and Národná banka Slovenska. The European Central Bank contributed to the implementation of the programme.

A short film has been made to give impressions of the programme and to provide some feedback from the participants. It can be downloaded using the following link:

(link will be inserted later)

