

### 'Laboratory of debate on European integration in university auditoriums'

European integration is the most strategic priority of the Albanian state and affects all areas of society. Because of its importance, there is a need for a well-informed public debate, especially among young people. At the stage where the country expects to open negotiations, there is a need for deep and technical knowledge. To address this need, the University Debate Lab Project is launched.

This project is implemented by the Science and Innovation for Development Center, SCiDEV, with the support of the Open Society Foundation in Albania. The project aims to reinforce knowledge and develop critical analysis of young students and researchers related to European Integration, as well as to regenerate the debate culture in Albanian universities.

During the period November 2019-May 2020, 104 young university students in Tirana and Durres will have the opportunity to train and debate on the most important and contemporary issues of EU integration. 13 lecturers will mentor teams of 4 members each, who will face each other at the tournament stage. This debate marathon will enable the regeneration of debate culture in university auditoriums, promoting a critical thinking approach to European integration issues. Having a well-informed public debate, especially among young people, leads to the formation of active and responsible citizens on EU topics.

The project will be developed in several stages. The first phase coincides with the training of Trainers (mentors) regarding the topics and the format and structure of the debate. The second phase is the preparation of teams and debates in the respective faculties. The project finalization will take place through a debate tournament with qualified teams. The public information on EU topics does not end with the announcement of winners. A blog space will be dedicated to articles by young researchers, students involved, and stakeholders to write on the topic, in order to serve as a starting point for public discussions different from the classical ones in Albania.

