

RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within 30 days of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building. This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.



Certification: In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Open Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:

Private Sponsor(s):

The Atlantic Council of the United States, Inc.'s Europe Center

Travel Dates:

May 24 to May 31, 2025

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

N/A

Relationship to Traveler:

N/A

Total Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
\$3,411.26	\$776.86	\$487.95	\$9.74 - Tirana bunker guided tour & briefing

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- The final Employee Pre-Travel Authorization (Form RE-1)
- The final Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

23 Jun 25

Date

Amanda Thorpe

Printed Name of Traveler

Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

06/24/2025

Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Transportation	\$3,411.26	By the time of approval and booking of flights and ground transportation, fares had increased significantly.
Lodging	\$776.86	We were able to negotiate better group rates at several hotels than originally quoted.
Meals	\$487.95	We were able to negotiate group discount rates at several restaurants used for roundtables.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Explanation:

The final itinerary included additional meetings secured at short notice, as is customary in the region. There were also some last-minute substitutions and changes in timing or location.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Explanation:

ITINERARY

Balkans Forward Congressional Fellowship Study Tour

May 24 – 31, 2025

FINAL AGENDA

Saturday, May 24

5:25 p.m. – 8:15 a.m. +1

Delegation flew Washington IAD – Vienna VIE on Austrian Airlines OS 94

Sunday, May 25

12:50 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.

Delegation flew to Vienna VIE – Sarajevo SJJ on Austrian Airlines OS 757

2:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Transfer to Sarajevo city center and check in to hotel

Location: Courtyard Sarajevo

Address: Skenderija 1, Sarajevo 71000

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Atlantic Council Sarajevo briefing over light lunch

Location: Cevabdžinica Zelja

Address: Kundurdžiluk 19, Sarajevo 71000

5:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Private briefing with Marko Radovanović, Head of Office of the Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council

Location: Courtyard Sarajevo

Address: Skenderija 1, Sarajevo 71000

6:00 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.

Private briefing with representatives from the Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Location: Courtyard Sarajevo

Address: Skenderija 1, Sarajevo 71000

External meeting participants:

Elisabet Tomasinec, *Head of Political Section*, Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Aurelie Valtat, *Head of European Integration, Political Section*, Delegation of the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina

7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Welcome working dinner discussion with local experts

Location: Restaurant BarSa

Address: Sime Milutinovića 12, Sarajevo 71000

External participants:

Damir Kapidžić, *Member*, Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG)

Amila Karacić, *Political Advisor*, Royal Danish Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Nadezda Kokotović, *Business Manager*, SGS Group

Monday, May 26

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. **Private meeting over breakfast with Ms. Aida Hodžić, Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina**
Location: Courtyard Sarajevo
Address: Skenderija 1, Sarajevo 71000

9:05 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Hotel check-out and transfer to Camp Butmir**

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Private meeting with Major General Florin-Marian Barbu, Commander of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina**
Location: Camp Butmir
Address: Kemala Kapetanovića 12, Butmir 71000

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Transfer from Camp Butmir to Sarajevo**

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. **Private meeting with Louis Grishock, Principal Deputy High Representative and Supervisor for Brcko District, Office of the High Representative**
Location: Office of the High Representative
Address: Emerika Bluma 1, Sarajevo 71000

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Transfer to airport and flight check-in**

3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Delegation flew Sarajevo SJJ to Belgrade BEG on Air Serbia flight JU 653**

4:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m. **Transferr to Nordeus office**
Location: Nordeus office
Address: Bulevar Milutina Milankovića 11, Belgrade 11070

5:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Private meeting with Branko Milutinovic, Chief Executive Officer, Nordeus**
Location: Nordeus office
Address: Bulevar Milutina Milankovića 11, Belgrade 11070

6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. **Transfer to Belgrade city center and hotel check-in**
Location: Nordeus office
Address: Bulevar Milutina Milankovića 11, Belgrade 11070

Monday, May 26 – continued**6:30 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.****Private meeting with Ela Ruci, Balkan Business Development Manager, Bechtel**Location: Hilton Belgrade Rooftop BarAddress: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade 11000**7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.****Belgrade briefing dinner with local experts**Location: Klub KnjizevnikaAddress: Francuska 7, Belgrade 11000External participants:**Raša Nedeljković**, Program Director, Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability (CRTA)**Maja Stojanović**, Executive Director, Civic Initiatives**Professor Ivanka Popović**, Founder, ProGlas Movement**Tuesday, May 27****Morning****Independent breakfast****8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.****Private meeting with Sonja Vlahović, State Secretary, and Jovana Joksimović, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation and European Integration, Ministry of Mining and Energy of the Republic of Serbia**Location: Transnafta BuildingAddress: Hercegovačka 21, Belgrade 11000**9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.****Private meeting with Tanja Jović, Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Republic of Serbia**Location: Presidency OfficeAddress: No. 1, Andrićev venac Str., Belgrade 11000**10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.****Private meeting with Ana Brnabić, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia**Location: House of the National Assembly of the Republic of SerbiaAddress: Trg Nikole Pašića 13, Belgrade 11000**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.****Private meeting with Miroslav Gacević, Assistant Minister of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia**Location: Ministry of European IntegrationAddress: Nemanjina 34, Belgrade 11000

Tuesday, May 27 – continued**1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.****Private working lunch with local academics**Location: MaderaAddress: Bulevar kralja Aleksandra 43, Belgrade 11000External participants:**Aleksandra Krstić**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade**Milan Krstić**, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade**Miodrag Milosavljević**, Deputy Director, Open Society Foundations – Western Balkans**Dusan Spasojević**, Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade**3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.****Private meeting with Plamena Halacheva, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia**Location: EU Delegation in SerbiaAddress: Vladimira Popovica 40, 5th Floor, Belgrade 190776**4:30 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.****Private meeting Pavle Grbović MP, President of the Movement of Free Citizens and Member of the National Assembly of Serbia**Location: Hilton Belgrade RooftopAddress: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade 11000**5:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.****Private meeting with Stefan Lazarevic, President, American Chamber of Commerce in Serbia**Location: Hilton Belgrade RooftopAddress: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade 11000**7:15 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.****Belgrade debrief over dinner with Atlantic Council Team**Location: ComunaleAddress: Beton Hala, Karađordeva 2-4, Belgrade 11000**Wednesday, May 28****5:00 a.m. – 5:30 a.m.****Hotel checkout and transfer to airport****7:00 a.m. – 8:10 a.m.****Delegation flew Belgrade BEG to Vienna VIE on Austrian flight OS 740****9:50 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.****Delegation flew from Vienna VIE to Tirana TIA on Austrian flight OS 845**

Wednesday, May 28 – continued

- 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** **Transfer to Tirana city center and check-in to Tirana hotel**
Location: Tirana Marriott
Address: Sheshi Italia, Tirana 1001
- 2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.** **Private briefing with Grant Van Cleve, President, American Chamber of Commerce in Albania**
Location: Tirana Marriott
Address: Sheshi Italia, Tirana 1001
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.** **Private meeting with Altin Dumani, Head and Chief Special Prosecutor, Special Structure against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK)**
Location: SPAK Headquarters
Address: Jordan Misja Nr.1, Tirana 1001
- 5:15 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.** **Guided tour and briefing of communist-era nuclear bunker in Albania**
Location: Bunk'Art 2
Address: Rruga Abdi Toptani, Tirana, 1001
- 7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.** **Tirana program briefing dinner with Ilva Tare**
Location: Pireu
Address: Rruga Qemal Guranjaku 12, Tirana 1000

Thursday, May 29

- 9:00 a.m. – 9:50 a.m.** **Private meeting with Jorida Tabaku MP, Deputy Chair of DP and Chair of the European Affairs Committee in the Albanian Parliament**
Location: Tirana Marriott
Address: Sheshi Italia, Tirana 1001
- 10:15 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.** **Private meeting with H.E. Igli Hasani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania**
Location: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Address: Bulevardi Gjergj Fishta Nr 6, Tirana 1001
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** **Private meeting with Samir Mane, President, Balkan Finance Investment Group (BALFIN)**
Location: ABA Business Center, 4th Floor
Address: Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II, Tirana 1001

Thursday, May 29 – continued

- 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.** **Tirana working lunch with H.E. Anila Denaj, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Republic of Albania**
Location: Lift
Address: St 1010, ABA Business Center, 11th Floor, Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II, Tirana 1001
- 4:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.** **Private meeting with Martin Mata and Aleksander Sarapuli, Co-Chief Executive Officers, Albanian American Development Fund (AADF)**
Location: AADF offices
Address: Ibrahim Rugova Street, Building #42, Tirana 1001
- 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** **Private meeting with H.E. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania**
Location: Prime Minister's office
Address: Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit 7, Tirana 1010
- 7:45 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.** **Working dinner with local experts**
Location: Tribe
Address: Rr. Murat Toptani, Pedonale Tirana 1001
- External participants:
Dr. Odeta Barbullushi, *Resident Professor*, College of Europe (Tirana Branch)
Lutfi Dervishi, *Trainer*, Albania Media Institute
Andi Dobrush, *Director*, OSF Western Balkans
Agon Maliqi, *Nonresident Senior Fellow*, Europe Center, Atlantic Council

Friday, May 30

- 6:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.** **Hotel check-out and transfer from Tirana to Pristina by bus**
- 10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.** **Check-in to Pristina Hotel**
Location: Hotel Sirius
Address: Agim Ramadani, Pristina 10000
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.** **Private meeting with H.E. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo**
Location: Prime Minister's Office
Address: Mother Teresa Square, Pristina 10000

Friday, May 30 – continued**12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.****Working lunch with Civil Society Leaders**Location: TiffanyAddress: Fehmi Agani, Rr. Enver Zymberi, nr.55, Pristina 10000External participants:**Dr. Ramadan Ilazi**, *Head of Research*, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies**Lura Limani**, *Team Leader, EU Integration and Regional Cooperation Program*, OSF Western Balkans**Jovana Radosavljevic**, *Executive Director*, New Social Initiative**Visar Ymeri**, *Executive Director*, Musine Kokalari Institute for Social Policy**2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.****Private meeting with H.E. Vjosa Osmani, President of the Republic of Kosovo**Location: Office of the President (Parliament Building, Entrance from Ibrahim Rugova Sq.)Address: Parliament Building, Ibrahim Rugova Sq., Pristina 10000**4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.****Private meeting with Major General Enrico Barduani, Commander, Kosovo Force (KFOR)**Location: KFOR HQ PristinaAddress: Camp Film City, Pristina 10000**6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.****Private meeting with Arian Zeka, Executive Director, Staff, and Members, American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo**Location: Soma Book StationAddress: 4/A, Fazli Grajqevci, Tirana 10000**8:15 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.****Debrief and farewell dinner with Atlantic Council experts**Location: SaltAddress: Rruga, nr 2 Fehmi Agani, Pristina**Saturday, May 31****4:00 a.m. – 4:30 a.m.****Hotel checkout and transfer to airport****6:05 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.****Delegation flies Pristina PRN to Vienna VIE on Austrian Airlines OS 770****10:50 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.****Delegation flies Vienna VIE to Washington IAD on Austrian Airlines OS 93**

(INDICATIVE) ITINERARY

Balkans Forward Congressional Fellowship Study Tour

May 24 – 31, 2025

(INDICATIVE) ITINERARY

Saturday, May 24 – Departure

6:10 p.m. – 8:00 a.m. +1 Delegation flies Washington IAD – Frankfurt FRA on Lufthansa airlines LH 419

Sunday, May 25 – Sarajevo

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10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Delegation flies Frankfurt FRA – Sarajevo SJJ on Lufthansa airlines LH 1544

12:00 p.m. – 12:30 pm. **Transfer to Sarajevo city center and check in to hotel**
Location: Courtyard Sarajevo
Address: Skenderija 1, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia & Herzegovina

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Trip itinerary briefing lunch with Atlantic Council team**
Location: Barba – Mediterranean Restaurant
Address: Dr. Fetaha Bećirbegovića 37A, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia

3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Private briefings (TBC)**

- Sarajevo Briefing with local experts
- Daniel Koski, *Chargés d'affaires a.i.*, US Embassy Sarajevo

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **Welcome dinner and trip orientation**
Location: Dveri
Address: Prote Bakovića 12, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Monday, May 26 – Sarajevo, Belgrade

8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- Major General Florin-Marian Barbu, *Commander of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- H.E. Luigi Soreca, *Ambassador of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- H.E. Christian Schmidt, *High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- H.E. Elmedin Konaković, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Hotel check-out and transfer to lunch
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Working lunch with Damir Kapidzic, Member, Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (TBC)
1:00 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.	Transfer to airport
3:10 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Delegation flies Sarajevo SJJ to Belgrade BEG on Air Serbia flight JU 653
4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Transfer to Belgrade city center and check-in to Belgrade hotel <u>Location:</u> Moxy Belgrade <u>Address:</u> Njegoševa 2, Beograd 11000, Serbia
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Belgrade briefing dinner with think tank experts <u>Location:</u> Iva New Balkan Cuisine <u>Address:</u> Kneževlje Ljubice 11, Beograd 11000, Serbia

Tuesday, May 27 – Belgrade

9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Private meetings (TBC) - H.E. Aleksandar Vučić, <i>President of the Republic of Serbia</i> - H.E. Marko Đurić, <i>Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia</i> - H.E. Nemanja Starović, <i>Minister of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia</i>
12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch with Prof. Tanja Mišćević, Former Chief Negotiator for the accession of Serbia to the EU TBC
2:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Private meetings (TBC) - Opposition Members of Parliament: Dr. Jelena Jerinić MP (ZLF), Mr. Dobrica Veselinović MP (ZLF), Dr. Anna Oreg (PSG) MP - Stefan Lazarević, <i>President, AmCham Board of Governors</i> - H.E. Emanuele Giaufret, <i>Ambassador of the European Union to Serbia</i> - Alexander Titolo, <i>Chargés d'affaires a.i., US Embassy Belgrade</i>
7:45 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Dinner with Serbian Civil Society Representatives TBC <u>Location:</u> Klub Književnika <u>Address:</u> Francuska 7, Beograd 11000, Serbia

Wednesday, May 28 – Belgrade, Tirana

- 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**
- Ivanka Popovic, *Founder*, ProGlas movement
 - Representatives of Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA)
- 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Transfer to airport and lunch to-go
- 1:20 p.m. – 2:35 p.m. Delegation flies Belgrade BEG to Tirana TIA on Air Serbia flight JU 162
- 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Transfer to Tirana city center and check-in to Tirana hotel
Location: Arte Boutique Hotel
Address: Rruga Ibrahim Rugova 32, Tiranë, Albania
- 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**
- Nancy Van Horn, *Deputy Chief of Mission*, US Embassy Tirana
 - Representatives of the Office of the Mayor of Tirana
- 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. **Cultural activity – Tour of Pyramid of Tirana (Pjeter Arbërori International Center of Culture and Enver Hoxha Museum)**
- 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. **Tirana briefing dinner with think tank experts**
Location: Pireu
Address: Rruga Qemal Guranjaku 12, Tiranë 1000, Albania

Thursday, May 29 – Tirana

- 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**
- H.E. Edi Rama, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania*
 - H.E. Igli Hasani, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania*
 - H.E. Silvio Gonzato, *Ambassador of the European Union to Albania*
- 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Briefing over lunch with Ms. Françeska Korançe, EIT Community Officer, Albania**

2:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Private meetings (TBC)

- **Martin Mata and Aleksander Sarapuli**, *Co-Chief Executive Officers*, Albanian American Development Fund
- **Samir Mane**, *President*, BALFIN Group
- **Altin Dumani**, *Head*, Albanian Special Anti-corruption Body (SPAK)

7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Working dinner with Grant Van Cleve, *President*, American Chamber of Commerce in Albania

Location: Tribe

Address: Rr. Murat Toptani, Pedonale Tirana AL, 1001, Albania

Friday, May 30 – Pristina

6:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Drive Tirana – Pristina

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Check-in to Pristina Hotel

Location: Hotel Sirius

Address: Agim Ramadani, Prishtina 10000

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Briefing over lunch with Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian Civil Society Representatives (TBC)

- **Agon Maliqi**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow*, Europe Center, Atlantic Council
- **Ramadan Ilazi**, *Head of Research*, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
- **Jovana Radosavljevic**, *Executive Director*, New Social Initiative
- **Milica Andric Rakic**, *Project Manager*, New Social Initiative

1:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Private meetings (TBC)

- **H.E. Vjosa Osmani**, *President of the Republic of Kosovo*
- **H.E. Albin Kurti**, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo*
- **Lumir Abdixhiku**, *Leader*, Democratic League
- **Përparim Rama**, *Mayor of the City of Pristina*
- **Major General Enrico Barduani**, *Commander of Kosovo Force (KFOR)*

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Farewell dinner and debrief

Location: SALT Prishtina

Address: Rruga, nr 2 Fehmi Agani, Prishtina 10000

Saturday, May 31

6:05 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.

Delegation flies Pristina PRN to Vienna VIE on Austrian airlines OS 770

10:50 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.

Delegation flies Vienna VIE to Washington IAD on Austrian airlines OS 93

DRAFT



Amanda Thorpe
National Security Advisor
Office of Senator Peter Welch

April 14, 2025

Dear Amanda,

On behalf of the Atlantic Council, it is my pleasure to invite you to join a staff delegation to Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania led by the Council's Europe Center. The trip will take place from **May 24 to May 31, 2025**.

The Atlantic Council's Europe Center is home to the Balkans Forward Initiative, which is a unique, coordinated effort to foster a democratic, secure, and prosperous Western Balkans firmly integrated into the transatlantic community. Our work seeks to reinvigorate US engagement in the region, promote more effective US-European cooperation on issues impacting the Western Balkans, foster dialogue among key actors across the region, and cultivate a new generation of decision-makers and experts.

This staff delegation will take congressional staffers to the Western Balkans where they will meet with senior government officials, civil society, and private sector leaders. Meetings will focus on US policy, regional security, economic development, crime and corruption, judicial reform, and law enforcement issues in the region. The mission of this trip is to build greater awareness and understanding among congressional policymakers of the challenges and opportunities facing the Western Balkans and support informed US policy toward the region.

We hope that you can join this timely trip. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me, or my colleague Lisa Homel (lhommel@atlanticcouncil.org).

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jörn Fleck", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jörn Fleck
Senior Director, Europe Center
Atlantic Council

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will **not** be considered or approved.

Date/Time Stamp

Name of Traveler:

Amanda Thorpe

Employing Office/Committee:

Senator Peter Welch (D-VT)

Private Sponsor(s):

Atlantic Council of the United States

Destination(s):

Bosnia, Serbia, Albania, Kosovo

Travel Dates:

May 24, 2025 - May 31, 2025

NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you must notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

Travel supports increased knowledge of U.S.- Western Balkan partnership and stabilization opportunities as well as broader policy considerations which inform legislation and appropriations priorities in the Congress.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip? Name and Relationship to Traveler:

☐

(signify "yes" by checking box)

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

4/22/25

Date

Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms,
Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

Peter Welch

(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

hereby authorize

Amanda Thorpe

(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

☒

(signify "yes" by checking box)

4/23/25

Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA, CHAIRMAN
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS, DELAWARE, VICE CHAIRMAN

JAMES E. RISCH, IDAHO
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA

BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII
JEANNE SHAHEEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

SHANNON HAMILTON, KOPPLIN, CHIEF COUNSEL AND STAFF DIRECTOR
WILLIAM B. CABLE, CHIEF CLERK

HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 220
SECOND AND CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6425

TELEPHONE (202) 224-2981
FACSIMILE (202) 224-7416

United States Senate

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

May 20, 2025

Amanda Thorpe
Office of Senator Peter Welch
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ms. Thorpe:

This responds to your recent correspondence requesting approval from the Select Committee on Ethics (the Committee) to accept an invitation you received to travel on the *Europe Center Balkans Forward* trip, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, and Kosovo, on May 24-31, 2025, sponsored by the Atlantic Council. Provided that you adhere to the guidance set forth below, it appears that it is permissible for you to accept necessary expenses from the Atlantic Council in connection with this trip.

Background

Based on your communication with the Committee, the background in this matter is as follows.¹ You are employed in the office of Senator Peter Welch. The Atlantic Council invited you to travel on the *Europe Center Balkans Forward* trip, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, and Kosovo, on May 24-31, 2025. The Atlantic Council certified to the Committee that it will pay the necessary expenses² related to the travel and that it is neither a lobbyist, lobbying firm, agent of a foreign principal, or otherwise acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government. The Atlantic Council has also certified that it does not retain or employ a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal and that no registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal will accompany you at any point throughout your trip.³

Discussion

Privately sponsored travel includes any gift of travel and travel-related expenses for travel outside the Senate duty station, including transportation, lodging, food and refreshments, and conference fees and materials, whether paid for directly, reimbursed, or provided directly, from a private individual or entity, in connection with a Member's, officer's, or employee's official Senate duties. Incorporating reforms from the Honest Leadership and Open Government

¹ If this letter does not correctly recite the facts, contact the Committee immediately.

² The term "necessary expenses" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 10-13.

³ The term "any point throughout your trip" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 15.

Act of 2007 (HLOGA), Pub. L. 110-81 (2007), Senate Rule 35.2 permits Members, officers, and employees to accept privately sponsored travel only with the prior written approval of the Committee.

The Committee's approval process is governed by the *Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel (Travel Regulations)*. The *Travel Regulations* contain detailed requirements regarding who may sponsor travel; time limits for trips; and the type and amount of expenses that can be reimbursed.

Entities that do not retain or employ a lobbyist or foreign agent and all non-profit organizations designated as tax-exempt organizations under § 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, regardless of whether they retain or employ a lobbyist or foreign agent, may sponsor foreign trips for up to seven days. The seven-day limitation means seven 24-hour periods, calculated from the time of arrival in the trip location to the time of departure from the trip location. For such trips, neither lobbyists nor foreign agents may accompany a Senate invitee at any point throughout the trip, other than in a *de minimis* way.⁴ This means that neither lobbyists nor foreign agents may accompany Senate invitees at any point to and from the event, at the event itself, or at the location being visited.⁵

The Committee has determined that § 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations that are classified as private foundations, as opposed to public charities, may not pay for transportation from the United States to a foreign country.⁶ However, the Atlantic Council represented to the Committee that it is a § 501(c)(3) public charity, as opposed to a private foundation, pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.⁷

Under Senate Rule 35, Senate staff must receive advance authorization signed by the Member or officer under whose direct supervision the individual works in order to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary expenses related to fact-finding travel. Further, such authorization and expenses must be disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate by filing the completed *Employee Pre-Travel Authorization* and the *Employee Post-Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses* (Form RE-1 and Form RE-2), along with a copy of the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form*, and all relevant attachments (e.g., the private sponsor's invitation and itinerary) **within 30 days of the conclusion of Privately Sponsored Travel.**

Consistent with these standards, Committee precedent, and the Atlantic Council's factual representations, it appears that it is permissible for you to accept necessary expenses from the

⁴ The term "*de minimis*" has a specific definition. See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 6-8.

⁵ See *Select Committee on Ethics Regulations and Guidelines for Privately Sponsored Travel* at 6-10.

⁶ See 26 U.S.C. § 4941 et seq. Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code broadly defines non-profit, charitable, tax-exempt organizations. These § 501(c)(3) organizations are then further defined or designated as "public charities" and "private foundations."

⁷ 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).

Atlantic Council in connection with this trip, provided that the actual travel and travel-related expenses conform to the information and materials you provided, and the travel and all required documents are disclosed to the Secretary of the Senate (Office of Public Records).

Please be advised that the United States Constitution prohibits the acceptance of any gift, including a meal, from a foreign government without the consent of Congress. In the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), Congress consented to the acceptance by federal government officials of: (1) gifts of minimal value and (2) travel or the expenses for travel taking place entirely outside the United States, from a foreign government (which includes those acting as a representative or agent of a foreign government).⁸ The Senate has defined minimal value as \$100 or less. Further, pursuant to FGDA, there are certain reporting and procedural requirements that are imposed upon Members, officers, and employees who accept gifts from a foreign government. Please review the Committee's "Dear Colleague" letter of January 11, 2019, setting forth the items to be included in filing that report.

Finally, Senate Rule 34 requires a reporting individual,⁹ on their financial disclosure report, to make an annual disclosure of the receipt of payments or reimbursements under Senate Rule 35 from a private sponsor for officially-related travel expenses where, in the aggregate, travel expenses exceed \$480 from that sponsor during a calendar year. However, if a Member, officer, or employee properly reports the receipt of necessary expenses for such travel to the Secretary of the Senate within 30 days of the travel, as discussed above, the travel expenses need not be disclosed a second time on their financial disclosure report.

I hope you find this information helpful. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee.

Sincerely,



Shannon Hamilton Kopplin
Chief Counsel and Staff Director

Enclosure: Employee Privately Sponsored Travel Checklist

⁸ 5 U.S.C. § 7342.

⁹ A reporting individual is someone whose salary equals or exceeds 120% of the basic rate of pay for GS-15 (\$150,160 for CY 2025) or is a political fund designee and is required to file financial disclosure reports.

Atlantic Council of the United States: Atlantic Council Europe Center Balkans Forward Congressional Fellows trip

 Amanda Thorpe

Title:
Senior Advisor

Employing Office/Committee:
WELCH, PETER

Duty Station:
WASHINGTON, DC

Destination(s):
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Belgrade, Serbia
Tirana, Albania
Pristina, Kosovo

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

This trip enables increased knowledge of internal Western Balkan dynamics and U.S.-Balkan partnerships helping to inform policy positions, legislation recommendations and appropriations priorities within the Congress.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):
Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
None

Organization Information

Organization Name
Atlantic Council of the United States

§501(c)(3) Organization Type
N/A

Address 2 (Optional)
11th Floor

Phone Number
8016648089

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Address
1400 L Street NW

City, State Zip
Washington DC, District Of Columbia 20005 United States

Organization URL
<https://atlanticcouncil.org/>

History of Congressional Travel

The Atlantic Council has previously sponsored several congressional trips. The Atlantic Council's Europe Center specifically sponsored a similar congressional trip to the Western Balkans in 2019.

Educational Activities

The Atlantic Council regularly hosts events for attendance by the general public and publishes reports that are freely available to the public. The Atlantic Council's Europe Center hosts events for the general public and publishes reports for the general public specifically on the Europe region, including a separate workstream focused entirely on the Western Balkans and its Euro-Atlantic path towards integration into NATO and the EU.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and do not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

- ☒ I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.
- ☒ I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.
- ☒ I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

None Entered

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

The Atlantic Council's Europe Center planned a trip for staffers based on the Center's focus on the Western Balkans. The locations of Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina were picked to educate staffers on the different dynamics across a large swath of the Western Balkans region. Visiting these locations will provide opportunities to understand each country's relationship with the United States and the priorities and dynamics of each country within the region, in the transatlantic relationship, and vis-à-vis their efforts to join the European Union.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

The Atlantic Council promotes leadership and engagement in international affairs. The Atlantic Council's Europe Center aims to enhance transatlantic cooperation and generate awareness about Europe, including the Western Balkans. This staff delegation will take congressional staffers to the Western Balkans where they will meet with senior government officials, civil society, and private sector leaders. Meetings will focus on US policy, regional security, economic development, crime and corruption, judicial reform, and law enforcement issues in the region. The mission of this trip is to build greater awareness and understanding among congressional policymakers of the challenges and opportunities facing the Western Balkans and support informed US policy toward the region.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- ☒ The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

- ☒ The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- ☒ No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

- ☒ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

- ☐ The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- ☐ The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.
- ☒ Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

- ☒ Members and staff from the House of Representatives will receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
05/24/2025 @ 06:10 PM

↔

Trip End Date/Time:
05/31/2025 @ 02:35 PM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$1,850.00 | Accompanying Family Member: \$0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Coach	\$1,600.00
Note Roundtrip transatlantic airfare		

Ground Transportation	Coach	\$250.00
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Note
A private coach bus is necessary in the Western Balkans for group transport including airport transfers and transfers to meetings.

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$819.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
05/25/2025	05/26/2025	Courtyard Sarajevo	Sarajevo	None	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	\$114.00	No
05/26/2025	05/28/2025	Moxy Belgrade	Belgrade	None	Serbia	2	\$109.00	No

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
05/28/2025	05/30/2025	Arte Boutique Hotel	Tirana	None	Albania	2	\$196.00	No
05/30/2025	05/31/2025	Hotel Sirius	Pristina	None	Kosovo	1	\$95.00	No

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$545.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
05/25/2025	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$70.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	Sarajevo	None	Bosnia and Herzegovina	No
05/26/2025	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30.00	Sarajevo	None	Bosnia and Herzegovina	No
05/26/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	\$0.00	\$60.00	Belgrade	None	Serbia	No
05/27/2025	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$65.00	\$0.00	\$90.00	Belgrade	None	Serbia	No
05/28/2025	\$0.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$25.00	Belgrade	None	Serbia	No
05/28/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$75.00	Tirana	None	Albania	No
05/29/2025	\$0.00	\$35.00	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$110.00	Tirana	None	Albania	No
05/30/2025	\$0.00	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$20.00	Tirana	None	Albania	No
05/30/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$35.00	\$0.00	\$35.00	Pristina	None	Kosovo	No
05/31/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pristina	None	Kosovo	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$0.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
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There are no miscellaneous expenses.

Additional Attachments

Document Name

There are no additional attachments.

US Senate

Committee on Ethics

Atlantic Council of the US, Inc.

Europe Center trip to the Western Balkans

May 24 – 31, 2025

Primary Trip Sponsor Form supplemental documentation

Senate employees invited:

1. Carpenter, Molly

- a. *Legislative Director*, Office of Sen. Mike Crapo (ID)
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Carpenter's official professional portfolio in the Senate given their Senator's role on the Senate Finance Committee.

2. English, Amy

- a. *Professional Staff Member*, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. English's official professional portfolio in the Senate given her role as a professional staff member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

3. Rice, James

- a. *Legislative Director*, Office of Sen. Chuck Grassley (IA)
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Mr. Rice's official professional portfolio in the Senate given his Senator's role on the Senate Finance Committee and the Congressional Caucus on Bosnia.

4. Thorpe, Amanda

- a. *National Security Advisor*, Office of Sen. Peter Welch (VT)
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Thorpe's official professional portfolio in the Senate given her Senator's

position on the Senate Committee on Finance and the ties between her Senator's state, Vermont, with North Macedonia.

5. **Velez, Roberto**

- a. *Legislative Assistant, Office of Sen. Tim Kaine (VA)*
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Mr. Velez's official professional portfolio in the Senate given his Senator's position on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

6. **Vogt, Camilla**

- a. *National Security Advisor, Office of Sen. John Hickenlooper (CO)*
- b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Vogt's official professional portfolio in the Senate given her role as National Security Advisor for her Senator who has a position on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.