

## Online Panel Discussion

### Slovenia's second EU Council Presidency – What vision for the European path of its non-EU neighbours?



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16 June 2021, 17.00 – 18.30

Online via Zoom

Welcome / Introduction:

**Manuel Sarrazin**, Member of the German Bundestag, Spokesperson for Eastern Europe of the Parliamentary Group Alliance 90/The Greens, President of the Southeast Europe Association, Berlin

Keynote: Slovenia's EU Council Presidency priorities for the WB6

**Peter Grk**, Director Western Balkans, Foreign Ministry of Slovenia, Ljubljana

Panelists:

**Ambassador Susanne Schütz**, Director for South-Eastern Europe, Turkey, EFTA States, OSCE and the Council of Europe in the German Federal Foreign Office

**Gerald Knaus**, Chairman of the European Stability Initiative, Berlin

**Simonida Kacarska**, Director of the European Policy Institute, Skopje

Moderation:

**Florian Bieber**, Professor of Southeast European History and Politics, Director of the Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

## Topic

2021 is a special year for Slovenia. On 25 June, the small Adriatic republic celebrates its 30th independence anniversary from Yugoslavia. Only a few days later, Slovenia will take over the rotating EU Council Presidency for the second time since becoming an EU member on 1 July 2013. We will use this occasion to take a closer look at Slovenia in 2021, both when it comes to its domestic (political) developments, as well as its plans for its EU Council Presidency with relevance for Southeast Europe.

This first round of discussion will take a closer look at Slovenia's EU agenda. The country's first EU Council Presidency in 2008 was widely hailed as a success. More than a decade ago, our event on the 2008 Slovenian Presidency concluded that it had "succeeded in restating the priority of Southeast Europe's process of stabilisation, regional cooperation and EU integration for Europe as a whole".

These days, amidst a global pandemic, the increased engagement of non-democratic international powers in the region, and a stalled EU enlargement process, another impetus from a Slovenian Presidency like the one witnessed in 2008 would be more than welcome. The list of potential tasks is long: First, there are the most recent plans, tools, and packages for the WB6 that need to be brought to life, especially the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans promising a post-Covid recovery including a green and digital transition, and the goal of a Common Regional Market. Second, the enlargement process needs progress. Albania and North Macedonia should see their first intergovernmental conferences, and the latter must be freed from the trap of yet another bilateral dispute with an EU member state stalling its European ambitions. Also, the new methodology of enlargement must show that it can deliver tangible progress, especially when it comes to fundamentals. Third and finally, there are the region's long-term priorities like reconciliation and good-neighbourly relations closing this non-exhaustive list of issues the EU and the WB6 are jointly facing.

We are looking forward to discussing with our experts and audience how the Slovenian EU Presidency could again create a momentum putting Southeast Europe and especially the Western Balkans more forcefully on the EU's agenda. This is the first event of our two-part series on Slovenia on the occasion of its independence anniversary and upcoming EU Council presidency. Please find here (link) the programme of the second event.



### Registration

This event takes place online via Zoom.

Please register latest by 15 June 2021: [Registration Form](#)

### Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V.

Widenmayerstr. 49  
80538 München  
Tel. +49 89 2121 540

Fax +49 89 2121 5499  
E-Mail: [info@sogde.org](mailto:info@sogde.org)  
[www.sodge.org](http://www.sodge.org)



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