



# Civil Society Forum

of the Western Balkans Summit Series



## Civil Society & Think Tank Forum II Berlin 2021

July 05, 2021 | Digital Conference



Western  
Balkans  
Summit  
**Berlin**  
2021

**#CSFBerlin**

Supported by:



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## Monday, July 05, 2021

### 09:00 – 09:30 Welcoming Remarks

Valeska Esch, *Deputy Executive Director, Program Director Europe, Aspen Institute Germany*

Manuel Sarrazin, *Member of the German Bundestag, President of the Southeast Europe Association*

Angela Merkel, *German Federal Chancellor (Video Message)*

### 09:30 – 11:00 Panel Discussion I

#### Conditionality, the Reform Agenda, and the Future of the EU in the Western Balkans

Strengthening the rule of law, enhancing media freedom, and conducting democratization reforms are a substantial part of the EU reform agenda. The panelists will scrutinize the performance of regional governments in these areas, discuss the role of civil society actors, and assess the EU's ability to support reform processes through conditionality mechanisms in light of growing geopolitical competition across the region.

Speaker: Nikola Burazer, *Programme Director, Center for Contemporary Politics*

Misha Popovikj, *Good Governance Program Coordinator, Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis Skopje – IDSCS*

Arberesha Loxha, *Executive Director, Group for Legal and Political Studies, Representative of the Think for Europe Network (TEN)*

Kalinka Gaber, *State Secretary for European Affairs*

Maciej Popowski, *Acting Director-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, DG NEAR, European Commission*

Moderation: Vessela Tcherneva, *Deputy Director, European Council on Foreign Relations, Head of Sofia Office*

### 11:00 – 11:15 Short Break

### 11:15 – 12:45 Panel Discussion II

#### The Green Agenda and the Challenge of a Sustainable Transformation

Both the European Green Deal as well as the Green Agenda set an ambitious agenda in moving towards a more sustainable Europe. This panel will consider the cross-border nature of environmental issues relating to the problem of air pollution, the challenge of energy transition as well as the protection of biodiversity and nature conservation. The panelists will highlight how Western Balkans governments, the EU, and civil society actors can contribute to the convergence of (environmental) standards and to the target of carbon-neutral economies within the EU and the region.

Speaker: Aleksandra Tomanić, *Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans, Balkans United for Clean Air Network*

Nihad Harbaš, *Secretary General, Regional Center for Sustainable Energy Transition*

Nataša Crnković, *Biodiversity and Protected Areas Program Coordinator, Center for Environment*

Tanja Mišćević, *Deputy Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council*

Moderation: Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, *Member of the European Parliament, Greens – European Free Alliance*

### 12:45 – 13:45 Lunch Break

**13:45 – 14:45 Panel Discussion III**

**Reconciliation, Social Dialog, and Regional Confidence Building**

Reconciliation and regional confidence building continue to be challenges across the region and civil society organizations engaged in these issues continue to face obstacles and a lack of support. Building on the work of civil society representatives throughout the first forum, this panel will address how to improve and advance current reconciliation efforts and focus on the importance of strengthening social dialog between and within countries.

Speaker: Branka Vierda, *Program Coordinator, Justice Program, Reconciliation Program, Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia*

Albert Hani, *Secretary General, Regional Youth Cooperation Office*

Gordana Čomić, *Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue*

Donika Gërvalla-Schwarz, *Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora*

Moderation: Florian Bieber, *Professor, Center for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz, BiEPAG*

**14:45 – 15:00 Short Break**

**15:00 – 16:00 Panel IV**

**Acceptance and Rights of Minorities in the Western Balkans**

The acceptance and social inclusion of minorities in the region continue to pose a challenge. Based on the policy recommendations developed by civil society experts throughout the first Civil Society & Think Tank Forum, the panelists will discuss what Western Balkans governments, the regional civil society as well as the EU and its Member States can do to enhance social inclusion of Roma and other minorities, who currently face discrimination in the form of limited access to political representation, economic opportunities, education, healthcare, and other essential services.

Speaker: Suad Skenderi, *Programme Manager for Foreign and National Politics, Institute for Research and Policy Analysis – Romalitico*

Sonja Licht, *President, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence*

Emilija Redžepi, *Third Deputy Prime Minister for Minority Issues and Human Rights*

Frédéric Jörgens, *Deputy Head of Western Balkans Division, German Federal Foreign Office*

Moderation: Andreea Óhidy, *Professor of Education, University of Education Freiburg*

**16:00 – 16:15 Short Break**

**16:15 – 17:15 Panel Discussion V**

**Digitalization, Cyber Security, and Data Protection**

The digitalization of public services in the Western Balkans is expected to be a major step towards increased transparency and curbing corruption. However, it also raises skepticism about adequate protection of data from private persons throughout the region. Cyber security is also a major concern since a lot of the material and communication, which used to take place in the office space, has been moved online due to the ongoing pandemic. Against this backdrop and that of regional deficiencies in the rule of law, this panel will focus on the major potentials and challenges that digitalization poses to the region.

Speaker: Danilo Krivokapić, *Director, SHARE Foundation*

Marko Čadež, *President of the Managing Board, Western Balkan 6 Chamber Investment Forum, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Serbia*

Marina Banović, *State Secretary for Public Administration, Digital Society and Media*

Moderation: Anja Quiring, *Regional Director Southeast Europe, German Eastern Business Association*

**17:15 – 17:30 Short Break**

**17:30 – 18:30 Panel Discussion VI**

**Enhancing Integrity Compliance in Infrastructure Projects**

Against the backdrop of an increased engagement of external actors, such as China's 17+1 initiative, and taking into account the policy recommendations developed throughout the Civil Society & Think Tank Forum I, the panelists will discuss the Connectivity Agenda's challenges and potentials as well as concrete proposals as to what Western Balkans governments, the EU, and civil society actors can do to enhance integrity compliance in infrastructure projects and achieve tangible results in the region.

- Speaker:        *Ardian Hackaj, Director of Research and Coordinator of Tirana Connectivity Forum, Cooperation and Development Institute*
- Bojan Marichikj, Minister of Justice*
- Odeta Barbullushi, Advisor to the Prime Minister and National Coordinator for Regional Cooperation*
- Matteo Rivellini, Head of Division Croatia, Slovenia, and Western Balkans, European Investment Bank*
- Moderation:    *Nora Hasani, Managing Director, German-Kosovar Business Association*