

Panel Discussion

Inherited Insecurity: Why Youth Engagement Matters for Reconciliation in the Western Balkans



Friday, 14 February 2025, 10:00–11:30 a.m.. The event is followed by a light-lunch reception.

Seidlvilla, Nikolaiplatz 1B, 80802 München

Opening:

Manuel Sarrazin, Federal Government Special Representative for the Countries of the Western Balkans / President of the Southeast Europe Association

Panel Discussion:

Sofija Todorović, Director, Youth Initiative for Human Rights

Branimir Đurović, Researcher, Youth Initiative for Human Rights

Moderation:

Christian Hagemann, Executive Director, Southeast Europe Association

Stormy-Annika Mildner, Executive Director, Aspen Institute Germany

Topic

After the wars of the 1990s, the Western Balkans remained inherently unstable. Only in 2023, the international community witnessed outbreaks of violence in Northern Kosovo and continued agitation

for separatism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among the root causes of this instability is a lack of dealing with the past to facilitate reconciliation and conflict prevention. These developments threaten security in the region, but they also motivate especially young people to emigrate. However, young people are not only subject to these developments, but also agents of change. Young activists and youth leaders fight an uphill battle against politicians' inflammatory rhetoric, online radicalization, and nationalist school curricula. Still, with their knowledge of digital tools and through regional cooperation they have achieved astonishing successes.

Our event aims to amplify the role of youth in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, particularly during the rising instability in Europe and the Middle East. Youth are often sidelined, despite their significant stake in the future. We seek to showcase how young leaders are actively shaping a more secure and democratic world, with a focus on empowering them to address today's security challenges. Our approach spotlights practical, youth-driven solutions by sharing real-world initiatives where young leaders have reshaped societal landscapes. We emphasize the role of digital communication in both radicalization and peacebuilding, while focusing on democratic empowerment. This unique angle highlights the intersection of youth, technology, and democracy in addressing global security threats.

The event features the Youth Initiative for Human Rights which has extensive experience in youth-led peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the Western Balkans. Their work has received many prizes, among others the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Price (2019) and the Aachen Peace Price (2024).



Registration Form

To participate in the event, please register using the following link until 13 February 2025. As the number of seats is limited, we recommend early registration:
<https://www.sogde.org/de/formulare/inherited-insecurity/>

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