



**EXPERT
TALKS**

 **ONLINE CONFERENCE**

THE EUROPEAN PROJECT IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

June 24 and June 25

01:00 PM - 04:00 PM

Register via the link: <http://bit.ly/euw balk>



Europski dom Zagreb
Europe House Zagreb

CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

JUNE 24 Thursday 12:45 P.M. - 04:00 P.M.

12:45 PM OPENING SPEECH

Nataša Owens, President of the Europe House Zagreb

01:00 PM PROF. IVAN OBADIĆ, FACULTY OF LAW, ZAGREB

The Path to European Union: European Integration and the Balkans

02:00 PM PROF. DARIO ČEPO, FACULTY OF LAW, ZAGREB

Democratization in the Western Balkans: Between the Idealism of Supranational Values and the Real-Politik of National Political Actors

03:00 PM PROF. ĐANA LUŠA, FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCES, ZAGREB

Enlargement hidden behind empty phrases or reasserting the EU enlargement policy?"

JUNE 25 Friday 12:45 P.M. - 04:00 P.M.

12:45 PM OPENING SPEECH

Nataša Owens, President of the Europe House Zagreb

01:00 PM PROF. KATERINA KOLOZOVA, DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES, SKOPJE

Inventing Avenues of Collaboration between North Macedonia and Bulgaria: Toward Restoring the Credibility of the Enlargement process

02:00 PM PROF. FILIP BALUNOVIĆ, INSTITUTE FOR PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THEORY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Serbia in Europe: A Failed Project or Wrong Expectations?"

03:00 PM MR. DEMUSH SHASHA, DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN POLICY INSTITUTE OF KOSOVO

The Kosovo and the European Union integration process

INTRODUCTION

Two decades after the Stabilisation and Association Process of 1999, the process of European integration continues in the Balkan countries. The Zagreb Summit in May 2020 reminded its objectives. This process has left a lasting mark on the face of these societies and has changed the lives of their inhabitants. This conference offers a critical reflection on the "European Project in the countries of the Western Balkans". The genesis of the process, its successive stages, its consequences, and its prospects for development will be analyzed and debated.

The conference will be multidisciplinary and international. Professors and experts from different countries and different fields of research will intervene within the framework of their specialty. The combination of these different points of view will enhance the efficiency of the analysis and provide the curious citizen with the keys to understanding his political future.

The philosophy that guides us is that of dialogue, without which no real understanding is possible.

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JUNE 24 Thursday
12:45 P.M. - 04:00 P.M.

12:45 PM OPENING SPEECH

Nataša Owens, President of the Europe House Zagreb

01:00 PM PROF. IVAN OBADIĆ, FACULTY OF LAW, ZAGREB

The Path to European Union: European Integration and the Balkans

The presentation examines the origins and evolution of European policy towards the Balkans from the creation of the European Communities in the 1950s. It examines the emerging role of Western Europe in the Balkan (Yugoslav) foreign and internal politics within the larger context of the development of European integration. The presentation is divided into three distinct sections.

The first section analyses Yugoslav relations with the European Community. The second examines the EC policy towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The final part explores the European Union's Balkan policy after the Dayton Agreement.

02:00 PM PROF. DARIO ČEPO, FACULTY OF LAW, ZAGREB

Democratization in the Western Balkans: Between the Idealism of Supranational Values and the Real-Politik of National Political Actors

For almost three decades now the Western Balkans has been the focus of almost every single EU policy. First through conflict-resolution and peace-building, through consolidation and Europeanization, all the way to the process of all-encompassing democratization, EU institutions have been deeply invested in the region. Despite that, after three decades and multiple successes, the process of bringing the WB6 into the European Union's family of nations is nowhere near completion. In this presentation, I will show that the reason can be found not only in the countries of Western Balkans and their politicians but in EU (and member states) politicians, institutions, and political actors, including the party families.

Despite idealistic projects based on European values and aimed at strengthening democracy in WB6, these actors foster policies, processes, and ideas that lead to democratic backsliding or the maintenance of the status quo.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

03:00 PM PROF. ĐANA LUŠA
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCES, ZAGREB

Enlargement hidden behind empty phrases or reasserting the EU enlargement policy?"

From 1 January to 30 June 2020 Croatia took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Drawing on the Trio Programme and in line with the EU Strategic Agenda 2019 -2024, Croatia united following four priorities under the motto „A Strong Europe in a World of Challenges”: A Europe that develops, A Europe that connects, A Europe that protects and An influential Europe. Except for these basic priorities, Croatia placed a strong emphasis on one of the burning challenges of the EU – the enlargement policy. By organizing the EU – Western Balkans Summit in Zagreb in May 2020, twenty years after the first Zagreb Summit, which marked a turning point for the region, Croatia has shown its potential of reasserting the EU enlargement policy. With that in mind, the lecture critically addresses the results of the Zagreb conference, held after French's president Macron's veto in October 2019 on the willingness of the EU to open Albania and North Macedonia accession talks.

Therefore, the lecture will address the following issues: Did Zagreb Summit manage to undo the decision from October, when two decades of EU policy in the Western Balkans almost fell apart? Is the real achievement of the summit that it was held at all? Why Zagreb Declaration only contains the phrase “European perspective” instead of the enlargement perspective? What does the Declaration phrasing mean for the EU perspective of the Western Balkans states? Are things moving ahead for the enlargement process? Is Croatia as a small EU member state ready/willing/capable to help countries from the region to jump through many hoops before becoming members?

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

JUNE 25 Friday
12:45 P.M. - 04:00 P.M.

12:45 PM OPENING SPEECH

Nataša Owens, President of the Europe House Zagreb

**01:00 PM PROF. KATERINA KOLOZOVA,
DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND
HUMANITIES, SKOPJE**

Inventing Avenues of Collaboration between North Macedonia and Bulgaria: Toward Restoring the Credibility of the Enlargement process

The talk will tackle a couple of questions: Are there lessons to be learned from the Prespa Agreement as to how a model of a solution to a cultural conflict (involving national narratives of official historiographies) can be created in terms of contemporary politics?

Will North Macedonia and Bulgaria be able to demonstrate the same capacity to mobilize the informed public in creating a climate and adequate discursive foundation to pave the floor for a possible resolution as it were the case between (then) Macedonia and Greece? It is of utmost importance to tackle this question as I argue, it is the knot that needs to be untied in order to restore the credibility of the EU's enlargement process in the Western Balkans.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

02:00 PM PROF. FILIP BALUNOVIĆ, INSTITUTE FOR PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THEORY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Serbia in Europe: A Failed Project or Wrong Expectations?

Three decades after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbia as the biggest of the former Yugoslav republics is trying to find its own position within Europe. Through the process of 'transformation' or as many call it "transition", Serbia has been aiming to catch up with the most developed countries of Europe. After more than two decades of Serbia's efforts to become a 'European state', in terms of fulfilling the 'Copenhagen criteria and 'come back to Europe', after the downturn during the wars in the early 1990s and the Milosevic's era, this Balkan state is still far from its aim – at least from the aim as portrayed by the political elites of both Serbia and EU. Coming closer to membership in the European Union, does not seem to be 'behind the corner'.

The break up with communism as an ideology and the country's war past, same as strong determination to modernization (often perceived as westernization), made Serbia waiting in line first to be recognized as a reformed society, and later accepted as equal to all other European countries. The transformation from real socialism to neoliberal, peripheral capitalism brought a much worse kind of social and economic stratification than expected.

My presentation seeks to deal with Serbia's 'post – Milosevic era', in order to target the most significant factors that affected Serbian position vis-à-vis European Union. Unlike many who call the outcome of the "Serbia in Europe" project 'a failure', I argue that the project has been more than successful. It was, as a matter of fact, the projection of the outcome that predicted prosperity that failed considerably.

03:00 PM MR.DEMUSH SHASHA, DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN POLICY INSTITUTE OF KOSOVO

The Kosovo and the European Union integration process

The presentation will focus on the Kosovo EU integration process. Specifically, Kosovo's main achievements and main obstacles on its EU integration path will be outlined.