

BEATING THE BALKANS BLUES



Winter 2010

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Report of the European Policy Summit

co-organised by *Friends of Europe*
and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

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Friends of Europe wishes to pay tribute to Peter Weilemann, Head of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's Brussels Office, who died suddenly on the very day of this year's Balkans summit. Peter was a co-initiator with *Friends of Europe* when the annual conference project was launched almost a decade ago. He is greatly missed by his many friends and colleagues in Brussels.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A high-level European Policy Summit focusing upon issues surrounding the accession of Western Balkans countries to European Union membership took place in Brussels on 9 December 2010. Prime Ministers, cabinet ministers and policy-makers from Balkan countries joined members of the European Parliament, European Union officials, and institutional and business chiefs to discuss progress towards EU membership and remaining obstacles.

Opening the conference, Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa, Director of the Multinational Development Policy Dialogue in the European Office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, noted that the Summit appeared to coincide with a slowdown in the accession process.

An 'accession fatigue' both among existing EU members and candidate states must be addressed, she insisted. "The Balkans Blues has not only hit the EU and its member states, but also a little bit the region itself."

Ms Ostheimer de Sosa insisted on the need to "underline the positive effects of enlargement for the further stabilisation of the region". Though improving the rule of law and generating stronger economic growth are big challenges, these must be confronted and the sooner, the better. "Important steps have been taken in regional cooperation, but there is much more room for further improvement."

Tim Judah, Western Balkans Correspondent for *The Economist* and co-moderator of the summit, concurred, but set an upbeat tone with a metaphor that recurred throughout the day: "My glass is half full, it is not half-empty," he assured participants. "You can talk about organised crime, corruption, enlargement fatigue – that is all true. But the Balkan Blues are light blue, not dark blue."

Mr Judah set out a list of positives: Croatia is on-track for EU accession, Serbia's application for candidacy has been unblocked, Montenegro is about to win candidate status. And even Bosnia is benefiting from "good atmospheric" after its election. The Prime Ministers of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece have recently met frequently about the 19-year dispute over Macedonia's name, and Albania isn't "too far" behind. Perhaps elections in Kosovo will unblock its isolation, he pondered. "There are plenty of difficulties that lie ahead, but there is some good news too." During the course of the discussions, it was clear that

many participants share his optimism that progress of Western Balkan states toward EU membership is once again gathering pace.

Three main themes were discussed: providing fresh impetus towards EU membership, stamping-out corruption and organised crime, and improving economic competitiveness and inward investment.

There was clear acknowledgement by leaders of the Western Balkans that progress on a path of reconciliation and increased regional cooperation benefits citizens, and is worthwhile of itself. EU speakers emphasised the need to see continuing progress by states in the region toward settling border disputes and conflict legacy issues including refugee and reconciliation problems. Rather than rush to welcome Western Balkan countries to the EU house, the Union would prefer to accept new members that have solved most of their historic problems.

Huge efforts have been devoted to combating organised crime and corruption in the Western Balkans. Collaboration between states in policing and judicial processes is beginning to bear fruit. But participants flagged the desire to see alleged war criminals, as well as gangsters, being jailed as proof that new laws can deliver security and the rule of law.

Effective legal regimes are a pre-condition for reconstruction and development, the Summit concluded. Yet much more needs to be done to drive sorely-needed reconstruction and economic expansion, the Summit heard.

Billions of Euros must be invested in transport, energy and communications infrastructure, it was concluded. Both tariff and non-tariff barriers remain obstacles to business in the region, and should be removed. And investment in education and innovation are essential too to improve trade volumes and help spread employment and prosperity.

Countries in the Western Balkans have achieved remarkable advances, and for some progress toward long-awaited EU membership appears to be accelerating. But far greater regional integration is imperative, with or without the benefits of EU membership.

ŠTEFAN FÜLE, EU ENLARGEMENT COMMISSIONER, ON ‘ACCESSION FATIGUE’

In his keynote address [Štefan Füle](#), EU Commissioner for Enlargement, confronted head-on widespread talk of ‘enlargement fatigue’ among member states of the European Union who, it is suggested, are today more reluctant to recruit new member countries to the EU. The Commissioner highlighted “real progress on the ground” toward membership among Western Balkans countries, but suggested that rather some Balkan states are suffering a measure of ‘accession fatigue’.

“The abiding image in the mind of many EU citizens is of a region torn apart by conflict and the most terrible crimes.” The legacy of conflict - from organised crime to refugees - is still with us, he noted, but “This view is out-dated. We have had a decade of peace and stability.”

Today “the key to banishing the region’s blues lies within the region itself”. Countries must accentuate the positive and address the negative.



“The abiding image in the mind of many EU citizens is of a region torn apart by conflict and the most terrible crimes. This view is out-dated.”

Štefan Füle, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

And there are plenty of positives, including young, dynamic populations, a strong interest in the EU, and a sense of entrepreneurship. The negatives? “Organised crime, corruption, trafficking in people, drugs and weapons are the all-too-real manifestation of the conflicts of the 1990s.” However, they are being tackled.

“I have witnessed an acceleration of these efforts over the last year,” Commissioner Füle reported. “Regional cooperation is paramount,” and real and deeper cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo is especially needed.

More broadly, though, the Commissioner is encouraged by increased cross-border cooperation between prosecutors and police, which is bringing gangsters to justice – though EU citizens struggle to understand why alleged war criminals often still remain free.

“Open issues including border disputes need to be solved by parties concerned in a good neighbourly spirit,” he stressed. “Bilateral issues should not hold up the enlargement process. The European Union stands ready to facilitate the creation of the necessary impetus.”

Finally, he told participants, the Commission is promoting the enlargement process in many ways, including efforts to modernise understanding of the region, its peoples and its culture. By combining our efforts, he insisted, “We can beat the Balkan blues.”



GIVING THE WESTERN BALKANS FRESH EU IMPETUS

During the first session of the day, discussants reviewed progress of Western Balkan states toward EU membership. For two decades, the EU has held out the carrot of membership to encourage countries in the region to overcome recent conflicts, to facilitate the tough transition from command to market economies, and to aid sorely-needed economic growth on the EU's south-eastern fringe.

The progress of Western Balkan states toward accession has been slower than expected, though. Today EU leaders have many other worries and priorities, allied to a sense that integrating Eastern European members proved more exhausting than anticipated. Many commentators worry that hitching the Western Balkans to the EU locomotive is no longer an urgent priority within the Union.

Setting the scene, co-moderator [Tim Judah](#), Western Balkans Correspondent for *The Economist*, noted that in the past year, however, there are signs of overdue progress and renewed momentum.

Perhaps most striking of all: some Western Balkan states recognise that putting their house in order is in the best interest of their citizens, even if the EU train is slow to arrive.

History gives way to hopes

[Mirko Cvetković](#), Prime Minister of Serbia, opened the first session by detailing preparations for EU membership launched by his government since it was formed two and a half years ago.

The collapse of the former Yugoslavia, and subsequent wars of partition, have left a terrible legacy of human suffering, displaced people, and destroyed infrastructure, he observed. New nations have had to build institutions and competencies.

“Obviously there are a lot of problems and those problems basically arise from what was inherited – from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and all

the disasters that one would never have believed could happen in Europe,” the Prime Minister noted.

But, moving into the new century, democratic changes, progress and economic recovery are the order of the day. In this context, the prospect of EU membership is an inspiration for reforms.

“The key pre-requisite for the economic and democratic development of the Western Balkans is security.”



Milo Đukanović, Prime Minister of Montenegro

The Prime Minister of Montenegro, [Milo Đukanović](#), reinforced this point strongly, affirming that “There is very strong Euro enthusiasm in the Balkans - and this is typical of all the governments in the Western Balkans. There is absolute dependence in the Western Balkans on EU policy in regard not just to the direction of enlargement but also the pace of this future enlargement.”

Prime Minister Đukanović remarked: “We are waiting for the European Commission to give Montenegro candidate status and a date for accession

negotiations.” He added: “The situation in the Western Balkans today is better than at any time in the recent past. But the key pre-requisite for the economic and democratic development of the Western Balkans is security.”

Sharing the view from Sarajevo, [Bakir Izetbegović](#), Bosniak Member of the Tri-Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, spoke eloquently of the need to “beat part of our Balkan mentality – fear of diversity, fear of the other”.

“What should be beaten is part of our Balkan mentality – fear of diversity, fear of the other.”

[Bakir Izetbegović](#), Bosniak Member of the Tri-Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

He detailed two contrasting processes: one toward disintegration, the second driving reconciliation. Challenges in the coexistence of nine peoples and four monotheistic religions, the struggles of many empires in the past, and recent bloody wars have contributed to the creation of these fears across the former



Yugoslavia, he said. But this diversity is also wealth. Now three religions and three peoples are re-learning to co-exist in Sarajevo. “This is an opportunity, a chance,” he insisted. Calling for economic development and reconstruction, he urged: “Creation of new jobs would significantly defuse tensions.”

Dragoljuba Benčina, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, summed up perceptions from the region. “Slovenia has one simple formula,” she stated, “We are convinced that the EU needs the Balkans just as much as the Balkans needs the European Union.”

“Europe needs the Balkans because they are part of Europe, not just geographically, but also historically.” Why does the Balkans need Europe? “Because they need impetus to fulfil the reforms needed. To be prepared for Acquis Communautaire. All of this will bring better living conditions for the people, including human rights and the rule of law.”

“We are convinced that the EU needs the Balkans just as much as the Balkans needs the European Union.”

Dragoljuba Benčina, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia



Regional integration gathers pace

Whilst speakers were at odds over the extent to which ‘accession fatigue’ is to blame, there appears a change in the mood music around EU membership for the Western Balkan states. Prompted by a question from Tim Judah, Commissioner Füle spelled out the need for “Full 100% preparedness of the candidate countries before they seek to join the European Union.”

Today, he made clear, mere aspirations to join the EU are no longer sufficient. Would-be members need to demonstrate their credibility, their commitment to Europe’s values, and their capacity to live by them. Reforms must be seen to

work. “You will have seen and are seeing that we are more and more interested not only in the legislation being adopted or institutions established but also in how it works – whether it is bringing effects.”

Effective regional cooperation is now a pre-requisite for further progress towards EU membership. “Regional cooperation is important from the point of view of tackling the remaining issues,” the Commissioner stressed. “The region must start addressing these issues and make all the efforts required or they will not make it to the table of accession process.”

That message was reinforced by [Doris Pack MEP](#), Member of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, who stressed that today’s visa-free regime is a real achievement but that strenuous commitment is needed from Western Balkan states to overcome an undeniable ‘enlargement fatigue’ among EU members.

“It is up to the region to show they are really interested to fulfil the conditions,” she urged. “You have friends in the European Parliament, you have friends in the



Doris Pack MEP and Bakir Izetbegović

Commission. You should make friends in the different nations,” she urged. “The bilateral questions should be solved before accession is started.”

“You have friends in the European Parliament, you have friends in the Commission. You should make friends in the different nations.”

Doris Pack MEP, Member of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo

The importance of regional integration as a prior condition for EU accession is well understood among leaders in the Western Balkans, as Commissioner Füle noted himself. Prime Minister Cvetković of Serbia emphasised its importance both for his government and the region.

“Serbia and this government are trying to make a gigantic contribution to reconciliation in the region,” the Prime Minister stressed. “We are significantly growing our relations with Croatia. We would also like to have good relations with Macedonia and all the neighbouring countries. We are not just saying that regional cooperation is important but we are doing a lot and we can be proud of the results.”

“We do not believe it is a good idea to have a frozen conflict and sweep it under the carpet, because you never know when this problem will jump out in the future decades.”



Mirko Cvetković, Prime Minister of Serbia

He singled out a solution to the status of Kosovo as a priority. A joint resolution by the EU and Serbia at the United Nations called for dialogue. “We believe there

is a solution - there could be a win-win situation acceptable for all parties," he insisted. And he seeks an "historical resolution between Serbs and Albanians".

Summing up, he stressed: "We do not believe it is a good idea to have a frozen conflict and sweep it under the carpet, because you never know when this problem will jump out in future decades."

Milo Đukanovic, Prime Minister of Montenegro, reinforced this view, arguing: "We are all conscious in the Western Balkans that there are no shortcuts to the EU."



Prime Minister Đukanovic of Montenegro shaking hands with Deputy Prime Minister Naumovski of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Doris Pack MEP was among several speakers who emphasised the need to resolve the dispute between Greece and Macedonia over the name Macedonia to unblock the stalled accession of the Republic of Macedonia. She also stressed the importance of states in the region resolving their border disputes to clear the way for accession to the EU.

Responding to a question from the floor raised by Ana Selic, anti-corruption programme coordinator of the CEMI Monitoring Centre in Montenegro, Prime Minister Đukanovic said that in terms of regional policy: "The most important priority for Montenegro and all countries of the region is the rule of law.

"This is an international problem so we must fight it globally using synergies between countries and respective enforcement authorities that yesterday viewed each other as enemies. We are now signing bilateral agreements. We are on this path."

From the floor former European Commission official Andrei Enghis noted that many East European countries joined NATO before joining the EU. Should this be the case with Balkans? Mr Izetbegović answered that "Some 70% of the Bosnian population want to join NATO and we are on a good way toward NATO."

Ms Pack said there is no linkage between membership of NATO and of the EU. Montenegrin Prime Minister Đukanovic observed that joining NATO is a common ambition among Western Balkan states, and he believes many may achieve membership of the defence organisation before that of the European Community.

Connecting with the EU locomotive

MEP Pack highlighted the introduction of a visa-free regime between Western Balkan countries and the EU as evidence that integration momentum is being sustained. She urged states to have confidence in the Thessaloniki declaration eight years ago that the future of the Western Balkan states lies within the EU.

Serbia is once more forging ahead in its ambitions to join the EU, said Prime Minister Cvetković. The country has made its formal application for membership, and Serbian officials are now completing answers to an EU questionnaire which

Mr Cvetković plans to deliver personally to Brussels at the end of January. “We are expecting that at the end of next year we will be granted candidacy status and a date for opening negotiations,” he stated.

Mr Đukanovic noted that four and a half years after gaining its independence, Montenegro is now awaiting approval of candidate status for EU membership. He argued that it would be “much more useful” for the European process in the Western Balkans to have a “firm date” for accession negotiations. Delays are damaging to confidence, he insisted. For example Macedonia received candidate status five years ago, but has yet to open negotiations, stalled by its name dispute with Greece. It is also urgent to resolve uncertainty over Kosovo, he argued.

[Vasko Naumovski](#), Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, noted: “It is clear that the criteria are not the same now as they were in 2004 or 2007, but we are prepared to fulfil every one of them.” He acknowledged that accession negotiations will be a tough process, but urged: “I would like to hope the difficult issues will be solved at the beginning of the negotiations.”



“It is clear that the criteria are not the same now as they were in 2004 or 2007, but we are prepared to fulfil every one of them.”

[Vasko Naumovski](#), Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Commissioner Füle highlighted the importance of using reform momentum created by the accession process. There are signs of progress on many sticking points. “Macedonia really wants this name issue solved.” And there is

a possibility that Albania and Montenegro will soon implement the “list of key priorities” required ahead of the accession process.

“2011 is going to be extremely important” for the progress of the Western Balkans towards EU membership, he noted. “Next year I hope to finish accession negotiations with one country, Croatia, and to be in a position to recommend to member states to open negotiations with some others.”





GIVING SHARPER TEETH TO THE RULE OF LAW

The rule of law has become a critical issue for Western Balkan states seeking EU accession, argued [Eduard Kukan MEP](#), Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, during the second session of the day.

Ironically, publicity around arrests and sentences arising from organised crime and corruption has reinforced perceptions that the rule of law is weak, even as action against wrong-doers has become more effective.

“The focus in the Western Balkans today is on the rule of law.”

Eduard Kukan MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo

When Slovakia, the MEP’s home country, joined the EU in 2004, “economic issues were to the fore,” the MEP remarked. “Now, the focus has shifted on the rule of law.”

Effective functioning of Western Balkan states has become a pre-condition for beginning accession talks. There is a widespread recognition that beating the upsurge in corruption and organised crime should be a top priority for governments in the region.

“I meet representatives, NGOs and so forth and everyone is complaining that corruption on all levels is unacceptably high, and it affects their day to day lives and businesses,” Kukan noted. The effective rule of law affects how people trust, or distrust, their country and its institutions, he asserted.

By common consent, “It is necessary to tackle this at the beginning of the accession process. It is necessary to deliver concrete results.” But the task is tough, he reminded summit participants. “It is very easy to say all the criminals who misuse public functions should be arrested and sent to jail. Do you know how difficult it is to achieve?”

Beating crime and corruption: An Albanian example

Edith Harxhi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania, described the progress made toward stamping out corruption and organised crime in Albania, a country notorious only a few years ago for racketeering and human trafficking.

“Albania has been one of the best examples of how the rule of law has developed a very backward country with one party to a very vibrant democracy and also peace and stability,” she stated.

When the current government took office in 2005, Albania “had one of the highest rates of corruption in the world and was also a dark spot for trafficking,” she explained.

Today, “We have already eliminated 350 gang groups, and EU and US reports today cannot find any single case where human trafficking is an issue any more.”



“Cross border cooperation has increased hugely.”

Edith Harxhi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania

The goal of EU membership is a driver for the anti-crime strategy. But Albania realised that the best way to beat corruption and crooks was through regional cooperation, she said.

“Cross border cooperation has increased hugely.” Lifting of Albania’s visa regime for nationals of other regional states has gone hand-in-hand with improved border surveillance in collaboration with neighbouring countries.

“Should Western Balkan states cooperate more against organised crime and corruption?” asked **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe* and co-moderator of the summit.

Cooperation with international organisations is critical, Ms Harxhi argued. At a conference in Tirana, regional ministers had signed a statement that they would be committed to fighting organised crime together.

Albania finds support from the Council of Europe’s Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) especially valuable, the Deputy Minister stressed.



From left to right: Pierre Mirel, Edith Harxhi, Giles Merritt, Tim Judah, Kori Udovički and Eduard Kukan MEP.

In total, Albania has adopted eight amendments to its national criminal code to combat corruption.

Removing parliamentary immunity remained to be achieved, though: “There is plenty of work to be done yet,” the Deputy Minister noted. “We cannot say Albania is corruption free until we ensure that everyone is equal in front of the law.”

Advice and support from the EU, from Slovenia, and from the One UN Programme of the United Nations is of great benefit, Deputy Minister Harxhi noted. This has led to the introduction of e-procurement, which helps ensure the transparency of bids for public contracts.

Helping states take effective measures

Some details of ways in which the UN Programme helps Western Balkan states in the fight against organised crime and corruption were spelled out by [Kori Udovički](#), Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Ms Udovički noted that the “motivation and the standards” for crime-busters are set by Europe. The UN’s role, she said, is to provide independent advice and step-by-step support.



“A pervasively corrupt institution is actually the absence of an institution.”

[Kori Udovički](#), Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

“A pervasively corrupt institution is actually the absence of an institution”, because institutions are actually a commonly understood, accepted and,

therefore executed, way of doing things. The task for the thoroughly transforming states, she argued, is to not only set new rules of the game, but to develop common expectations and understandings on how they are now to perform. This is what the creation of institutions is all about: new frameworks and rules that both reflect and meet the Western Balkan citizens' expectations of fair and effective administration.



Sometimes relatively simple structural changes can remove the opportunity for gangs to make money. For example, in the recent past, Serbia was overrun by a ‘petroleum mafia’ that blossomed during economic sanctions, she said. “It really took one decree to do away with the petroleum mafia in Serbia.” A new law banned import of petroleum products. Only crude oil could be imported, so all petroleum products in the country could be taxed at the door of the refineries. This rule simultaneously ended mafia revenues, and bolstered tax collection from oil products refined in the country.

However, more often things are more complex and states do not have the necessary capacity, even when they have the political will, to identify and prosecute criminal or unsound behaviour in the framework of the new rules of the game. For example, when the central bank withdrew licences from unsound or un-trustworthy institutions, and the courts revoked these decisions, many in society called foul. Yet her personal investigation of the issues in Serbia led her to believe this was more often a reflection of weaknesses in legal process and legal/judicial knowledge both on the side of the central bank’s lawyers and of the courts. In the Western Balkans, she said, to take effective action in support of the rule of law, “sometimes the problem is in adjusting a long line of institutional wheels”.

Mr Kukan stressed the importance of cross-border cooperation. Extradition agreements must be backed by training. It is very important that each country takes it equally responsibly,” he insisted. “Governments must send a message that the Western Balkans is not a safe haven for criminals any longer.”

Tackling outstanding issues

The past two years have delivered something of a breakthrough as regards regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, noted [Pierre Mirel](#), European Commission Director for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo Issues in the Directorate General for Enlargement.

“For the first time in 2009 we saw very positive developments towards the establishment of good neighbourly relations with several symbolic gestures – and a number of extradition agreements. These are extremely important developments we have been wanting for a long time.”



Yet “the rule of law continues to stand in the way of countries on EU tracks”. Corruption arises largely through four mechanisms, he suggested: privatisation, public procurement, licences and permits, and in the granting of construction permits. Corruption of this sort must be stamped out.

“For the first time in 2009 we saw very positive developments towards the establishment of good neighbourly relations with several symbolic gestures.”



Pierre Mirel, European Commission Director for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo Issues in the Directorate General for Enlargement

Trafficking of weapons to EU countries remains a problem, he insisted. Legal systems, too, must become more efficient, so that wrong-doers are seen to be punished.

To satisfy the EU, he suggested, the rule of law must be extended further. It must also provide a solution for thousands of refugees from past conflicts, and answers for families seeking missing loved-ones. A truth commission called the RECOM initiative, proposed by a group of NGOs, could help reconciliation, Mr Mirel believes.

The Director highlighted the importance of benchmarking for assessing efficiency and progress of measures against organised crime and corruption. That point was reinforced by Albania’s Deputy Minister Harxhi, “We take this very seriously,” she stressed. “We have been trying to put in place measurable benchmarks with dates and achievements.” Such measures were essential too for the health of democracy, she asserted.

From the floor of the summit, Iris Bjelica-Vlajic, Member of the Executive Board of Transfuse International, Berlin, questioned the extent to which Albania is open to external assessments. Ms Harxhi insisted Albania would cooperate with any inquiry. "It is important to show we have absolutely nothing to hide," she stated.

Mr Mirel recognised that achieving satisfactory compliance with the rule of law might even delay the accession process for some states. Journalists have a vital role to play in combating corruption and organised crime, he noted. However, Tim Judah noted that journalists could pay with their lives for such exposing of wrong-doing, or face court action from powerful opponents.

But things should "go smoother" if crime and corruption are brought under control before Western Balkan states join the EU. Mr Mirel made clear that the EU would set the bar high. "In the course of next year we are going to press and push these countries to do much more on these issues," he stressed. Sharp incisors are not enough to ensure the rule of law, the Director insisted. "We also need molars to chew on more important issues."







Co-moderators Giles Merritt and Tim Judah



STEPPING UP THE INVESTMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS DRIVE

The third session of the day turned the focus upon the need to bolster prosperity across the Western Balkans through increased trade, investment and competitiveness.

Introducing the session, co-moderator Giles Merritt suggested that although the recession had led to a slump in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), the region seemed to offer a pool of skills and manpower that could benefit the European Union.

Tim Judah suggested that November's €243m takeover by Croatian food-toothpaste conglomerate Atlantic Grupa of Slovenian peer Droga Kolinska was a welcome sign of consolidation in a regional market fragmented by past conflicts.

The need to consolidate the regional market was the first of three strong themes to emerge in the session. Speakers and participants also noted continuing tariff and regulatory barriers that pose challenges in attracting productive investment.

The session concluded with a lively debate about the need to improve transport and power infrastructure, and in particular whether this was a necessary precondition for improved trade, or whether providing better conditions for business would trigger solutions to the most pressing infrastructure problems. In addition there was a strong emphasis on the need for more attention to education and innovation.

Fragmented markets hinder growth

The evidence that trade benefits prosperity is today well established. Many commentators see the break-up the former Yugoslavia into a cluster of small states, in a process often accompanied by destructive conflict and displacement

of populations, as a contributor to the poverty of the Western Balkans relative to the rest of Europe.

Alan Paic, Acting Head of the Investment Compact and Principal Administrator for the South East Europe Programme at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), said FDI in the Western Balkans increased ten-fold between the year 2000 and 2008. But the inflow has since halved, and even in the good years, “most of the FDI went into real estate and privatisation, not the manufacture of tradable goods. Growth in the Balkans was thus due to credit expansion leading to internal consumption, rather than sustainable export-led growth.”

The Balkans currently benefit from relatively low labour costs, but this is not a sustainable competitive advantage. The future should bring highly skilled and



highly paid jobs based on high value added. However, only 5% of the region's exports are high technology exports. That compares to 10% in Central and Eastern Europe, 20% for the average OECD country and 29% of Chinese exports, he revealed. "That is showing that high-value-added goods are lacking in the export structure."

OECD analysis has highlighted two weaknesses: poor education – only Croatia approaches the average on the OECD's PISA tests of 15-year-olds' ability – and lack of innovation.

**“The biggest obstacle to regional integration
is the lack of infrastructure.”**



Peter Reiniger, Managing Director for Central and South Eastern Europe at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Peter Reiniger, Managing Director for Central and South Eastern Europe at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), noted a third problem area: "My view is that the biggest obstacle to regional integration is the lack of infrastructure."

Hido Bišćević, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), observed that unlike countries in Eastern Europe, where links were built during the Warsaw Pact years for military purposes, the Western Balkans has long had very poor road and rail routes. "The Western Balkans needs a regional approach to recovery and development," he urged.

Moreover, “there was a period that we are aware of over the 1990s that brought a sense of self-sufficiency for practically every new state in the region”. Many strove to satisfy their own needs in electricity and water, for example, denying themselves scale economies and battling geography.



“The Western Balkans needs a regional approach to recovery and development.”

Hido Bišćević, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council

The Chair of the European Parliament EU-Croatia Delegation, [Gunnar Hökmark MEP](#), drew a sympathetic comparison with the Nordic region where states such as Norway, Sweden and Finland failed to capitalise on the potential for intra-regional trade until they became members of the EU.

One lesson from the 2004 EU enlargement round was a spectacular increase in FDI flows from Western to Eastern Europe, and rapid increases in trade that benefited both new and long-standing EU members. He drew three conclusions. Institutions must be put in place, EU enlargement is beneficial for growth, and “regional cooperation will benefit very much from the European Union”.

Regional and EU integration can bolster investment

Though remittances have fallen, Mr Reiniger of the EBRD showed that economic growth has returned to the Western Balkans, with growth in Gross Domestic Product expected to range during 2010 from 0.9% in Romania to 2.9% in Serbia. “This growth will come from exports,” he stressed. “The winner in the competition for export markets will be the market which is most open.”

[Nataša Djurdjevic](#), Franchise Operations Director for Adriatics at The Coca-Cola Company, revealed that Coca-Cola alone has invested more than €1bn in its Adriatic region, which covers the former Yugoslavia with the exception of

Slovenia. Today the company and its franchisees have 8 production facilities, more than 30 distribution centres across the region and more than 3,500 employees.

“We believe FDI is crucial to drive economic growth in these countries,” she said. However, she noted, one needs to bear in mind that the Western Balkans is not a big territory in global business terms, and therefore the region needs to boost its competitiveness profile.

National boundaries, tariffs on inputs and exports, and varying local rules and regulations add to the costs of doing business in the region. Harmonisation



Over 300 interested stakeholders observed the day's debates.

of rules and markets and enforcement of a level playing field, especially in the food and beverage sector in Serbia, would enhance investment attractiveness. “Our experience is that the potential for cross-regional synergies in supply and distribution are still not fully utilised,” she stressed. “We are faced on occasions with uneven treatment of inspections and non-harmonised regulations that prohibit free flow of goods.” And Croatia, in many ways a vanguard economy in its efforts to align with EU regulations, “would benefit from reduced fiscal and para-fiscal pressures to stimulate growth”.

As Mr Merritt observed: “The fragmentation of the market is a serious problem for a newcomer who might arrive and select one country as a manufacturing base, then find there are taxes, levies, non-tariff barriers, and so on, and find it is not looking at a Balkan marketplace but only the country it invested in.”



“Those economies that are not open to competition will not achieve competitiveness.”

Gunnar Hökmark MEP, Chair of the European Parliament EU-Croatia Delegation

Mr Hökmark noted the long-standing paradox that “everyone wants competition until it arrives”, but insisted that “those economies that are not open to competition will not achieve competitiveness”. However, Croatia had made huge progress in competitiveness, and early EU membership for Croatia would send “a strong signal” to the rest of the region.

Picking priorities from a crowded agenda

Mr Bišćević noted not only the need for continued progress toward EU accession, but also for “a regional approach to recovery and development”, particularly of transport and energy infrastructure.

Mr Reiniger stressed that the EBRD is actively supporting regional integration; one recent example is the financing of the path-breaking Atlantic Grupa deal. In 2010, the EBRD will provide more than €1bn financing in the Western Balkans.

“My view is that the biggest obstacle to regional integration is the lack of infrastructure,” he revealed. “To travel from Skopje to Tirana takes seven hours, and you risk your life on the road.” To fly between the capitals of the Western Balkans it is easiest to fly via Vienna, he remarked.

Through the Western Balkans Investment Framework the EBRD, together with the EU, European Investment Bank (EIB) and others, is willing to contribute to the “billions and billions of Euros” that will be needed to provide adequate transport, energy and telecoms infrastructure for the region.

The image shows the logo for The Coca-Cola Company. The text "The Coca-Cola Company" is written in a classic, flowing cursive script. The word "The" is smaller and positioned to the left of "Coca-Cola". "Coca-Cola" is the largest and most prominent part of the logo, with a registered trademark symbol (®) at the end. The word "Company" is also in the same cursive font, positioned to the right of "Coca-Cola". The entire logo is centered within a simple black rectangular border.

From the floor Mario Hirsch, Director of the Pierre Werner Institute, Luxembourg, noted that “there are more kilometres of tracks out of use than in use in most West Balkans countries,” and stressed the urgency of planning links that can take a decade to reach fruition.



“Adam Smith said: It is not wealth which makes good roads possible, but having good roads that makes wealth creation possible. The same holds true for skills and innovation.”

Alan Paic, Acting Head of the Investment Compact and Principal Administrator for the South East Europe Programme at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

But Mr Hökmark argued that whilst he favoured more infrastructure, “if you get more trade, you will get more infrastructure”. Mr Paic, paraphrasing economist Adam Smith, then argued rather that “It is not wealth which makes good roads possible, but having good roads that makes wealth creation possible. The same holds true for skills and innovation.”

He argued strongly for the need to invest in education and innovation to ensure Balkan companies were creating knowledge-intensive goods and services that will win in export markets. “Investing the equivalent of just a few kilometres of highway into innovation centres is critical,” he stressed.

Ms Djurdjevic said the region has entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial spirit. “The presence of international business has definitely helped build capabilities in the region.”

From the floor, Nenad Popović, Member of the Serbian National Parliament, remarked though that investment tends to be concentrated in major cities, and building road, rail and waterway links and making better use of the Danube, is

critical to creating employment and raising prosperity in rural areas. Serbia's plans for tax-free economic zones would also help, he suggested.

Summing up, participants said that while they were generally optimistic, further progress is needed on market integration while regional collaboration to produce a transport master-plan is essential.

“The presence of international business has helped build capabilities.”

Nataša Djurdjevic, Franchise Operations Director for Adriatics at The Coca-Cola Company



ANNEX II - Programme

- 09.00 – 09.30 Welcome and registration of participants
- 09.30 – 09.45 WELCOME ADDRESS by **Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa**,
Director of the Multinational Development Policy Dialogue
in the European Office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
- KEYNOTE ADDRESS by **Štefan Füle**, EU Commissioner
for Enlargement
- SESSION I** **GIVING THE WESTERN BALKANS**
09.45 – 11.30 **FRESH EU IMPETUS**

For all the encouraging noises the EU makes, the membership prospects of many Balkan countries seem to be stagnating. Croatia now looks likely to miss its 2010 accession target; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has candidate status but is waiting for negotiations to begin; Albania, Montenegro and Serbia have yet to be awarded candidate status; and Bosnia and Herzegovina is still struggling with constitutional reform. Regional cooperation in the western Balkans has made progress, but bilateral disputes mean that regional structures and initiatives are not yet as efficient as they could be. How best should obstacles to regional cooperation be removed, and what impact is the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling on Kosovo's declaration of independence likely to have on regional relations? If eventual membership for the Balkan states remains the EU's goal, what should the Union's member governments be doing to bring that about?

- Dragoljuba Benčina** Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia
- Mirko Cvetković** Prime Minister of Serbia
- Milo Đukanović** Prime Minister of Montenegro
- Bakir Izetbegović** Bosniak Member of the Tri-Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Vasko Naumovski** Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Doris Pack MEP** Member of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo

Co-moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*, and **Tim Judah**, Western Balkans Correspondent for *The Economist*

11.30 – 12.00 Coffee break

SESSION II **GIVING SHARPER TEETH**
12.00 – 13.30 **TO THE RULE OF LAW**

The major challenges that the countries of south east Europe still face over the rule of law now stand in the way of their EU accession. Justice needs to be speedy and certain for the rule of law to be respected, and that means better cross-border cooperation by police and judiciaries. With war crimes and other serious crimes still an urgent issue, what progress still needs to be made on extradition and the transfer of proceedings? Most Balkan countries protect freedom of expression, but what needs to be done to prevent undue political pressure on the media? And a decade and a half after the end of the conflicts, with hundreds of thousands of refugees still awaiting return or resettlement, what should Balkan governments be doing to expedite this process and guarantee the safety of vulnerable minorities?

Edith Harxhi	Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania
Eduard Kukan MEP	Chair of the European Parliament Delegation to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo
Pierre Mirel	European Commission Director for Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo Issues in the Directorate General for Enlargement
Kori Udovički	Assistant Secretary General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Co-moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*, and **Tim Judah**, Western Balkans Correspondent for *The Economist*

13.30 – 14.30 Networking lunch

**SESSION III STEPPING UP THE INVESTMENT
14.30 – 16.00 AND COMPETITIVENESS DRIVE**

The tentative western Balkans' economic buoyancy of recent years has been hit hard by the global economic crisis, with the IMF forecasting an average of 1.5% GDP growth for the region in 2010. Looking further ahead, the long-term competitiveness and prosperity of the region will depend in large part on whether these economies can attract more foreign direct investment. What progress has been made in reducing restrictions, improving the investment climate and creating a new era of innovative businesses and export-led growth? Has the economic and financial crisis been a blessing in disguise because it has enabled Balkan governments to push through unpopular but much-needed market reforms? What prospects are there for further progress in such areas as access to finance and infrastructural development? With the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) looking increasingly moribund, what new initiative might kick-start intra-Balkan trade?

Hido Bišćević	Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council
Nataša Djurdjevic	Franchise Operations Director for Adriatics at The Coca-Cola Company
Gunnar Hökmark MEP	Chair of the European Parliament EU-Croatia Delegation
Alan Paic	Acting Head of the Investment Compact and Principal Administrator for the South East Europe Programme at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Peter Reiniger	Managing Director for Central and South Eastern Europe at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Co-moderated by **Giles Merritt**, Secretary General of *Friends of Europe*, and **Tim Judah**, Western Balkans Correspondent for *The Economist*

16.00 End of summit

ANNEX II - List of Participants

Scott Abrams, Project Manager, Open Society Institute, Hungary

Christos Aivaliotis, Assistant, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Martine Alonso Marquis, Researcher, Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, France, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche Internationales (CERI)

Dejan Anastasijevic, Journalist, Vreme, Serbia

Bojidar Andonov, Chair of Religion, Educational Science and Homiletics at the Theological Faculty, University of Sofia, Bulgaria

Pedro Andreo Andreo, Head of Sector, Evaluation, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Danijel Apostolovic, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Media, Government of Serbia

Arnaud Appriou, Policy Co-ordinator, Human and Minority Rights Desk, Kosovo Issues Unit, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Joana Araújo, Responsible for Enlargement, Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU

Marija Atanaskova, Europe Programme Assistant, International Crisis Group (ICG), Brussels Office (Headquarters)

Péter Balázs, Director, Central European University, Hungary, Center for EU Enlargement Studies

Rosa Balfour, Senior Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre (EPC)

Branko Baricevic, Ambassador, Mission of Croatia to the EU

Sandro Baricevic, Corporate Identity, Public Affairs & Communications Manager, The Coca-Cola Company, Croatia

Michelle Barrett, Regional Programme Officer, USAID Regional Services Center for Europe and Eurasia, Hungary

Haris Basic, Advisor to President Izetbegovic, Office of the Tri-Presidency, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Robin Baudour, Cameraman, Klan Albanian Television

Jan Bäverström, Information Specialist, European Parliament

Dragoljuba Bencina, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

Tanja Bezget, Analyst, Council of the European Union

Hido Biscevic, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Iris Bjelica-Vlajic, Member of the Executive Board, Transfuse Association, Berlin

Dragan Blagojevic, Brussels Correspondent, Serbian BETA News Agency

Sebastian Bloching, Programme Officer, International Security Information Service Europe (ISIS Europe)

Alain Bloedt, Head of Office, Fondation Robert Schuman

Detlev Boeing, Principal Administrator, Enlargement Strategy, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Ferruccio Bogo, Political Desk Officer - Croatia Unit, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Henri Bohnet, Director, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Office

Friedrich Bokern, Research Associate to Gunther Krichbaum MP, Bundestag, Germany, Committee on the Affairs of the European Union

Grace Bolton, Assistant, European Commission: Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Enlargement & Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle

Laure Borgomano, Conseillère, Delegation of France to NATO

Simona Bovha Padilla, Economist, Development Economics Advisory Service, European Investment Bank (EIB), Luxembourg

Oleg Bredikhin, First Secretary (Political Affairs), Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU

Ovidio Brugiati, Policy Officer, Ferrovie dello Stato, EU Relations Office

Robertas Bruzilas, Head of EU Enlargement Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania

Geert Cami, Co-Founder & Director, *Friends of Europe, Les Amis de l'Europe*

Branislav Canak, President, United Branch Trade Unions, Serbia

Mario Capato, Journalist, Agenzia Nova, Italy

Bo Caperman, Programme Manager, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Enzo Caputo, President, Development Researchers' Network (DRN), Italy

Alessandro Carano, Head of Unit, Institutional and Operational Policies Outside the EU, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Barbara Chiappini, Head of the EU Task Force, Ministry of the Environment and Territorial and Marine Conservation, Italy, European Union Task Force

Dusan Chrenek, Head of Unit, Enlargement, European Commission: Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development

Marek Cichocki, Programme Director, Natolin European Centre, Poland

Philippe Claeys, European Government Sector Advisor, PricewaterhouseCoopers

Naim Cope, First Secretary, Economic and Financial Affairs, Mission of Albania to the EU

Marije Cornelissen MEP, Vice Chairwoman, Group of the European Greens-European Free Alliance (Greens-EFA)

Basil Coronakis, Head of Brussels Office, Regional Cooperation Council

Dominika Cosic, EU Correspondent, Wprost, Poland

Viktor Cvetkovic, Financial Manager, Belgrade Archdiocese, Serbia

Mirko Cvetkovic, Prime Minister, Government of Serbia

Martin Dabrowski, Director of Studies, Akademie Franz Hitze Haus, Germany

Stanislav Daskalov, Ambassador & Deputy Head of Brussels Liaison Office, Regional Cooperation Council, Brussels Liaison Office

Martin Dawson, Deputy Head of Unit, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Muaz Dedajic, First Counsellor, Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU

Thomas Dedeurwaerdere, Policy Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Brussels Office

Joan Delaney, Independent Consultant

Bruno Dethomas, Principal Advisor, European Commission: Directorate General for External Relations

Radomir Diklic, Ambassador, Embassy of Serbia to Belgium

Dragutin Djekovic, European & International Officer, Local Government Association, United Kingdom

Milo Djukanovic, Prime Minister, Government of Montenegro

Natasa Djurdjevic, Franchise Operations Director for Adriatics, The Coca-Cola Company, Serbia

Dace Dobraja, Counsellor, Enlargement, Permanent Representation of Latvia to the EU
Burckhard Doempke, Consultant Interpreter, Managing Partner, Conference Interpreters International

Elena Drakopoulou, Press Attaché, Embassy of Greece to Belgium

Olivera Drazic, International Affairs Advisor, BP Europe

Davor Dzalto, Vice President & Professor of Art History and Theory at University of Nish, Christian Cultural Centre, Belgrade, Serbia

Ivan Ebejer, Economic Analyst, European Commission: Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs

Rebekka Edelmann, Programme Manager for Financial Assistance, Albania & Bosnia and Herzegovina, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Radka Edererova, Counsellor, Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU

Andrej Engelman, Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia Government Office for Development and European Affairs

Andrej Enghis, Former European Commission Official

Robert Erzin, Assistant to the President of the Management Board, Telekom Slovenije

Evangelos Fanoulis, Assistant, European External Action Service (EEAS)

Lucian Farcas, Lecturer in Roman-Catholic Theory of Ethics and Social Ethics, University of Iasi, Romania

Jose Fernandez Camacho, IPA Programme Manager, European Commission: Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

Elena Fernandez Frontan, Assistant, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Vladimir Filipovic, Council Member, Ministry of Diaspora, Serbia

Miriam Fischer, Programme Assistant, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), European Office

Francesco Florindi, International Relations Officer, United Nations Youth Association Italy (MSOI), Italy

Una Forgic, Assistant, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement

Štefan Füle, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, European Commission

Nathalie Furrer, Director, *Friends of Europe, Les Amis de l'Europe*

Drazen Gagulic, Head of Cabinet, Ministry of Communication and Transport, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sandra Gaisch-Hiller, Senior European Affairs Manager, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), Corporate & European Government Affairs

Dusan Gajic, Chief Editor, South East Europe TV Exchanges (SEETV)

Momčilo Gajić, Head of Protocol of the Prime Minister, Government of Serbia

Gabriela Galvez, Assistant, Embassy of Mexico to Belgium, Luxembourg and Mission to the European Union

Vesko Garcevic, Ambassador, Embassy of Montenegro to Belgium

Eranda Gjomena, PhD Researcher, Università Degli Studi di Trento, Italy

Nikola Gjorgonoski, Assistant, Kapital Invest, Albania

Kola Gjovalin, Journalist, Alsat

Megan Glick, Research Associate, Nonviolent Peaceforce

Justyna Glodowska, Administrator, European Commission: Directorate General for Internal Market and Services

Ignacio Gomez Navarro, Assistant, European Commission

Nedžad Hadzimusic, Assistant Minister for Multilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Esmir Halilovic, Assistant, University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mimoza Halimi, Ambassador, Mission of Albania to the EU

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Gudrun Heymans, Coordinator, Cultural Contactpoint Flanders Belgium

Mario Hirsch, Director, Institute Pierre Werner, Luxembourg

Ivana Hlavsova, Head of Department, South and Southeast Europe, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Gunnar Hökmark MEP, Chairman, European Parliament: Delegation to the EU-Croatia Joint Parliamentary Committee

Kate Holman, Senior Editor, European Service Network (ESN)

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Kliment Hristov, Moderator, Bulgaria Social Seminars, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Bulgaria Office

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Carmen Raluca Ipate, Policy Officer, International Affairs, Western Balkans, European Commission: Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry

Zeljko Ivancevic, Director, FIMA-ECS European & Corporate Strategy

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Vladimir Jokanovic, Journalist, Politika, Serbia

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Tim Judah, Western Balkans Correspondent, The Economist, United Kingdom

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Killian Kehoe, Consultant, Public Affairs, Hill & Knowlton International Belgium

Elizabeta Kitanovic, Executive Secretary, Conference of European Churches

Lucia Klapacova, Chief of Cabinet of the State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia

Lefter Klimi, First Secretary, Mission of Albania to the EU

Zeljko Knezevic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Communication and Transport, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Maria Koleva, Special Correspondent, New Bulgarian Media Group Holding (NBMG), Bulgaria

Erich Korzinek, Director, Representation of Steiermark to the EU

Milica Kotur, Assistant, Embassy of Slovenia to Belgium

Jovan Kovacic, Chief Executive Officer, Global Communications Associates, United Kingdom

- Martina Kovacova**, Chairman of the Editorial Board, Euro Atlantic Quarterly, Slovak Atlantic Commission, Slovakia
- Igor Kozejmakim**, Jevrejska Zajednica, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Lucia Kronsteiner**, Counsellor, Coweb Delegate, Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU
- Johanna Krüger**, Second Secretary, Mission of Canada to the EU
- Eduard Kukan MEP**, Chairman, European Parliament: Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South East Europe
- Igor Kuzelka**, Counsellor, Mission of Serbia to the EU
- Ingrid Kylstad**, Consultant, The Brussels Office
- Juri Laas**, Political and Communications Advisor, Council of the European Union
- Matthias Langemeyer**, Deputy Head of Unit, Enlargement, European Commission: Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development
- Anna Lauridsen**, Operations Advisor, Development Gateway International
- Alen Legovic**, Correspondent, Deutsche Welle
- Miriam Lexmann**, Advisor, Relations with National Parliaments, Group of the European People's Party (EPP)
- Erik Liptak**, Senior Analyst, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia
- Lucija Ljubic**, Counsellor, Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU
- Jana Lolic Sindelkova**, Deputy Head of Cabinet, Regional Cooperation in South East Europe, Coordination of Foreign Affairs, External Relations, European Commission: Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Enlargement & Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle
- James Mackey**, Western Balkans Officer, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Headquarters (HQ)
- Marina Maksimovic**, Journalist, Deutsche Welle
- Jacques Malache**, Senior Director, International Press Agency
- Renaldo Mändmets**, Head of Unit, Bulgaria, European Commission: Directorate General for Regional Policy
- Alexandra Mantzila**, First Counsellor, Embassy of Greece to Belgium
- Slaven Maric**, Co-President, Organisation Committee, Youth Sports Games, Croatia
- David Mark**, Political Officer, Mission of the United States of America to the EU
- Robert Markic**, Third Secretary, Mission of Montenegro to the EU
- Renata Marmulaku**, First Counsellor, Delegation of Slovenia to NATO
- Dragica Martinovic**, Director, Croatian Chamber of Economy, Brussels Office
- Bozidar Masanovic**, Correspondent, Delo
- Dalibor Matic**, Third Secretary, Mission of Croatia to the EU
- Doris Mayer-Ahlen**, Director of Studies, Akademie Franz Hitze Haus, Germany
- Ani Mbrica**, Assistant, European Commission
- Danijel Medan**, Third Secretary, Mission of Croatia to the EU
- Giles Merritt**, Secretary General, *Friends of Europe, Les Amis de l'Europe*
- Thomas Miglierina**, Correspondent, Radio Svizzera
- Jean-Louis Mignot**, Honorary Ambassador of Belgium
- Petra Miklavc**, Correspondent, Slovene Press Agency
- Slavica Milacic**, Chief Political Advisor to the Prime Minister, Government of Montenegro
- Aleksandra Milosevic**, Conference Manager, EUobserver.com
- Ana Milosevic**, Delegate, Ministry of Diaspora, Serbia
- Pierre Mirel**, Director, Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo Issues, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement
- Andrijana Mladenovic**, President, Christian Cultural Centre, Belgrade, Serbia
- Philippe Molitor**, Photographer, Gleamlight
- Denis Moskalenko**, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to NATO
- Lirim Muharemi**, President, Kapital Invest, Albania
- Dzevad Mujezinovic**, Legal Council, Lansky, Ganzger and Partner, Austria
- Jens Naujeck**, Coordinator in the Office of the Special Representative to the EU, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)
- Vasko Naumovski**, Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs, Government of the Republic of Macedonia
- Maria Navarro Ortiz**, Project Manager, Particip Ilir Nezaj, First Secretary, Mission of Albania to the EU
- Roksanda Nincic**, Ambassador, Mission of Serbia to the EU
- Willem Noë**, Policy Officer, European Integration, Iceland, European Commission: Directorate General for Enlargement
- Gergana Noutcheva**, Assistant Professor, University of Maastricht, The Netherlands
- Andrea Ostheimer de Sosa**, Director of the Multinational Development Policy Dialogue, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), European Office
- Doris Pack MEP**, Member, European Parliament: Delegation for Relations with the Countries of South East Europe
- Alan Paic**, Acting Head of the Investment Compact and Principal Administrator for the South East Europe Programme, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Investment Compact for South-East Europe

Michela Palladino, Assistant, Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU
Augustin Palokaj, Journalist, Koha Ditore
Nienke Palstra, Advisor for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Transparency International, Liaison Office to the EU
Sophie Papalexiou, Head of Brussels Office, Particip
Jonas Paul, Advisor to Franziska Brantner MEP, European Parliament
Jasmina Paunovic Markovic, Assistant, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, Brussels Office
Aleksandra Pavicevic, Journalist, RTCG National Television, Montenegro
Justyna Pawlak, EU Correspondent, Thomson Reuters
Aleksandar Andrija Pejovic, Ambassador, Mission of Montenegro to the EU
Rafal Perl, First Secretary, European Policy Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland
Sasa Pilja, Counsellor, Embassy of Serbia to Belgium
Anita Pipan, Ambassador, Embassy of Slovenia to Belgium
Uroš Piper, Journalist, TANJUG, Serbia
Meglena Plužtschieva Alexandrova, Deputy Chair, National Assembly, Bulgaria, Committee on European Affairs
Zamira Poda, Tax Advisor, Albania Threshold Program II, Millenium Challenge Corporation, Albania
Nikola Poposki, Ambassador, Mission of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the EU
Gordana Popovic, Officer, European Commission: Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)
Nenad Popovic, Member, National Parliament, Republic of Serbia
Daniel Prior, Consultant, The Brussels Office
Isabel Proano Gomez, Official, European Commission: Directorate General for External Relations
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Andrzej Pyrka, Programme Director, Gallup Europe
Svetislav Rabrenovic, Assistant/Translator, Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor, Republic of Serbia
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Dirk Reinermann, Head of Unit, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank, Brussels Office
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Anna Reismann, Project Manager, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), European Office
Jean-Michel Richez, Business Consultant, GDF Suez
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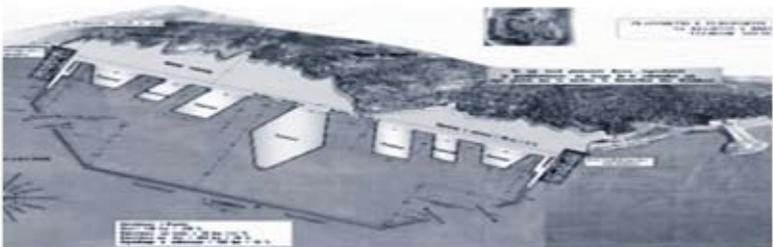
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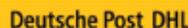
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