

Agenda of #CSFTirana2023



DAY 1 | OCTOBER 14, 2023 | SATURDAY

09:00 – 09:40 Launching Event

Pyramid of Tirana

Welcoming Remarks

- **Erion Veliaj**, Mayor of Tirana;
- **Andi Dobrush**, Western Balkans Director, Open Society Foundations;

- **Manuel Sarrazin**, Federal Government's Special Representative (pre-recorded video message).
- **Ioannis Armakolas**, Associate Professor, Senior Research Fellow & Head of South-East Europe Programme at ELIAMEP.

09:40 – 09:50 Family photo in front of the Pyramid

09:50 – 10:00 Transfer from the Pyramid to Rogner Hotel

10:00 – 10:30 Registration at Rogner Hotel

10:30 – 12:00 Opening Forum

Antigonea 1 & 2



Unlocking progress: The European Future of the Western Balkans

Rule of law is a non-negotiable principle for EU accession and Western Balkan leaders must deliver on their commitments and show tangible progress in reforms. The renewed enthusiasm for enlargement and the reinvigorating debate in speeding it up, require the support, commitment and engagement of all actors – government, businesses, and civil society. As introduction of EU's new financial instruments is discussed, political and technical challenges such as corruption, organized crime, and weak institutions need to be tackled head on. This panel will address the link between economic prosperity, democratic transformation, and the perspective of EU membership for the Western Balkans.

Keynote speaker

- **Igli Hasani**, Minister, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs

Speakers

- **Michael Reiffenstuel**, Director for the Western Balkans at the Federal Foreign Office;
- **Michela Matuella**, Acting Director for the Western Balkans, Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (online participation);
- **Odeta Barbullushi**, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Western Balkans & EU affairs;
- **Majlinda Bregu**, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council;
- **Milka Tadić Mijović**, President, Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro;
- **Donika Emini**, Executive Director, CiviKos.

Moderator

- **Ilva Tare**, Senior Fellow at Europe Center, Atlantic Council.

12:00 – 12:30 Coffee break

12:30 – 14:00 The Politics of Enlargement

Antigonea 1



How to seize the new momentum?

If there can ever be a silver lining in a war, the Russian aggression against Ukraine led to the acknowledgment that European unification through enlargement should continue without delay. The reality of a war on the European continent contributed to reinvigorating the debate on how to proceed further, and how to prepare both the EU to accept new members and the (potential) candidate countries to meet the membership requirements. Opportunities for blockages in the accession process are all too numerous, political commitment is not a given and the momentum can easily be lost. Against such a backdrop, it is important to examine the contentious aspects in order to anticipate and facilitate solutions. What is the way forward to streamline decision-making in the Council so that candidate countries can easily navigate from one step to the next? Can Member States be convinced to

refrain from vetoes on bilateral issues unrelated to the accession process? How to ensure that candidate countries deliver on the key reforms, and avoid backsliding, especially in the area of the Fundamentals?

Speakers

- **Ditmir Bushati**, Former Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs;
- **Nikola Dimitrov**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- **Viola von Cramon-Taubadel**, Member of European Parliament, European Green Party (online participation);
- **Adnan Ćerimagić**, Senior Analyst for the Western Balkans, European Stability Initiative;
- **Ana Krstinovska**, Research Fellow, ELIAMEP; President, ESTIMA.

Moderator

- **Alexandra Voudouri**, Research Fellow and Journalist, ELIAMEP

12:30 – 14:00

Antigonea 2



Breaking Barriers to Regional Security Cooperation

How to Address Trust Issues Among Security Institutions in the Western Balkans?

The brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia has dramatically shifted geopolitical dynamics and energized efforts to bring the region closer to the EU. Effective security cooperation among the Western Balkan countries is central to the European integration and countering transnational threats to the region and the wider EU. The panel will discuss strategies for rationalizing regional security cooperation initiatives and building greater confidence for exchange and collaboration among security institutions in the region. It will also assess how the current state of regional security cooperation impacts potentially malign foreign influence, cybersecurity, organized corruption, corrosive capital, and more.

Speakers

- Taulant Balla, Minister of Internal Affairs;
- Xhelal Sveçla, Minister of Internal Affairs;
- Josip Brkić, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- Ramadan Ilazi, Head of Research, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies;
- Sonja Stojanović Gajić, Independent Consultant.

Moderator

- Valbona Zeneli, Non-resident Senior Fellow, Europe Center, Atlantic Council

14:00 – 15:00

Lunch at Rogner Hotel

15:00 – 16:30

Antigonea 1



Full Access to the EU Single Market as a Pathway to Prosperity

Can the Western Balkans Achieve Seamless Integration?

The Growth Plan for the Western Balkans plan is an opportunity for the EU to offer a feasible strategy that would allow facilitated access for the countries from the region to the Single Market. Swiftly adopted trade derogations and market integration initiatives following the Russian aggression in Ukraine reflect the EU's capacity for strategic response in an evolving geopolitical context. Nevertheless, the full access of the Western Balkan to European markets ahead of membership is a challenging task. This panel will discuss which political and legal decisions need to be made to advance economic integration, as well as the need to improve capacities and put forward an economic rationale that gives credibility to the EU enlargement process.

Speakers

- Pranvera Kastrati, Senior Connectivity Expert, Regional Cooperation Council;
- Zdravko Ilić, Senior Expert on Trade in Services, CEFTA;
- Jeton Zulfaj, Political Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister;
- Jorida Tabaku, Member of Parliament;
- Nenad Djurdjević, Director, Regional Center for Strategic and Political Initiatives;
- Silvana Mojsavska, Full-time Professor, Institute of Economics;
- Stefan Ristovski, Researcher, European Policy Institute.

Moderator

- Dragana Djurica, Secretary General, European Movement (EMinS)

15:00 – 16:30

Antigonea 2



Greening the Western Balkans

Uniting for Sustainable Infrastructure, Biodiversity Protection, and Effective Governance

Meeting the EU requirements for environment and climate as well as fulfilling the Green Agenda obligations places a significant financial burden on the Western Balkan countries. On the other hand, the Green Agenda is a fundamental pillar in the EU's engagement with the Western Balkan countries, especially as it navigates the complex process of EU integration. This panel will address critical issues related to green infrastructural investments, environmental conservation, and governance in the Western Balkans region. It brings together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to discuss holistic strategies aimed at fostering a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future in the Western Balkans.

Speakers

- Sabit Gashi, Acting Director of the Department of Energy, Ministry of Economy;
- Radica Koceva, IPA Management Expert;
- Johannes Heidecker, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Economic Issues;
- Draško Boljević, Executive Director of the Eco Fund;
- Mirjam de Koning, Executive Director, Prespa-Ohrid Nature Trust;
- Petrica Dulgheru, Chairman of the Board, Roma Economic Development Initiative.

Moderator

- Jadranka Ivanova, Institute for Good Governance and Policies in Environment and Climate Change

16:40 – 18:00

A process that delivers

Antigonea 1

Enhancing the Berlin Process through Accountability Mechanisms



In times where global challenges demand collaborative solutions, the Berlin Process has emerged as a vital platform for fostering cooperation and driving positive change in the Western Balkans. The panel will examine possible accountability mechanisms that can play a pivotal role in elevating the effectiveness and impact of the Berlin Process. Bringing together parliamentarians, experts, and media representatives, this session will explore the various facets of accountability within the Berlin Process, shedding light on the mechanisms, strategies, and best practices that can ensure tangible outcomes and progress. Participants will gain valuable insights into how accountability can reinforce commitments, enhance transparency, and bolster the overall success of the Berlin Process in areas such as regional stability, economic development, and political cooperation.

Speakers

- **Arbër Ademi**, Chairperson of the European Affairs Parliament Committee;
- **Aleksandra Tomanić**, Executive Director, European Fund for the Balkans;
- **Adelheid Feilcke**, Director of Programs for Europe, Deutsche Welle;
- **Viktoria Voglsinger-Palm**, Deputy Director, Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V.;
- **Fatjona Mejdini**, Director of the Southeastern Europe Observatory, Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime;
- **Geron Kamberi**, Independent Expert.

Moderator

- **Zoran Nechev**, Head of the Centre for European Integration and Senior Researcher, Institute for Democracy “Societas Civilis”

DAY 2 OCTOBER 15, 2023 | SUNDAY

09:00 – 10:00 Arrival & Morning Coffee

Rogner Hotel

10:00 – 10:45 **Freedom?**

Antigonea 1

The European Destiny of the Western Balkans

▪ **Conversation with Lea Ypi**, Professor in Political Theory, London School of Economics, led by **Igor Štikš**, Professor, Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University.

11:00– 12:30

Antigonea 2

Challenging ‘the Lack of Administrative Capacities’ Narrative

How Can the Western Balkans Absorb More EU Funding?

The Western Balkans access to the EU budget has remained limited and highly disproportionate to its level of market integration, with allocations remaining largely unchanged over the last three budgetary cycles. Both Western Balkan and EU actors have been advocating for increased funding for the region in support of economic convergence and meeting the EU accession criteria. However, this shift requires fitting in the larger sums for the candidate countries among the already mounting needs in the Union budget. Moreover, the Western Balkan countries would have to be ready to deliver mature projects and ensure their implementation, whilst respecting rule of law conditionality. This panel will reflect on the lessons learned from previous enlargement that could provide insights on how to address the bottlenecks in terms of absorption capacities and streamlining EU funding to meet the requirements of membership.

Speakers

- **Tanja Mišćević**, Minister of European Integration;
- **Drita Abdiu Halili**, State Secretary and Deputy Chief Negotiator with the EU, Secretariat for European Affairs;
- **Ambre Maucorps**, Economist, Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies;
- **Simonida Kacarska**, Director, European Policy Institute;
- **Anja Bosilkova-Antovska**, Head of Advocacy, Balkan Civil Society Development Network;
- **Damir Miljević**, Member of Managing Board, RESET (online participation).

Moderator

- **Matteo Bonomi**, Senior fellow, IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali

11:00–12:30

Antigonea 1

Towards a Just and Inclusive Energy Transition

Accountability and Oversight of the Western Balkans Energy Sector

The years leading to 2030 will be crucial for the decarbonisation and energy transition of the Western Balkans. Ambitious and robust policies and measures are needed in the energy and climate sector to enable the region’s economies to cope with EU climate neutrality goals, abandon fossil fuels, and make a resolute choice in favour of low-carbon energy sources. Energy transition needs to be just, inclusive, and accountable, with the EU and national parliaments playing a notable role in decision-making processes, particularly in the upcoming extension of the Energy Community Treaty. This panel will discuss the implications of the integration of the Western Balkans economies into the EU emission trading system, particularly in terms of decarbonisation policies and regulatory frameworks. Further topic of discussion will be how the Berlin

Process could provide a framework for inclusive energy transition by emphasising the stakeholders’ cooperation as driving force of transition.

Speakers

- **Dirk Buschle**, Deputy Director and Legal Counsel, Energy Community Secretariat (TBC);
- **Marta Rufino Campos**, Policy Assistant, DG Energy (online participation);
- **Verena Allert**, Senior Advisor, German Watch;
- **Aleksandar Kovačević**, Energy Expert;
- **Ilir Bejtja**, Energy Expert;
- **Dragan Minovski**, Professor, Founder, Institute for Economic and Energy Policies and Research.

Moderator

- **Mirko Popović**, Programme Director, Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute



12:30 – 13:00 Coffee break

13:00 – 14:30 **Reaching Over the Digital Fence**

Antigonea 2



How Can EU regulation Help Improve Digital Markets and Services in the Western Balkans?

Countries in the Western Balkan region face regulatory challenges in tackling illegal and harmful content online, are unable to protect citizens rights as users and consumers and lack functional mechanisms to assure digital platforms accountability. This has created vast grey areas in the regional digital market that negatively affects media credibility and information integrity, jeopardizes democratic processes, exacerbates foreign influence operations, and creates risks for consumer safety and citizens' rights online. The panel will discuss how we can bring the region into the EU digital single market, improve digital connectivity and online safety, and introduce accountability of Very Large Online Platforms.

Speakers

- **Maida Ćulahović**, Head of Department, Regulatory Agency for Communications;
- **Djordje Bojović**, Western Balkans Advisor, Greens/EFA;
- **Ana Toskić Cvetinović**, Executive Director, Partners-Serbia;
- **Pjerina Gaxha**, Director, General Directorate for the Protection of Personal Data.
- **Svetlana Siljanovska**, Communications and PR adviser for NATO and Security to the Prime Minister (online participation).

Moderator

- **Tijana Cvjetičanin**, Fact-checking program coordinator, Zašto Ne

13:00 – 14:30 **The Prospects of Mobility Driven Research and Innovation**

Antigonea 1



How to Strengthen Western Balkans Integration into the European Research Area?

Research and innovation (R&I) and knowledge transfer in the Western Balkans have the transformative potential of accelerating sustainable growth and convergence of our economies with the EU. This potential can be attained only if the pressing challenges of R&I and mobility-driven innovation in the Western Balkans are addressed timely, in order to catalyse regional cooperation and facilitate integration into the EU, including the European Research Area. This panel will reflect on how to strengthen the integration of the region into the European Research Area, ensuring the Western Balkan countries not only align with, but also actively collaborate with their European peers in pioneering progressive initiatives.

Speakers

- **Ogerta Manastirliu**, Minister of Education and Sports;
- **Bernhard Fabianek**, Senior Expert, Horizon Europe Association Unit, DG Research and Innovation;
- **Sanja Damjanović**, Scientist, GSI Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research, Darmstadt;
- **Lucian Brujan**, Science Officer, Leopoldina Academy of Science;
- **Linda Pustina**, Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Head of S3 Team;
- **Anastas Mishev**, Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University;
- **Lisa Cowey**, Key Expert on IPR and Technology Transfer;
- **Blerjana Bino**, Executive Director, SCiDEV.

Moderator

- **Elvin Gjevori**, PhD, Institute of Parliamentary Research

14:30 – 15:30 Lunch at Rogner Hotel

15:30 – 17:00 **Closing Forum**

Antigonea 1 & 2



Unlocking Progress: What's Next?

The closing panel offers a platform for taking stock, reflecting, consolidating insights and ideas, and setting a course for future actions and potential collaborations. Speakers will provide a summary of thematic discussions and convey key messages, highlighting the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration between civil society, think tanks, and governments and EU in the region to advance the goals of the Berlin Process, including translating the recommendations into concrete actions. This panel will offer an opportunity to reflect on how the Berlin process has evolved through the years, its contribution to growth, regional cooperation and enlargement and what adjustments can be made for the Berlin Process to be fit to respond to the contemporary needs of the region, all while assuring meaningful civil society participation.

Keynote speaker

- **Michael Roth**, Chair of the Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee

Speakers

- **Valeska Esch**, Senior Advisor to the Federal Government Special Representative for the Countries of the Western Balkans, Federal Foreign Office;
- **Bojan Marichikj**, Deputy Prime Minister, Secretariat for European Affairs;
- **Liza Gashi**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora;
- **Hedvig Morvai**, Program Director, ERSTE Foundation;
- **Aleksander Siemaszko**, Deputy Director in Ministry of Development and Technology (online participation);
- **Marta Szpala**, Senior Fellow, Center for Eastern Studies;
- **Ardian Hackaj**, Research Director and Coordinator of Tirana Connectivity Forum, Cooperation and Development Institute.

Moderator

- **Una Hajdari**, Freelance Journalist

19:00 – 21:00 Harmonizing Nations

Cultural Center
of the Orthodox
Cathedral of
Tirana, Rruga
Ibrahim Rugova
Nr.1, Tirana

Roma – The Heartbeat of Western Balkans' Unity | Concert

An exceptional evening of unity and cultural richness at the "Cathedral of Tirana - The Resurrection of Christ." Under the evening's embrace, we present "Harmonizing Nations: Roma - The Heartbeat of Western Balkans' Unity," a symphonic masterpiece performed by the authentic Roma: The Force of Nature orchestra, authored by Bekir Haliti. This musical journey celebrates the unwavering commitment of the Open Society Foundations (OSF) to Europe, highlighting the pivotal role of Roma in the region's narrative. OSF proudly advocates for Europe's largest ethnic minority, the Roma in these transformative times.

Our concert is more than music; it's a clarion call for unity, emphasizing the essential role of Roma in shaping the Western Balkans. It's a testament to cultural diplomacy's power in European integration and our dedication to a diverse and collaborative future.

Join us as we bridge political complexities, celebrating the identities, talents, and voices enriching the Western Balkans and Europe. In this living symphony, the Roma are the pulsating heart that sustains unity.