



FRIENDS of the WESTERN BALKANS

Second Network Meeting

Prague, 13-15 November 2022
Hotel Adria Praha, Václavské náměstí 26

Always the bridesmaid, never the bride? The Western Balkans: Getting out of the waiting room

In June 2022, the network Friends of the Western Balkans, comprising members of European national parliaments and members of the European Parliament, was established with the support of the *Foundation for European Progressive Studies*, the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Dialogue Southeast Europe*, *Renner Institut*, *Masarykova demokratická akademie*, *Kalevi Sorsa Foundation*, *Fondation Jean-Jaurès*, *Foundation Max van der Stoel*, *Društvo Progresiva*, *Olof Palme International Center* and in cooperation with *CeSPI*.

The mission of this network, as defined and agreed during the first meeting that was held in Sarajevo, is to provide more insight and information of the current political social and economic situation in the Western Balkans, of the challenges ahead and of the state of play of the enlargement process to parliamentarians of the EU member states, so that they can, in turn, get a better understanding and advocate – with the logistic, technical and intellectual support of the above-mentioned consortium of political foundations – for enlargement before their respective governments, parliaments and public opinions, who are often uninterested in the topic, when not outright hostile. Moreover, the network will offer opportunities for exchanges on perceptions and ideas with Western Balkan stakeholders and support closer ties between EU and Western Balkan social democrats.

This second meeting of the network will have a twofold aim. On the one hand, it will consolidate the network and the basis for the continuation of its work in the future. On the other hand, it will carry on its analysis of the issues at stake – both on the EU and Western Balkan sides – and of the most recent developments in the process of enlargement. The reflection will take stock of the results of the previous meeting and will move forward in the identification of a common social democratic approach to accelerate a process of enlargement, which is otherwise stalling. The current international political situation and the reluctance with which some countries have implemented sanctions against Russia have further highlighted the urgency to fulfil a promise that was given a long time ago (the Thessaloniki declaration will celebrate next year its 20th anniversary) and ensure that the Western Balkan countries do not shift further away from the European Union’s orbit. It is, in fact, also the EU’s tepid commitment to future enlargements and its unconfessed satisfaction with the present (flawed) status quo in the region that cools down the Western Balkans’ mild enthusiasm for accession.

Agenda

Sunday 13 November

During the day/evening	Participants’ arrival
20:00	Dinner at Bistro Špejle (Jindřišská 16)

Monday 14 November Conference room, Hotel Adria

09:30 -10:30

A European Political Community?

Welcome: **Lubomír Zaorálek**, President, Masarykova demokratická akademie

Introductory remarks and first input: **László Andor**, Secretary General, FEPS

Moderation: **Ralf Melzer**, Director, FES Dialogue Southeast Europe

Discussion

10:30-11:30

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections

Input: **Saša Magazinović**, Member of Parliament, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Moderation: **Ralf Melzer**, Director, FES Dialogue Southeast Europe

Discussion

11:30-11:45

Coffee Break

11:45 – 12:45

Kosovo-Serbia: after the August deal, what's next?

Armend Muja, Member of Parliament, Kosovo
Nebojša Novaković, Member of Parliament, Serbia

Moderation: **Florent Marciacq**, Director of the Observatoire des Balkans, Fondation Jean-Jaurès

Discussion

12:45-14:30

Lunch at the hotel

14:30-16:15

The Czech and Slovenian accession: lessons learned and best practices for candidate countries

14:30 – 16:15

Vladimír Špidla, former Prime Minister, Czech Republic
Andrej Horvat, former State Secretary to Prime Minister of Slovenia
Borut Pahor; former team leader of project "Support to the EU Accession Negotiations in the Republic of Serbia"

Moderation: **Aleksandar Spasov**, Advisor the the President, North Macedonia

Discussion

16:30

Departure from the hotel lobby to the *Social-Democratic History tour of Prague and the Czech Parliament*

18:30

Free time

20:00

Dinner at Restaurace u Pinkasů (Jungmannovo nám. 16)

Tuesday 15 November

Conference room of Hotel Adria

09:45-10:45

Wrap-up: The future of Western Balkans in the EU and of the Friends of the Western Balkans network – Part I
Wrap-up: Hedwig Giusto, Senior Research Fellow, FEPS

Moderation: László Andor, Secretary General, FEPS

10:45-11:00

Coffee Break

10:45-11:45

Wrap-up: The future of Western Balkans in the EU and of the Friends of the Western Balkans network – Part II

12:00

Goodbye lunch at the hotel and departure of participants



List of participants

- **László Andor**, Secretary General, FEPS
- **Balázs Bárány**, International Secretary, MSZP, Hungary
- **Marina Berlinghieri**, Former Member of Parliament, Italy
- **Arthur Cady**, Policy Officer, FEPS
- **Jan Chmelíček**, Former Director of Cabinet of Lubomír Zaorálek, Masarykova demokratická akademie, Czech Republic
- **Irfan Čengić**, Member of Parliament, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Harun Cero**, Project Manager, FES Dialogue Southeast Europe, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Adnan Dibrani**, Member of Parliament, Sweden
- **Patrik Eichler**, Staff, Masarykova demokratická akademie, Czech Republic
- **Robert Ernecker**, Foreign Political Advisor to the SPD parliamentary group, Germany
- **Hedwig Giusto**, Senior Research Fellow and Editor in Chief of the Progressive Post, FEPS
- **Etilda Gjonaj**, Member of Parliament, Former Minister of Justice, Albania
- **Stella V. Grahek**, Društvo Progresiva, Slovenia
- **Sébastien Gricourt**, Advisor to the Vice-Prime Minister of Kosovo, Co-director of L'Observatoire des Balkans, Fondation Jean-Jaurès, France
- **Julian Hodaj**, Deputy Minister of Interior, Albania, Legal Advisor of the Foundation Qemal Stafa, Albania
- **Andrej Horvat**, former State Secretary to Prime Minister of Slovenia Borut Pahor; former team leader of project "Support to the EU Accession Negotiations in the Republic of Serbia", Slovenia
- **Josip Juratovic**, Member of the Bundestag, Germany
- **Uroš Jauševac**, Društvo Progresiva, Slovenia
- **Jan Kašpárek**, Staff, Masarykova demokratická akademie, Czech Republic
- **Helene Kortländer**, Head of the East Europe Department at FES headquarters in Berlin, Germany
- **Romina Kuko**, Deputy Minister of Interior, Albania
- **Ana Marija Lukenda**, Društvo Progresiva, Slovenia
- **Saša Magazinović**, Member of Parliament, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Niina Malm**, Member of Parliament, Finland
- **Florent Marciaq**, Director of the Observatoire des Balkans, Fondation Jean-Jaurès, France
- **Saša Magazinović**, Member of Parliament, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Ralf Melzer**, Director, FES Dialogue Southeast Europe, Germany
- **Armend Muja**, Member of Parliament, Kosovo
- **Nebojša Novaković**, Member of Parliament, Serbia
- **Daniel Ort**, Photographer, Czech Republic
- **Tomáš Petříček**, Former Foreign Affairs Minister, Czech Republic
- **Ledjon Shahini**, Executive Director of Foundation Qemal Stafa, Albania
- **Sanela Shkrijhelj**, Member of Parliament, North Macedonia
- **Jelena Simic**, Project Manager, Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, Finland
- **Domokos Simon**, Chief of Staff for Bertalan Toth, Hungary
- **Aleksandar Spasov**, Advisor to the President, North Macedonia
- **Vladimír Špidla**, former Prime Minister, Czech Republic
- **Bertalan Tóth**, Member of Parliament, Hungary
- **Harald Troch**, Member of Parliament, Austria
- **Jarne Van Der Poel**, Junior Project Manager, Foundation Max Van Der Stoel, Netherlands
- **Visar Ymeri**, Director of Musine Kokalari foundation, Kosovo
- **Lubomír Zaorálek**, President, Masarykova demokratická akademie, Czech Republic
- **Arbër Zaimi**, Member of Presidency of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje, Kosovo
- **Pia Zevnik**, Društvo Progresiva, Slovenia