

Roundtable and Debate

"After 2016 - New Perspectives for the Western Balkans in the European Union?"

Western Balkans Reflection Forum - Paris and the way ahead

Sarajevo, Wednesday, 07 December 2016, 18h00-21h00

Venue: Kino Kriterion, Obala Kulina Bana 2, Sarajevo

On 4 July 2016 the French President François Hollande hosted a summit on the Western Balkans in Paris. It was the third of its kind after the launch of the “Berlin process”. Back in August 2014, in the wake of the centenary of First World War, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel initiated an intergovernmental process with the countries of the Western Balkans. Its aim has been to improve their cooperation, put “fundamentals first” and thereby reinvigorate the European integration of the region. The first conference in Berlin was followed by a second one in Vienna in 2015. The conference in Paris marked already the middle of the process as it was conceptualized to conclude in 2018, at the occasion of the centenary of the end of the First World War. The aftermath of the Paris conference hence offers an ideal opportunity for review and a discussion of the way ahead, in view of the conference planned for summer 2017 in Italy upon invitation by Prime Minister Renzi.

The Sarajevo roundtable and debate takes places as follow-on to the Reflection Forum “*The Western Balkans in the European Union: new perspectives on integration?*” organized by CIFE, the French Institute for International Relations (IFRI) and CFA/ÖFZ in Paris on 30-31 May 2016 and the “*Civil Society Forum Paris of the Western Balkans Summit Series*” coordinated by the European Fund for the Balkans, ERSTE Foundation and others which took place in Paris on 3-4 July 2016. The Sarajevo roundtable will provide a forum for information exchange and reflection on the achievements of the process so far and help to generate fresh contributions for the way ahead. Roundtables in all Western Balkans countries and beyond will have been organised until the second edition of the Reflection Forum on the Western Balkans takes place in Italy, next year.

The Sarajevo round-table comes at the end of a momentous year for the European Union and the Western Balkans. Participants will review the impact of the “Berlin process” and the quality of the intergovernmental cooperation of the Western Balkans countries with their EU partners in light of a changing European Union and international context for the region.

This roundtable and debate is organized by CIFE and Dialogue Southeast Europe of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in cooperation with CFA / ÖFZ, IAI and the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisors Group (BiEPAG), with the support of the German Foreign Office / Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and Erasmus+.

Programme

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18h00 Welcome and opening

Felix HENKEL, Regional Dialogue Southeast Europe, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Sarajevo

18h15 After 2016 - New Perspectives for the Western Balkans in the European Union?

Demetris PAPADAKIS, Member of the European Parliament (S&D/CY), Brussels

Lejla RAMIĆ-MESİHOVIĆ, Foreign Policy Initiative, Sarajevo

Srećko LATAL, Social Overview Service SOS, Sarajevo

Vedran DŽIHIĆ, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Vienna

Florent MARCIACQ, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe (CFA/ÖFZ),
Vienna / University of Luxembourg

Introduction and Moderator:

Tobias FLESSENKEMPER, Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE),
Nice/Berlin

19h15 Open debate on achievement and challenges

- The perspectives of EU accession
- Bilateral relations in South Eastern Europe
- Connectivity / Infrastructure
- Regional Youth Cooperation Office
- Civil society involvement
- Migration and mobility
- Political situation in EU member states
- Russia's, Turkey's, the US' and China's role
- Future of the "Berlin process"

20h00 Refreshments & opportunity for informal exchange

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