

**In Dialogue with the Western Balkans:  
Creating a Region of Growth, Security and Connectivity on the Path to Europe**

Agenda for 16 May 2018

**Location:** Hall 8, National Palace of Culture, Sofia

**Draft Agenda**

With the new strategy for the Western Balkans of the European Commission the countries from the region were given a fresh perspective for joining the Union. The 2025 horizon is a new chance for the region to complete all the necessary reforms at home. The EU needs to start debating and communicating this new opportunity not only to policymakers, but also to the societies in the region. The public should play the role of a motivating factor for the governments during the next 5-7 years and demand reforms. That is why one of the main tasks of the EU should be to start a vivid dialogue with the societies in the Western Balkans: media, analysts, NGO activists and opinion makers, and to rely on their participation in the process.

12:00 – 13:00                      Registration and Working Lunch

13:00- 14:10                      Opening:

- **Boyko Borissov**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
- **Andrej Plenkovic**, Prime-minister of Croatia
- **Manfred Weber**, Chair of the EPP Group in EP (TBC)
- **Eva Maydell**, President of the European Movement International, Member of the European Parliament

14:10 – 15:45                      Roundtable I: **EU Perspective for the Western Balkans**

Description:

At this roundtable, in line with the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018 and the European Commission's Western Balkans Strategy the EU's vision for the Western Balkans will be outlined. A selected group of policy makers, analysts, opinion makers and NGO activists will discuss in a round table style the realities and the European perspectives for the Western Balkans.

Short impulses from:

- **Ekaterina Zaharieva**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria
- **Nikola Dimitrov**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- **Angelina Eichhorst**, Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey European External Action Service
- **Mikuláš Dzurinda**, WMCES President, former Prime Minister of Slovakia (1998-2006)

**Active interactions from:**

- **Remzi Lani**, Executive director of the Albanian Media Institute
- **Alida Vracic**, Executive Director of Think Tank Populari
- **Jovan Teokarević**, Director of the Belgrade Centre for European Integration, Open Society Foundation in Serbia
- **Andreja Stojkovski**, Media representative and political analyst, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- **Nikolaos Tzifakis** - Research Associate, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Assoc. Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Peloponnese
- **Maja Bobic**, European Movement, Serbia

**Moderator: Vessela Tcherneva**, ECFR's Deputy Director and Head of ECFR Sofia Office

15:45-16:00

Coffee Break

16:00 – 17.30

**Roundtable II: EU-Western Balkans connectivity**

Description:

This roundtable will outline the steps taken towards a greater connectivity between the Western Balkans region and the EU, within the current Strategy for the region and in the framework of the Berlin Process. The Balkan Summit in Sofia on 17 May will be followed by a Berlin Process meeting in London in July 2018.

Short impulses from:

- **Lilyana Pavlova**, Minister for the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU 2018
- **Christian Danielsson**, Director General for Enlargement at the European Commission in Brussels.
- **Rosen Pleveliev**, President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)
- **Erion Veliaj**, Mayor of Tirana

**Active interactions from:**

- **Filip Radunovic**, GIZ
- **Vesselin Valkanov**, Head of RCC Brussels office
- **Andi Dobrushki**, Executive director OSF Albania
- **Veton Latifi**, Professor, South-east European University, Tetovo

**Moderator: Eva Maydell**, President of the European Movement International,  
Member of the European Parliament

17:30 – 17:40

Concluding remarks

19: 00

Dinner

*This event receives financial support from the European Parliament. Sole liability rests with the organisers, the European Parliament is not responsible for the activity.*