



## CALL TO EUROPE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

### Serbia



BELGRADE, 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018  
10.00 – 15.00

HOTEL METROPOL PALACE  
BULEVAR KRALJA ALEKSANDRA 69

*Working language: EN*

## PROGRAMME

9.30-10.00

**Registration of participants and welcome coffee**

10.00-10.30

**Introductory remarks by organizers**

**CHARLOTTE BILLINGHAM**, Executive Advisor, Foundation for European Progressive Studies

**DANILO MILIĆ**, National Coordinator, Olof Palme International Center

**NATAŠA VUČKOVIĆ**, Secretary General, Center for Democracy Foundation

10.30-11.30

**SESSION I: European Elections and the Western Balkans**

### *Key speakers:*

**SÉBASTIAN GRICOURT**, Political Counselor, Jean Jaurès Foundation, France

**DR. VESNA PUSIĆ**, Member of Parliament, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Croatia

**BOŠKO JAKŠIĆ**, Journalist, Politika Daily, Serbia

**NATAN ALBAHARI**, Program Manager, ISAC Fund, Serbia

### *Moderator:*

**LJUBICA GOJGIĆ**, Journalist, Serbia

The elections for the European Parliament in 2019 are seen as crucial as they will set the stage for how the European Union deals with the many challenges it faces in the next five years. For the Western Balkans the importance of the European Elections is twofold: firstly how will the coming political landscape in the Parliament influence the attitudes towards the Western Balkans and secondly what effect will it have on the dynamics of the regions European integration. What are the possible outcomes and how will these scenarios impact our region? Will the tempo of the Western Balkans journey towards EU membership change and how? How can progressive groups in the EU and in the Western Balkans work together in addressing common problems? How can progressive groups contribute to continuation of the EU enlargement and in promoting the EU enlargement in the EU, as well as in supporting the EU integration within the Western Balkans?

11.30-12.30

**SESSION II: Challenges and Threats to Democracy as a Common Issue**

***Key speakers:***

**DR. MILORAD PUPOVAC**, Member of Parliament, Croatia

**PROF. DR. ERALDA CANI**, Professor, Law School, University of Tirana, Albania

**ANDREJ IVANJI**, Journalist, Vreme Weekly, Serbia

**SVETLANA VUKOVIĆ**, Advisor for International Cooperation, Democratic Party of Socialists, Montenegro

**PROF. DR. DRAGOLJUB MIĆUNOVIĆ**, Member of Parliament, Serbia

***Moderator:***

**LUBICA GOJGIĆ**, Journalist, Serbia

Liberal democracy, the cornerstone upon which the EU is built upon, and social Europe as a set of values and policies based on solidarity and dignity, are under threat. We are witnesses to the rise of illiberal governments and populist political movements that utilise the threat of the “other” and the “tyranny of Brussels” in order gain power and take over institutions. Above all else, there is a troubling proliferation of the use of misinformation to steer public opinion. The crisis of representative democracy is spreading in Europe – how can progressive groups contribute to make its institutions, the parliament in particular, more attractive to citizens? What are the steps that need to be taken in order to safeguard democracy? How can we keep the public better informed and less prone to being swayed by untruths? How can we revitalise the peoples’ interest and engagement in the democratic processes? Is it possible to rebuild trust in politics?

12.45-13.00

**Coffee break**

13.00-14.00

**SESSIONS III: The Social Impact of EU Integration in View of Attempts to Socialize the European Semester**

***Key speakers:***

**IVAN SEKULOVIĆ**, Policy Advisor, Center for Democracy Foundation, Serbia

**KATICA JANEVA**, Director, ALDA Skopje Office, Macedonia

**SONJA LOKAR**, Former Executive Director, Central and Eastern European Network for Gender Issues, Slovenia

**IVAN VUJOVIĆ**, Member of the Party Presidency, Social Democratic Party, Montenegro

***Moderator:***

**BOJANA RUŽIĆ**, Project Manager, Workers Samaritan Federation, Serbia

The process of European integration requires that a state introduce and implement numerous reforms, their social dimension is unfortunately often neglected. This is done even though social issues are at the top of citizens concerns. Rising inequality, high unemployment rates, particularly of among younger generations, the degradation of social services, represent an everyday reality in the Western Balkans. Austerity measures have left a deep mark on our societies and the marginalisation of social rights has been a consequence. This creates an impression that the interests of economic and profit led actors prevail in such a manner that the achieved standards/levels of social rights are seriously undermined and distorted. The recently adopted European Pillar of Social Rights aims to reinforce the importance of social rights inside the Union, especially in relation to the European Semester. To prepare for membership candidate countries take part in a similar process, the “Mini European Semester”. How is the EU Pillar applied through particular policies in the EU? Is the adoption of the EU pillar going to be reflected in the reforms in the Western Balkans and in what ways? How do we measure the social impact of economic reforms in our region?

14.00-15.00

**Luncheon**