



Online conference “Debating Europe”

June 9, 2020 at 12:00 (CEST)

*Due to COVID19 pandemic, this conference is now organized online within the framework of the project “**YOUNG TOWARD EUROPE**”¹ and in collaboration with the project “Laboratory of debate on European integration in university auditoriums”².*

Background

In the wake of the Zagreb Summit, the friends of the EU enlargement, whether in the Western Balkans or within the Union itself, had reason to cherish. The European perspective of the non-EU six countries in Southeast Europe was confirmed again by EU leaders.

The most important recent development concerning the European Perspective was, however, a March decision by the European Council to start accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia. As the Council had already postponed this move last October because of a lack of consensus, there was loud talk of a “historical mistake” and of quasi-irreversible Balkan disappointment and of facilitating the encroachment of unfriendly third powers. The positive Council decision earlier this spring didn’t make headlines as Europe and the world was struggling with the coronavirus. Still, it remains very relevant.

A sober look at Albania and North Macedonia, as well as at the regional “forerunners and laggards”, would reveal that the problems lie not with a populace turning away from the “European Dream” or an EU enclave falling prey to “non-Euro-Atlantic” powerful players. The problems are rather homegrown and concern, first and foremost, what are known as the Copenhagen Criteria – “the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and human rights”.

Set in this background, this online conference will bring together academics, experts, students, young professionals, politicians, members of Parliament from Albania and Bulgaria to discuss on the European integration perspective of Albania and the region as well as on the European enlargement challenges.

¹ “[Young toward Europe](#)” is a project funded by IPA II European Union Integration Facility 2014 “Support to civil society organisations for the implementation of capacity building actions to increase policy dialogue and awareness on European integration process” - IPA2014/Al18 and implemented by the “[Mesdheu Center - Mediterranean University of Albania](#)” in a partnership with the [Bulgarian School of Politics "Dimitry Panitza"](#) and EDA Institute in Albania during Dec 2018- June 2020. The overall goal of the project is to raise public awareness and disseminate information about the EU accession and integration process, EU values and key institutions among young people of the Republic of Albania by providing a forum for information generation and sharing, reaching out to thousands of citizens, and youth in particular, in 9 cities across the country, Tirana, Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodra, Peshkopia, Korça, Berat, Vlorë, Gjirokastër.

² This [project](#) is implemented by the [Center “Science and Innovation for Development”](#) and funded by the Open Society Foundation for Albania, running from October 2019 – June 2020.



AGENDA

“Debating Europe”

The language of the conference will be in Albanian and translation in English will be provided.

12.00 - 12.05 Welcoming and opening remarks

Moderator: Mr. Kriton Kuçi, Project Manager, Mesdheu Center

12:05 – 12:45 Keynote speakers’ panel

Evgenia Angelova, Member of the Bulgarian Parliament - Youth policy and engagement in Bulgaria

Mrs Senida Mesi, Deputy Head of European Integration Committee, Albanian Parliament – Regional cooperation and EU integration

Mrs. Eglantina Gjermeni, Member of the Albanian Parliament - The decision of the European Council to open accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia and the state of play

Mr. Valentin Lambev, Member of the Bulgarian Parliament - How to revive the political will necessary to make enlargement a success for the WB and the EU

Mrs. Evis Kushi Member of the Albanian Parliament - The genuine “Europeanisation” of Albania

12.45– 13:30 Open discussions

Prof. Nevila Xhindi, General Director for Institutional Cooperation and Project Development, Mesdheu Center – The role of education in promoting European values in Albania- “ Young toward Europe” Survey conclusion and recommendation

Dr. Dorina Gjipali, Mentor, “Laboratory of debate on European integration in university auditoriums” – The role of youth

Ms. Lutjona Lula, ESN Tirana - “Youth possibilities to EU grants and programs”

Elion Osmani, UT and Rei Hodo, UET - Students from “Laboratory of debate on European integration in university auditoriums”

13.30-13.45 Final remarks

Dr Blerjana Bino, Co-Founder SCiDEV