



The Balkan Forum on Regional Cooperation

7 – 9 February 2013,

Thessaloniki, Greece

Location:

THE MET HOTEL
26th October Street, 48
54 627 Thessaloniki, Greece

The Balkan Forum Initiative & the Balkan Forum on Regional Cooperation Concept & Objectives

The **Balkan Forum Initiative** aspires to help transform the region into a unified force poised to act on the European and global stages. The attributes that unite Balkan cultures—hospitality, generosity, and solidarity—together with the region’s diversity, are powerful tools for tackling modern day challenges. This initiative aims to utilize the region’s strengths, and each individual country’s comparative advantages, to catalyze innovation and development and to advance a shared vision for the region based on sustainable development, collective growth, and prosperity.

On 6 February in Thessaloniki, we welcome the first annual **Balkan Forum on Regional Cooperation**. The forum will serve as a platform for connecting multiple stakeholders and young leaders and for generating ideas and strategies to address key regional challenges and opportunities. Participants in this year’s launching forum bring a rich mix of experience and expertise to the table. This year and in future years, the talents and creativity of forum participants will be vital ingredients in the success of the Balkan Forum Initiative. The Initiative is committed to fostering and assisting a growing network of individuals and organizations that will collaborate across borders and sectors to pursue shared regional development goals and to develop innovative solutions to shared regional problems.

The overall **objectives** of this year’s forum are threefold: 1) to discuss common agendas and capture initial thoughts about possible frameworks of cooperation; 2) to examine the current situation in specific issue areas, identifying existing capabilities, assets, and constraints, as well as measures that need to be undertaken to fill gaps and push forward on regional initiatives; 3) to generate ideas for collaborative initiatives - including initiatives that start small but will have real impact.

This year’s forum will focus on **four key sectors** where challenges are significant but the potential for innovative approaches and meaningful change is considerable:

1. Regional Educational Approaches
2. Human Capital and Labor Markets
3. Infrastructure and Tourism Development
4. Energy, the Environment, and Economic Development

Projects and initiatives that emerge from these discussions will be developed, implemented, and coordinated with the support of the **Balkan Forum**, a regional non-profit institution based in Thessaloniki.

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THURSDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2013

***Participant Arrival and Registration*

- 15:00 – 17:00 **Preparatory Workshop with Moderators/Facilitators**
- 17:00 **Meet in Met Hotel lobby for bus to reception**
(Bus leaves promptly at 17:15, and will include a guided tour of Thessaloniki)
- 18:00 – 21:30 **Reception and Dinner**

Location: **B Restaurant, The Byzantine Museum, Thessaloniki**

Keynote Speeches: **Catherine Ashton**, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (to be confirmed)
Yiannis Boutaris, Mayor of Thessaloniki
David Burger, Deputy Director, Office of South Central European Affairs, U.S. State Department
George Papandreou, Former Prime Minister of Greece

FRIDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2013

- 7:00-8:45 **Breakfast and Registration**
- 9:00 – 9:10 **Welcoming Remarks**
Room: Maistros A
- **Marika Theros**, Balkan Forum coordinator
 - **Stephen Heintz**, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- 9:10- 10:20 **Rethinking Regional Cooperation: Concept, Approach & Objectives**
Room: Maistros A
- **George Papandreou**, Former Prime Minister of Greece
Framing Discussions: Opportunities and Challenges for the Balkans as a region
 - **Jan Erik Enestam**, Nordic Council Secretary General
Reflections on the Nordic cooperation: Past and Present
 - **30 minute Q&A**

10:20–12:00

Room: *Maistros A*.

A Framework and Vision for Regional Growth and Prosperity

What frameworks for cooperation might best support the transformation of a vision of an integrated region into effective regional initiatives? The purpose of this panel is to discuss key opportunities, constraints, and priorities for constructing a framework of cooperation and building vision for a region that promotes sustainable development, collective growth, and collaborative investment.

Moderator:

Mark Freeman, Institute for Integrated Transitions

Speakers:

Ashraf Ghani, Institute for State Effectiveness

Panel Respondents:

Dorian Ducka, Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Energy
Leonidas Makris, Political Advisor to Mayor of Thessaloniki
Jelena Milic, Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies

12:00 – 12:30

Room: *Maistros B*

Tea/Coffee Break

12:30 – 14:00

Room: *Maistros A*

Regional Cooperation Initiatives

What lessons can the Forum draw from existing or past initiatives and how can effective approaches be adapted to meet the needs of our region? The purpose of this panel is to analyze and discuss several examples of regional cooperation and development, and think through the lessons they may provide for the Balkan Forum as it evolves from a generalized vision into concrete plans for policy action.

Moderator:

Priscilla Lewis, US in the World Initiative

Speakers:

Darko Brkan, Zasto Ne
Gidon Bromberg, Friends of the Earth Middle East
Tryggvi Felixson, Nordic Council
Goran Svilanovic, Regional Cooperation Council

14:00-15:30

Room: *Maistros B*

Lunch

15:45- 17:45

Workshop Objectives:

Parallel Workshop Sessions

To discuss the current situation in each issue area, identifying existing capabilities, assets, and constraints, as well as measures that need to be undertaken to fill gaps and push forward on regional initiatives; to generate ideas for collaborative initiatives, and capture initial thoughts about possible frameworks for cooperation.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

<p>Regional Educational Approaches</p>	<p>Moderator: Ivan Vejvoda, German Marshall Fund</p> <p>Discussants: Nevan Budak, University of Zagreb Costas Carras, Protection of Cultural Heritage Hellenic Society Christina Koulouri, Panteion University Despina Syrri, Symβiosis</p> <p>Location: Ostria AB</p>
<p>Human Capital & Labor Markets</p>	<p>Moderator: Goran Buildioski, Open Society Foundations Budapest</p> <p>Discussants: Will Bartlett, London School of Economics Eda Gemi, ELIAMEP Spiros Pengas, Deputy Mayor of Thessaloniki Dukagjin Pupovci, Kosovo Education Center Paul Stubbs, Institute of Economics</p> <p>Location: Ostria CD</p>
<p>Infrastructure & Tourism Development</p>	<p>Moderator: Bosiljka Vukovic, Office for Sustainable Development</p> <p>Discussants: Yiannis Boutaris, Mayor of Thessaloniki Milan Culic, Center for Tourism Research and Studies Dennis Gratz, Nasa Stranka Sladjan Ilic, Local Development Expert</p> <p>Location: Maistros D</p>
<p>Energy, Environment, & Economic Development</p>	<p>Moderator: Toni Vidan, Green Action</p> <p>Discussants: Shpend Ahmeti, American University of Kosovo Maro Evangelidou, Ministry of Environment and Energy Triggvi Felixson, Nordic Council</p> <p>Location: Maistros E</p>

19:30- 22:00 **Informal Dinner followed by Theatre Play ‘Hypermnnesia’ at 20:00**

SATURDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2012

- 7:00-9:00 **Breakfast/Agenda Review**
- 9:00-10:30 **Parallel Sessions continued: finalizing ideas**
Room: Maistros A *Aim:* To finalize and prepare short summary of discussion, including recommended areas of collaboration (existing and potential) and suggested program of action.
- 10:30-10:45 **Tea/Coffee Break**
Room: Maistros B
- 10:45-12:45 **Reporting Back and Open Discussion**
Aim: Presentation on each theme, and facilitated discussion of ideas
- Moderator: **Priscilla Lewis**, US in the World Initiative
 Marika Theros, Balkan Forum coordinator
- 12:45 – 13:45 **Informal Lunch**
- 13:45-14:30 **Moving Forward: Next Steps**
Room: Maistros A
- Moderators: **Priscilla Lewis**, US in the World Initiative
 Marika Theros, Balkan Forum coordinator
- 14:30 **Departures**