



Workshop

External differentiation and EU enlargement in the Western Balkans

Agenda

Athens, 16-17 June 2022

Royal Olympic Hotel

Conference room 1A

(28-34 Athanasiou Diakou Str.)

External differentiation and EU enlargement in the Western Balkans

For the past twenty years, following the end of conflicts in the region, the Western Balkan (WB) countries have pursued a process of integration in the European Union (EU) that has been uneven, protracted and obstacle ridden. Scholarship and expert analyses in the past years, bring to light unenviable conditions of democratic backsliding and generally paint a bleak picture of the region's European perspective - a diagnosis that may be realistic but nonetheless unsettling. Can the EU reverse resistance and decline and become anew an effective support for democracy and economic development in the region? This frequently raised question becomes all the more important and urgent in the light of recent developments in the EU's eastern neighborhood, not least the problem of Russian aggression and its potential for spread. This workshop brings together scholars who are experts on the EU and specialists on the region to examine the EU's relations with the Western Balkans as a case of external differentiated integration (EDI). In the EU's eastern and southeastern periphery, EDI has been posited as an alternative model for countries that are not yet considered ready for accession.

Organized in the framework of the EU3D project "Differentiation, Dominance, Democracy" (H2020), the workshop shall explore the nature and scope of EDI in the WB; the extent to which the EU seeks to apply a uniform set of rules and political conditions, or whether conditionality is shaped by consideration of specific circumstances; and how domestic developments, interests and perspectives from the region influence and constrain integration in the EU and the prospects of eventual membership. Furthermore, EDI and conditionality are shaped by profound power asymmetries in EU's relations with states in the region, raising questions regarding the legitimacy and (externally perceived) dominance of the EU's involvement. The workshop will also examine the role of other powerful states that contend for influence in the WB region and consider different scenarios for the integration of WB in the EU.

AGENDA **Thursday, June 16**

9:00 – 9:30 **Arrival of participants and registration**

9:30 – 11:00 **Session 1 - Differentiation and dominance in the EU's external relations**

Chair: Dia Anagnostou, ELIAMEP

“Differentiated integration and dominance”

John Erik Fossum, ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo

“The EU, domination and legitimacy in the ENP”

Marcin Zubek, Jagiellonian University

“EU enlargement and dominance in the Western Balkans”

Dia Anagnostou, ELIAMEP

Discussant: Emmanuel Comte, ELIAMEP

11:00 – 11:30 **Coffee Break**

11:30 – 13:00 **Session 2 - Perspectives on the EU and democracy from the Western Balkans**

Chair: Susannah Verney, University of Athens

“Democracy, stability and the EU in the Western Balkans”

Florian Bieber, University of Graz

“Civil society and public opinion on EU integration in Serbia”

Srdjan Majstorovic, European Policy Centre (CEP)

“National understandings of the European Union and its actions in North Macedonia”

Simonida Kacarska, European Policy Institute in Skopje

“Improving accountability mechanisms in EU accession process”

Krisela Hackaj, Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI Albania)

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch break**

14:30 – 16:00

Session 3 - Differentiated integration in the Western Balkans

Chair: Ritsa Panagiotou, Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)

“Differentiation, EU enlargement and the Western Balkans”

Spyros Economides, London School of Economics

“The EU policy in the Western Balkans”

Filippa Chatzistavrou, ELIAMEP

“Uniformity and Differentiation in the Fundamentals of EU Membership: The EU Rule of Law Acquis in the Pre- and Post-accession Contexts”

Ivan Damjanovski, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje

"Western Balkans enlargement post-Brexit: Impact and alternatives"

Roberto Belloni, University of Trento

18:30 – 20:00

EU3D Lecture: “How has the war in Ukraine affected EU enlargement in the Western Balkans?”

Loukas Tsoukalis, President, ELIAMEP

Chair: Xenia Kounalaki, Foreign Editor, ‘Kathimerini’ newspaper

20:30

Dinner

Friday, June 17

9:30 – 11:00

Session 4 - Contending external powers in the WB region

Chair: Filippa Chatzistavrou, ELIAMEP

"An assessment of China's presence in the Western Balkans"

Plamen Tonchev, Institute of International Economic Relations (IIER)

“Russia’s footprint in the Western Balkans and the role of the EU (and international community) in mitigating its negative effects”

Rufin Zamfir, Global Focus Center

“Value-based approach to Turkey-Western Balkans relations”

Samet Shabani, Horizon Civitas

Discussant: Ritsa Panagiotou, Centre of Planning and Economic Research (KEPE)

11:00 – 11:30

Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00

Roundtable: Scenarios of EU relationship with the Western Balkans
“Multilayered Connectivity as the New Enlargement”

Ardian Hackaj, Director of Research Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI)

“A European Political Community to structure politically the continent.”

Florent Marciacq, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

“The EU and Western Balkans: Integration without supranationalisation?”

Matteo Bonomi, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

“EU's Strategic Enlargement - Breaking the deadlock in EU accession of WB6”

Srdjan Majstorovic, European Policy Centre (CEP)

“A south European perspective on enlargement in the Balkans”

Marilena Koppa, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

13:00 – 14:00

Light Lunch

Departure of participants