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Event | 15.11.2023 | 14:00 - 18:00

Green and Peaceful Future in the Western Balkans

The next steps towards our shared European future

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Background

The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament has historically been at the forefront of supporting EU enlargement. In the current security context, a strong and united EU that brings security and prosperity to the whole continent is needed now more than ever.

Following on from the success of the Greens/EFA conference *'Green Wave in the Western Balkans - Challenges and Perspectives'* in June 2022, and in the context of further green progress and additional challenges in the region, we are continuing to work together with our green counterparts across the region on our shared goals - security, energy, environment protection and safeguarding European values including democracy, media freedom and fundamental rights. As we head towards EU elections in 2024, it is crucial that the current momentum on enlargement is not lost. With this event, we are bringing together key actors from the region to discuss important topics including energy security, enlargement and democracy.

Join us on 15th November, 14h-18h, in Brussels for opportunities to exchange, discuss and network at the '***Green & Peaceful Future in the Western Balkans - The next steps towards our shared European future***' conference.

The Greens/EFA conference, organised by MEPs Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz and Tineke Strik, will take place at Atelier 29, in Brussels. The conference will consist of two panel discussions, and will be followed by a cocktail reception. The conference will also be live streamed.

Programme

14.00 - 14.10 - Welcome & registration of participants

14.10 - 14.20 - Opening speeches by **MEP Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield & MEP Viola von Cramon-Taubadel**

14.20 - 15.40 - Panel 1 - Energy Cooperation, Challenges & Corruption in the Western Balkans

Speakers

- **Predrag Momčilović**, Researcher, journalist, and political activist from Belgrade. He is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Geography in Belgrade focusing on political ecology, degrowth, social aspects of climate change, food production, and just energy transition. He is also a member and co-founder of Center for Green Politics and a member of Don't Drown Belgrade/Green Left Front in Serbia.

- **Aleksandar Dragicevic**, Activist in the Coalition for sustainable development (KOR), Montenegro with a track record fighting eco-crime (illegal logging, gravel extraction, poaching) and helping grassroots and local communities organise and fight against projects such as hydro power plants, investor urbanisation, deforestation and river protection. Eco ambassador of Montenegro and public speaker.

- **Mirko Popovic**, Programme Director at Renewables and Environmental Regulatory Institute, Serbia (RERI) He is an environmental, energy and climate policy analyst and researcher dedicated to democratisation and citizens' engagement in evidence-based policy making, including the enforcement of EU environmental standards in Serbia and the Western Balkans.

- **Hristina Vojvodić**, Senior Legal Advisor in the field of Energy and Climate at RERI, with expertise on the implementation of the EU acquis, particularly on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and Paris Agreement implementation. Responsible for monitoring foreign investments in Serbia and the operations of large polluters.

- **Jasminka Young**, Programme Director of RES Foundation and co-author of the study 'Tackling the immediate challenges of energy poverty in the Western Balkans. The possible role for the EU'

- **Viktor Berishaj**, Energy Policy Coordinator for South East Europe at Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe. As the Western Balkans Energy and Climate Policy Coordinator in Brussels, he works to increase regional energy and climate ambition, including developing strategies for the Energy Community Treaty and EU accession processes, aiming for climate neutrality in the Balkans.

Moderator: **MEP Thomas Waitz**

Coffee break

16h00 - 17h20 - Panel 2 - Our shared European future - Enlargement, EU elections & continued cooperation

- **Alba Çela**, Executive Director at the Albanian Institute for International studies (AIIS), an independent think tank based in Tirana. She is also part of the Western Balkans Strategy Group of the Heinrich Boll Stiftung. Alba is an editor of the Tirana Observatory published by the AIIS quarterly.

- **Edo Kanlić**, human rights activist and coordinator of the Initiative for Monitoring the European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his activism and work, he focuses on European integration, civic participation, and dealing with the past.

- **Dr. Ardita Abazi Imeri**, Founder and Program Director at the European Policy Institute (EPI),

where she focuses on Europeanisation and accession monitoring, conditionality policy and benchmarking EU reform; Rule of Law, Mediation, PAR; Social Cohesion, Consumer protection at the national and regional levels. She is also responsible for coordinating the deliverables on North Macedonia to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

- **Una Hajdari**, independent reporter based in Rome and focused on Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Her reporting is mainly published in a variety of US outlets. Over the years, her particular interests have been identity issues, post-communist transition in Europe and far-right groups. She has held several prestigious fellowships over the years, including at the IWM in Vienna, at MIT, the International Women's Media Foundation and was a correspondent for Reporters Without Borders.

- **TBC** Expert on EU Enlargement, DG NEAR, European Commission

Moderator: **MEP Tineke Strik**

17h20 - 17h30 - Concluding remarks by **MEPs**

17h30 - 18h00 - Networking reception

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Responsible MEPs



Tineke Strik

Member



Thomas Waitz

Member

Venue

Atelier 29
Rue Jacques de Lalaing 29, 1000 Brussels

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