

Bled Strategic Times

Official Gazette of the Bled Strategic Forum / 30 August – 3 September 2019

bledstrategicforum.org bledstrategicforum Bled Strategic Forum Bled Strategic Forum BledStrategicForum @BledStratForum, #BSF2019 @BledStratForum info@bledstrategicforum.org

Content

The Western Balkans: from “power keg of Europe” to a Transatlantic perspective By Philip T. Reeker	2
The bell at Bled welcomes you! By Dr. Miro Cerar	3
Cooperation is realpolitik By Walter Kemp	4
Europeans must keep their eyes on the long-term challenges By Dr. Robin Niblett	5
Slovenia: saving you time By Alenka Bratušek	6
We need to prepare for a world in 2050 Interview with Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid	7
Shaping the future. Bearing responsibility. By Marjan Šarec	7
Winning the '20s: a leadership agenda for the next decade By Martin Reeves	8
A clean, well-lighted place... By Majlinda Bregu	10
Regional cooperation for European integration and sustainable development By Roberto Antonione	11
Whither Europe? By Charles Powell	12
Building the digital economy that benefits everyone By Josko Mrndze	14
Creating ‘virtuous cycles’ By Andrea Illy	15
Are we really ready to risk our own future? By Dr. Janez Potočnik	16
Gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean By Nasser Kamel	18
A world of rules or a world of power By Iztok Mirošič	20
How much future for our past? By Tobias Flessenkemper	22
On democracy and its opponents. Notes from Southeastern Europe By Vedran Džihčić	23
The promises and perils of Big Data By Jolene Creighton	24
Learning and teaching in the era of Artificial Intelligence By Dr. Jernej Pikalo	25
Central and Eastern Europe at the heart of the EU By Katja Geršak	26
The politics of migration By Camino Mortera-Cortez	28
Youth perspectives on a social and sustainable Union By Giorgio Trichilo	30



We need to prepare for a world in 2050

President Kaljulaid, who had many words of praise for Slovenia and Bled, expects the forum to bring an in-depth debate on sustainable development and answers on how to prepare for a further Earth population rise and prevent the planet from suffering.

/ An interview with Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid conducted by STA.

September's visit comes after President Kaljulaid already attended the Slovenia-hosted June summit of the Three Seas Initiative. Kaljulaid will couple the attendance at the Bled forum with a state visit to the country.

"The issue of resources is becoming more and more important for the whole world and Europe has been a leader in these discussions. I hope we can find a model of sustainable development in Europe which would also be economically more feasible than the previous or current industrial one," she said.

Kaljulaid is confident that "while Europe would be leading in finding the solutions and definitely benefiting from them, the rest of the world would simply follow, because these solutions should be actually also commercially feasible, cheaper than the current alternatives".

"So I really hope that we will discuss how to save the resources, how to be prepared for the world, let's say in 2050 when there will be even more people on our planet and make sure that our planet will not suffer."

The Estonian president noted that the digitalisation of society, a field where Estonia is a leader, is part of the same debate.

"Let's face it - 15% of electricity spent today is spent on the internet. But new technologies are not only consumers of resources. The internet and new technologies are a huge opportunity to save resources."

"We for instance don't need to travel so much, we can have conferences over the net, we can work over the net and don't have to travel to work any more," illustrated Kaljulaid, arguing the current living habits will be changed profoundly by digitalisation and new technologies.

"Jobs will be geographically neutral, so people will choose where they live according to the societies they like to live in, which means a new kind of competition between states."

Turning to Estonia's digitalisation experience, Kaljulaid stressed there were no universal recipes, with things playing out differently in individual countries, since each is an individual culture, meaning each needs to find its own solutions.

Still, once a country embarks on the path of digitalisation of public services, "people will expect you to keep the level of services up

Shaping the future. Bearing responsibility.

On the national level Slovenia is pledged to sustainability. On the EU level, we will be a future oriented Presidency, well aware of modern challenges, which sees the European Union as a global trendsetter. EU ambitions for the future must be to enshrine standards of sustainability as the only future oriented response to the traditional as well as modern challenges. If each of us also strives in this direction, we might manage to solve the puzzle on the global level.

/ By Marjan Šarec, Primer Minister of the Republic of Slovenia



Rethinking reality.

Whenever one gets the opportunity to rethink reality, one also gets the opportunity to rethink actions. Bled Strategic Forum definitely is one of such opportunities. Grasping this challenge, being aware of it and making the most of the discussions with leaders, decision makers and thinkers from Europe and beyond that beset the brains of the participants, is a privilege.

The 14th Bled Strategic Forum once again underlines and outlines what is most pertinent, and most challenging. Unfortunately, this year, we cannot escape the fact that the most urgent issue is the

Bled Strategic Times
Official Gazette of the Bled Strategic Forum
Issue date: 2 September 2019
Publisher: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Prešernova cesta 25, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, and Centre for European Perspective, Grajska cesta 1, 1234 Loka pri Mengšu, Slovenia
Editor-in-Chief: Katja Geršak
Design: David Fartek
DTP and Prepress: Premedia, Andrej Juvan
Printing: Grafične ideje, Alenka Potočnik
Circulation: 2000 copies

f t i M v #BSF2019

www.bledstrategicforum.org

Continued on page 7

Continued on page 7

The Western Balkans: from ‘powder keg of Europe’ to a Transatlantic perspective

The Western Balkans are an integral part of a shared vision of a ‘strong and free Europe’ and needs to be supported on the path of Euro-Atlantic integration.

/ By Philip T. Reeker, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, U.S. Department of State

This year, the Transatlantic community marks the 101st anniversary of the end of World War I; the 74th anniversary of the end of World War II; the 70th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of Communism in Central Europe; and the 20th anniversary of the end of the Kosovo conflict. It is also the 15th anniversary of the “big bang” enlargements of the European Union (EU) and NATO in 2004, and the 10th anniversary of NATO’s 2009 enlargement. These anniversaries are a reminder of the enduring strength of the West, but also that the work of fulfilling our shared vision of a “strong and free Europe” remains incomplete. We have come a long way, but the work isn’t done yet. The Western Balkans are an integral part of this shared vision, and we must redouble efforts to support their peoples’ Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Jim Leach, a former diplomat and U.S. Congressman from Iowa, once quipped, “The only thing the Balkans exports is history.” Outsiders sometimes characterize the Western Balkans as a region where the past remains very much present, and, indeed, longstanding geopolitical, economic, and cultural forces at play in Southeastern Europe at the start of the twentieth century have endured or become resurgent. The Western Balkans remains fragmented – politically, ethnically, and culturally – with high unemployment and lagging economic and infrastructure development. Its strategic location and vulnerabilities have made the region a critical front in increasing geopolitical competition for positive influence in Europe.

The unfortunate view in some quarters of the continent seems to be that the Western Balkan countries are in Europe, but not of Europe. Subscribers to that view continue

to use loaded, pejorative terms like “powder keg” or “balkanization.” They believe that, rather than pursuing an upward trajectory of stability and prosperity, the countries of the region are condemned to a vicious and endless cycle marked by poverty, zero-sum competition, nationalist resurgence, democratic backsliding, corruption, and conflict.

This does not have to be the case, as re-

nationalistic and cultural barriers that had held the region back for decades. They paved the way toward North Macedonia becoming the 30th NATO Ally and joining the EU. The Prespa Agreement was arguably the most significant purely diplomatic achievement in the Balkans since the Dayton Peace Accords. It stands as proof that, with real leadership, persistence, and compromise, even the most

deeply rooted historical and cultural conflicts can be overcome.

In 2016, Montenegro thwarted a brazen coup attempt aimed at undermining Montenegrin democracy. This coup attempt was only one prong of Russia’s

effort to destabilize the country; Russia also unleashed a pervasive anti-NATO disinformation campaign to thwart Montenegro’s NATO accession. On May 9, a Montenegrin court found two Russian GRU officers guilty of attempted terrorism during the 2016 coup attempt, laying bare Moscow’s blatant attempt to destabilize an independent European country. The open and transparent trial represents an important step forward for the rule of law and is an example of Montenegro’s resiliency.

Western Balkan countries should continue to advance reforms that will draw them closer to Western standards, particularly in strengthening judicial independence and the rule of law, increasing anti-corruption efforts, bolstering media freedom, liberalizing labor markets, privatizing or modernizing state-owned enterprises, and boosting cross border trade. We would also welcome steps by Western Balkan countries to advance regional energy security by completing projects such as the Krk Island LNG terminal, the Interconnector Bulgaria-Serbia, and the “Kosovo e Re” power plant. In the face of ongoing Russian malign influence campaigns aimed at destabilizing the region, as well as China’s increased investment in stra-

tegic industries through its “17+1” and “Belt and Road” initiatives, we need to increase engagement in the region and re-energize partnerships with Western Balkan countries. These countries need to know what they will get—and what they stand to lose—from the “deals” Moscow and Beijing peddle. The United States will continue to offer these countries a reciprocal and fair trading relationship and is working to boost U.S. investment in the region through new tools like the Development Finance Corporation.

Strengthening the Transatlantic alliance to preserve and defend our shared values, including individual liberty, representative democracy, media freedom, free markets, and the rule of law is a top strategic priority for the United States in a new era of geopolitical competition. The close collaboration between the United States, the EU, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the Western Balkans is a shining example of this partnership. Our work together to help Western Balkan governments accelerate reforms and strengthen their democracies is hardening their societies against malign external influence; creating better, stronger, global partners; and ensuring long-term stability, security, and prosperity for their citizens. This important work also prepares these countries for future membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions like NATO and the EU, in accordance with the wishes of their people.

It is these shared interests that motivate U.S. support for Albania and North Macedonia’s EU membership bids. The European Commission’s May 29 assessment confirmed both countries met the conditions set out at the June 2018 European Council Summit to open accession negotiations. It is especially critical that North Macedonia receive a positive decision to open accession negotiations in October. The Commission cited the Prespa Agreement and North Macedonia’s bilateral agreement with Bulgaria as examples of “how to strengthen good neighborly relations for the entire region.” Continuing to stall North Macedonia’s enlargement progress will undermine the courageous compromises these leaders made for peace and progress, which serve as inspiration to all those who strive to secure a common European future.

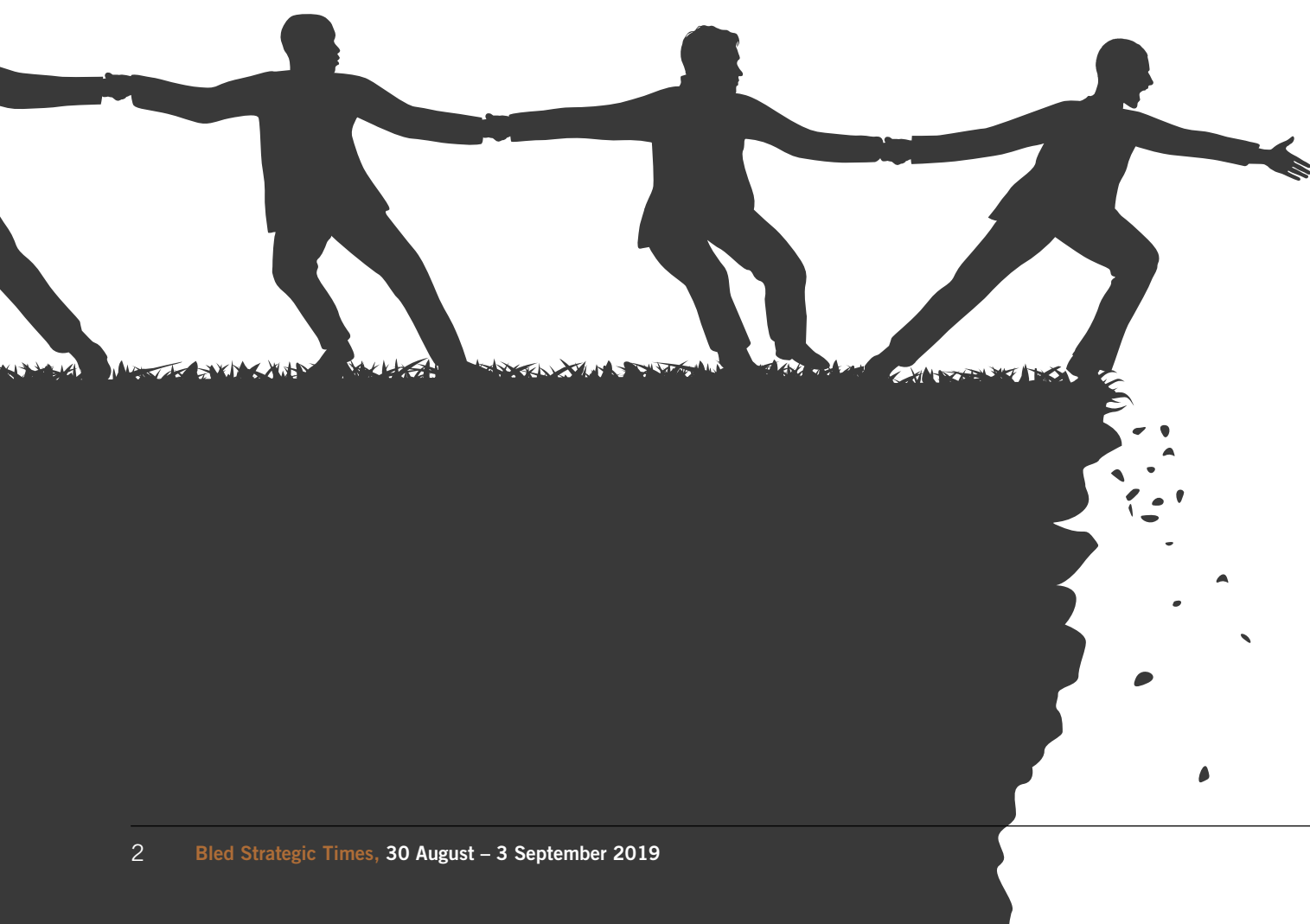
Before and after the EU decision in October, the United States will continue to urge Skopje and Tirana to press ahead with political and economic reforms that strengthen rule of law and anti-corruption efforts and cement democratic governance. In North Macedonia, we are encouraging the government and opposition to resolve differences over the future of the Special Prosecutor’s Office before the mandate of the Chief Special Prosecutor expires. In Albania, the United States is working with our European partners in pressing for continued progress on judicial reforms; re-establishment of a quorum in the constitutional court, following vetting; and electoral reforms based on the ODIHR recommendations.

The United States likewise strongly supports the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. At the highest levels, the United States has made clear that there

Balkan integration with Western institutions is in the political, security, and economic interests of the countries in the region, the EU, and the United States.

cent actions by Balkan leaders demonstrate. In defending the landmark Prespa Agreement, former Greek Foreign Minister Nikolaos Kotzias said, “History should be a school and not a prison.” The Western Balkans are not the same as they were 100 or even 15 years ago. The February 2018 EU Western Balkans Strategy reaffirmed the conclusion reached at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003 that there is a clear “European perspective” for all six Western Balkan aspirants to join the EU, based on firm, established criteria. This reflects our shared strategic goal. Balkan integration with Western institutions is in the political, security, and economic interests of the countries in the region, the EU, and the United States. There has been measurable progress. Croatia joined the EU in 2013. Montenegro and Serbia have made significant strides in their accession negotiations. With hard work, the European Commission said EU aspirant countries could join the Union by 2025. We call upon all the countries in the region to pursue this goal by accelerating their efforts.

Courageous and forward-looking leaders like North Macedonia’s Prime Minister Zoran Zaev and former Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras were able to break through



is a historic opportunity for Kosovo and Serbia to achieve a comprehensive normalization agreement. Ideally, this deal would center on mutual recognition. We are here to listen and to help. However, until the parties revive the stalled EU Dialogue negotiations, the chances of reaching an agreement are nil. Both Belgrade and Pristina have an opportunity to refocus on their strategic interest by removing barriers to negotiations, refraining from engaging in provocative actions, and returning to the negotiating table in a spirit of flexibility and readiness to compromise. To build confidence, we would welcome a decision by Kosovo to suspend the tariffs imposed on Serbian and Bosnian imports, and a move by Serbia to suspend its campaign to delegitimize Kosovo in the international community. Kosovo, of course, is headed towards elections in the fall and Serbia will likely have parliamentary elections next spring. The parties must work to navigate the political calendar and find their way back to the negotiating table. There is no other path forward.

As work to normalize their bilateral relations proceeds, parallel work to meet these countries' reform goals in areas like rule of law, judicial independence, media freedom, and democratic governance should continue. Serbia – indeed all of us – must remain wary of persistent Russian attempts to influence Serbian government actions in a manner and direction inconsistent with Serbia's Transatlantic aspirations. It is important, too, that the EU no longer delay extending visa-free travel to Kosovo citizens. The European Commission twice confirmed Kosovo has met all prerequisites, and both the Commission and the European Parliament expressed clear support for visa liberalization. Reliability is a two-way street.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is another urgent priority and source of challenges for regional stability. We are pleased that in December 2018, NATO Allies agreed to accept BiH's first Annual National Program (ANP), when the country chooses to submit it. Moving down the path to Euro-Atlantic integration is BiH's best hope for a stable and prosperous future and all the tangible benefits this process will bring its citizens. To achieve this worthy goal, the United States will continue to support the country's leaders in undertaking necessary reforms such as improving transparency, reforming the judiciary, privatizing state-owned enterprises, and tackling corruption.

Despite the complex challenges facing Western Balkans nations the United States is optimistic about the future of the region. The Western Balkans has taken significant, difficult steps forward in recent years. Brave leaders are disproving the critics who say the region will never escape its past. The people of the Western Balkans have firmly chosen to join the West. Certainly, this path ahead is long and difficult, and it will demand steady and consistent leadership to make decisions – some of which may be temporarily unpopular – that align with their countries' long-term, strategic goals, not short-term, politically expedient tactics. This is what citizens in Balkan nations have made clear they expect, and this is what is required to firmly anchor the Western Balkans into the Western community of nations to the benefit of the region, the EU, and the United States. We are here to help the countries of the region build a brighter and more secure future for all of their citizens. The road is long and steep and at times rocky. But, the destination is worth the journey. ●

The bell at Bled welcomes you!

Sustainable development is our key priority and we need to incorporate it into every pore of our society. Sustainability starts with us.

/ By Dr. Miro Cerar, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

When Slovenia launched the Bled Strategic Forum way back in 2006, we were aiming for something valuable, different and relevant, not just for our foreign policy, but for the wider world.

We had the enthusiasm and appeal of a new-born country that wanted to leave its mark on the global map of policy ideas. In today's highly connected world, there are many ways one can contribute to common efforts. Because we are all connected, we always felt that the only bell at our only island, here at Bled, should resonate globally and peal for all of you.

Our mission statement, our key priority and the reason why every September we invite more than a thousand participants from all over the world to join us here at Bled is one concept in two words: sustainable development.

Although this idea is shared and supported by almost everybody in the international community, be it individual countries, regions, governments, corporations, or citizens, we are still very far from translating these two words into practice – because every idea comes at a cost. Are we ready as a society to pay this cost, which at the end of the day will be far less than the cost of not doing anything? Climate change is not something that you can push into some box or some region and leave there – climate change is and will be affecting everybody, including you and me. We are all connected.

This is why we need to talk about the responsibility to put words into practice. It is not going to work if the burden of going sustainable and green falls on the shoulders of those who are already struggling now to cope with the changes in the globalised world.

We have so many comprehensive deals, from Kyoto to Paris. What we need is the will to implement the deal – to incorporate sustainability into every pore of society.

That is why this year at the Bled Strategic Forum we will not only discuss the need to go sustainable, but also propose clear ideas how to act accordingly. We can not discuss clean water without the right to it – and that is why Slovenia has enshrined this right in its Constitution. Democracy, the rule of law and

respect for human rights are not an appendage or consequence of development, they are the fundamentals of any serious debate on climate change.

Slovenia's most important natural environment is the European Union!

Do not get me wrong – I am not preaching some cheap euro-centrism to our global friends and competitors, but the fact is that Slovenia feels the EU to be its natural surroundings, its habitat. This is why the state of the European Union will be at the centre of discussions during the forum. The newly elected EU leaders need to show determination and responsibility during a time of growing uncertainties in the global arena, Brexit and challenging internal issues.

This is why we need political wisdom, leadership and European solutions, which will also include countries with prospects for EU membership.

The “B” in BSF of course stands for . . . Bled. Being bold about the Balkans and its EU enlargement have always been a special feature at the Bled Strategic Forum. It is in Slovenia's vital and strategic interest for the countries of the region to achieve irreversible stability and prosperity and become members of the EU as soon as possible. We are aware that in the current geopolitical context, with major powers seriously weighing up the region again, enlargement will be under immense pressure and the need to deliver on the reforms of candidate countries will be greater than ever.

However, when the region delivers, the EU should also be brave and daring enough to move forward. A negative decision regarding enlargement can have a negative cascading effect all across the Western Balkans. Yes, the EU should be strict, but first with ourselves – and we should stick to our promises and pledges when the time comes.

What we need is a region that is reforming, that is developing and adopting European values and norms. It will be very difficult to reignite the European passion among the citizens of the region if we blow out the candle of prospects for EU membership and hope. Other actors, other players are more than ready to fill this void. In a way, this is

already happening. The Western Balkans is a geostrategic arena, and the EU cannot afford to lose.

Migration flows are one of the issues where the EU will stand or fall. Nobody is under the illusion that migration is not a serious issue and consequentially a generational one, but we need to look at it in a comprehensive and objective manner. Of course, this is a security question, but in equal terms it is also a question of demography and opportunities. In solving these issues, Slovenia, as a Schengen country, respects European norms and values. As one of my fellow foreign ministers said: you first need to control your borders – to decide how open they are.

When talking about geostrategic questions, we must mention a gradual but irreversible reshaping of power in the international arena, which will have long-lasting consequences for our common future. Multilateralism is in danger.

For countries like Slovenia, a functioning multilateral framework is essential in order to safeguard and guarantee our sustainable and secure livelihood. However, this does not apply to small countries only – even the biggest powers rely so heavily on multilateralism that by thwarting it we thwart the destiny of the world as we know it.

There are many more challenges and questions that you will discuss at this edition of the Bled Strategic Forum. Looking at the impressive list of speakers, panelists and important guests, I am very proud that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the Centre for European Perspective, was able to combine all of these in a two-day agenda. If you find a moment to go to the island and ring the bell for luck, please do not forget that we are all connected – we create our common happiness only together, respectfully engaged. So, let the bell at Bled ring for you!

Only through diversity of thought can we arrive at comprehensive and viable solutions for our common future. Welcome to Slovenia, where discussion and debate are valued, and different opinions are shared and cherished. ●



Cooperation is realpolitik

In an inter-connected world, going-it-alone is not an option. It is in the self-interest of states to work together.

/ By Walter Kemp, Head of Strategic Policy Support Unit, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The world seems to be coming together and falling apart at the same time. People are connected like never before: information, money, and tourists move quickly. Supply chains and financial markets span the globe. But the openness that generates prosperity also creates vulnerability to criminal, terrorist, and cyber attacks, pandemics, and large groups of people on the move. This creates a feeling of threat and fear of “the other”, and the future. This is fertile ground for those – like the populists, jihadists and nativists – who promise simple (ideally homegrown) solutions.

In such a complex and dynamic environment, states should be working together. But the end of America’s unipolar dominance, the rise of China, and a more assertive Russia have led states to jockey for position in a new world order. For some, this means asserting a new regional leadership role. Others demonstrate the symptoms of post-imperial phantom limb syndrome: seeking geographical aggrandizement or a greater role in the world based on nostalgia for the past.

The result is an international system in flux. There are very few status quo powers. Competition, even conflict, trumps cooperation. It turns out that we have not reached the end of history, and the world is not flat. Geopolitics is back.

In a dangerous and unpredictable world, governments need to defend their territory, their sovereignty, people, and national interests. For some, this means building walls, keeping out foreigners, and strengthening borders. This is nothing new: leaders have been doing this for centuries.

But globalization has advanced to such a point that no state – not even great powers – can pull up the drawbridge and hope to survive. You cannot be off the grid of international relations. No country, however powerful, can stand alone. Like it or not, we are all inter-connected.

As Italian President, Sergio Mattarella, put it, the alternative to multilateralism is only unilateralism, which deludes itself that it can live in splendid isolation, in the absence of rules and in the affirmation of exclusive interests. A world dominated by unilateralism is a world without friends. Yet states need friends – at least partners and allies: for trade, security, and to cope with threats and challenges that defy borders.

Therefore, cooperation is a necessity. It is not just for idealist liberals or naïve internationalists: it is in the national self-interest. Those who espouse a go-it-alone, do-it-yourself approach may spin an attractive narrative, but it is fantasiepolitik, not realpolitik.

The problem is, too many leaders take a short-term, selfish perspective. At a time of short election cycles and even shorter news cycles, a deal with a short-term pay-off is considered a success.

Such behavior reflects what in political science is known as the Prisoner’s Dilemma. And it can be profitable in a single business transaction. But this is not how international relations work. You seldom have a one-off transaction where you will never meet the other party again. This is particularly the case with neighboring states. Indeed, what you do this time has an impact on how you are perceived next time. Experience shows that if you break the rules or break trust, the other side will do the same. This sets in motion a dangerous spiral of retaliation.

That is why rules have been developed in the international system: to create predictability, fairness, and to reduce the risk of violent conflict. These rules were not dreamed up by political theorists: they were developed, in large part, by hard-nosed practitioners who had lived through war and

You cannot be off the grid of international relations.

wanted to save future generations from experiencing something similar.

Indeed, it was almost exactly seventy-five years ago – in the autumn of 1944 – that negotiators from China, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union came together in Dumbarton Oaks in order to restore international peace and security, and to develop a blueprint for what would become the United Nations.

The worldview that was enshrined in the UN Charter was one where states – on the basis of sovereign equality – would work together for peace, develop friendly relations, and resolve any disputes in conformity with the principles of justice and international law. Pie in the sky?

A similar logic was at the heart of the European Coal and Steel Community. After two devastating wars within thirty years, French foreign minister Robert Schuman – among others – proposed to unite the production of French and German coal and steel under a common High Authority as a first step towards a federation of Europe. As he said in May 1950, such a step would make it plain that “any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible”. This Community developed into the European Union which – for all its faults – has contributed to peace, stability and prosperity for the past seventy years.

Can cooperation also work among states that are less like-minded? Look at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As the name implies, this organization – created during the Cold War in 1975 – is designed to foster security through cooperation. As recently as twenty years ago, at a Summit in Istanbul, heads of state from the 57 countries that participate in the OSCE – including Russia, the United States and all countries of Europe – reaffirmed “the inherent right of each and every participating State to be free to choose or change its security arrangements”, and pledged that “they will not strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States.” This is a creative way of overcoming the security dilemma.

Cynics would say that these promises have been broken and that wars in Kosovo, Georgia and Ukraine have demonstrated the limits of cooperative security.

But maybe the mess that we find ourselves in at the moment is a reflection of what happens when rules are broken rather than the weakness of the rules themselves.

Indeed, a rules-based system becomes all the more important with the return of geopolitics. Since states are part of a system, to reduce friction and manage relations there have to be rules.

Furthermore, common rules are vital for dealing with threats and challenges that transcend borders: like cyber, terrorism, and organized crime. Indeed, cooperation is more likely to be found in dealing with spaces and challenges that are currently less regulated – like lethal automated weapons systems, cyber attacks on critical infrastructure, and artificial intelligence.

hostile actions that trigger tit-for-tat retaliation, a virtuous circle of small positive steps could build trust and confidence.

So what do we want? Integration or fragmentation? An eye for an eye and the law of the jungle, or good-neighborly relations based on international law? A beggar-thy-neighbor approach where treaties and principles are broken and might equals right is a sure path to breaking up the international system that has been developed since the last world war. In a world of nuclear weapons, that could, quite literally, lead to a dead end. The alternative is to seek to manage relations between states, regulate common spaces, and work together for the sake of common interests, based on common rules. Surely this is in the interest of all states and peoples.

Therefore, for the sake of survival, security or power, cooperation is realpolitik. ●

Those who espouse a go-it-alone, do-it-yourself approach may spin an attractive narrative, but it is fantasiepolitik, not realpolitik.

Perhaps working together to regulate and deal with these issues will build trust in other areas, like enhancing military to military relations through confidence- and security-building measures, and or even arms control. As a result, instead of a negative spiral of

Europeans must keep their eyes on the long-term challenges

Broadening the beneficiaries of globalization, decoupling future economic growth from resources use and avoiding escalation of geopolitical competition are key challenges that Europe must tackle.

/ By Dr. Robin Niblett, Director, Chatham House

Amid Brexit, America First and a Chinese-US trade war, it is not an easy time for multilateralist Europeans. However, there is risk that their policymakers are drawn into responding to the daily vicissitudes of short-term shocks and tempestuous tweets. Instead, Europeans should stay focused on the most important long-term challenges. Three stand out.

The first is to rebalance globalization so that it works for all. Economic globalization has brought more prosperity to most people across the world, but it has had uneven and unequal effects. Too often, in focusing on its opportunities or simply in viewing globalisation as inevitable, insignificant attention has been given to the

disaggregated economic and social effects of globalisation, which have hit specific sectors, localities and communities hard, churning up the more emotional and identity-based politics spreading across Europe, the Americas and Asia.

Europeans are instinctively supportive of the multilateral system, not only because it suits their interests, but also because they are not well equipped to protect those interests in a more combative and transactional world.

The task of broadening the beneficiaries of globalization will not be easy. Much of the world will struggle to escape this period of sluggish growth. Aging societies in developed economies need to confront unsustainable worker-dependency ratios. Emerging economies have yet to overcome the middle income trap. And the just-in time global economy is highly vulnerable to any disruptions to the flow of goods, services, people and data, be that from cyber-attacks, trade disputes or the geopolitical constriction of maritime choke points.

The second, related challenge is to decouple future economic growth from resource use. As the IPCC has made clear, there is little more than a decade in which to try to ensure that global temperature change is limited to a 1.5 degree increase.

Limiting human-driven carbon emissions will be only one – though crucial – component of rebalancing global growth and consumption. Managing freshwater water supplies and land use will pose equally complex trade-offs.

The third challenge is to avoid an escalation in the

current bilateral geopolitical competition between the US and China into a more dangerous, global stand-off. Many Europeans share US concerns about Chinese trade practices, intellectual property theft, domestic political repression and aggressive territorial claims in the South China Sea. But most fear that the Trump administration's unilaterally confrontational approach will lead to a wider deterioration in the multilateral rules-based system, which has served Europe and America so well on balance these past 70 years.

Europeans are instinctively supportive of the multilateral system, not only because it suits their interests, but also because they are not well equipped to protect those interests in a more combative and transactional world. This is especially the case when Europe's main transatlantic partner – the United States – is actively fostering the return to great power competition. Despite their long roster of domestic challenges – from protecting the rule of law within the EU to reforming the Eurozone – Europeans need to put equal effort today into managing this challenging

The EU should use its collective market strength to maximum effect so as to usher in a more equitable period of economic globalisation.

international context. They should be willing to invest in and defend the international system where it under strain – from freedom of navigation to a functioning WTO dispute settlement mechanism – and be a source of ideas, energy and political will to reform and adapt where it needs updating, for example in the regulation of emerging technology. Overall, there should be four strands to this strategy.

First, the EU should use its collective market strength to maximum effect so as to usher in a more equitable period of economic globalisation. The EU needs to expand

further its web of successful recent trade negotiations, so as to embed a growing network of mid-sized countries in a rules-based approach to free trade. Especially on the regulatory side, the EU can extend shared approaches to competition policy, data protection, tax avoidance and supply chain ethics and transparency. Tackling these issues internationally does not require prior consensus in multilateral institutions; it could also be instigated through the EU's own market and regulatory power and bilateral agreements.

Second, the EU could use its regulatory power and economic weight to accelerate Europe's contribution to responding to climate change. European citizens are increasingly aware of the effects of their own choices on the natural environment, as the shift in attitudes to plastic usage demonstrates. But there is a long way to go. European governments must work in tandem with multinational companies and non-profit organisations, and alongside their own consumers to set the example for an accelerated transition towards a low carbon and more circular economy. National budgets should be combined with collective Europe-led vehicles such as the EIB and EBRD, so as to focus on transformational long term investments in clean energy infrastructure, transport and building sustainability. European development policy should be linked to ensuring countries escape the fossil fuel trap, delivering more flexible and energy efficient growth.

Third, Europeans should try to reduce the chance of escalation in geopolitical competition. Europe needs to take an approach towards China that incentivises a deepening of China's engagement in multilateral responses toward shared global challenges such as climate change and environmental management. Unlike the US, Europeans have a self-interest in trying to steer China's Belt and Road initiative along a more environmentally sustainable and financially transparent direction. On the other hand, it should join the US in screening Chinese inward investment more carefully, in holding Chinese state subsidies to account in the WTO, and in challenging the spread of surveillance technologies that undermine human rights beyond China's borders. This will require European leaders to commit to making China policy a central area for coordination rather than giving China the opportunity to divide its positions.

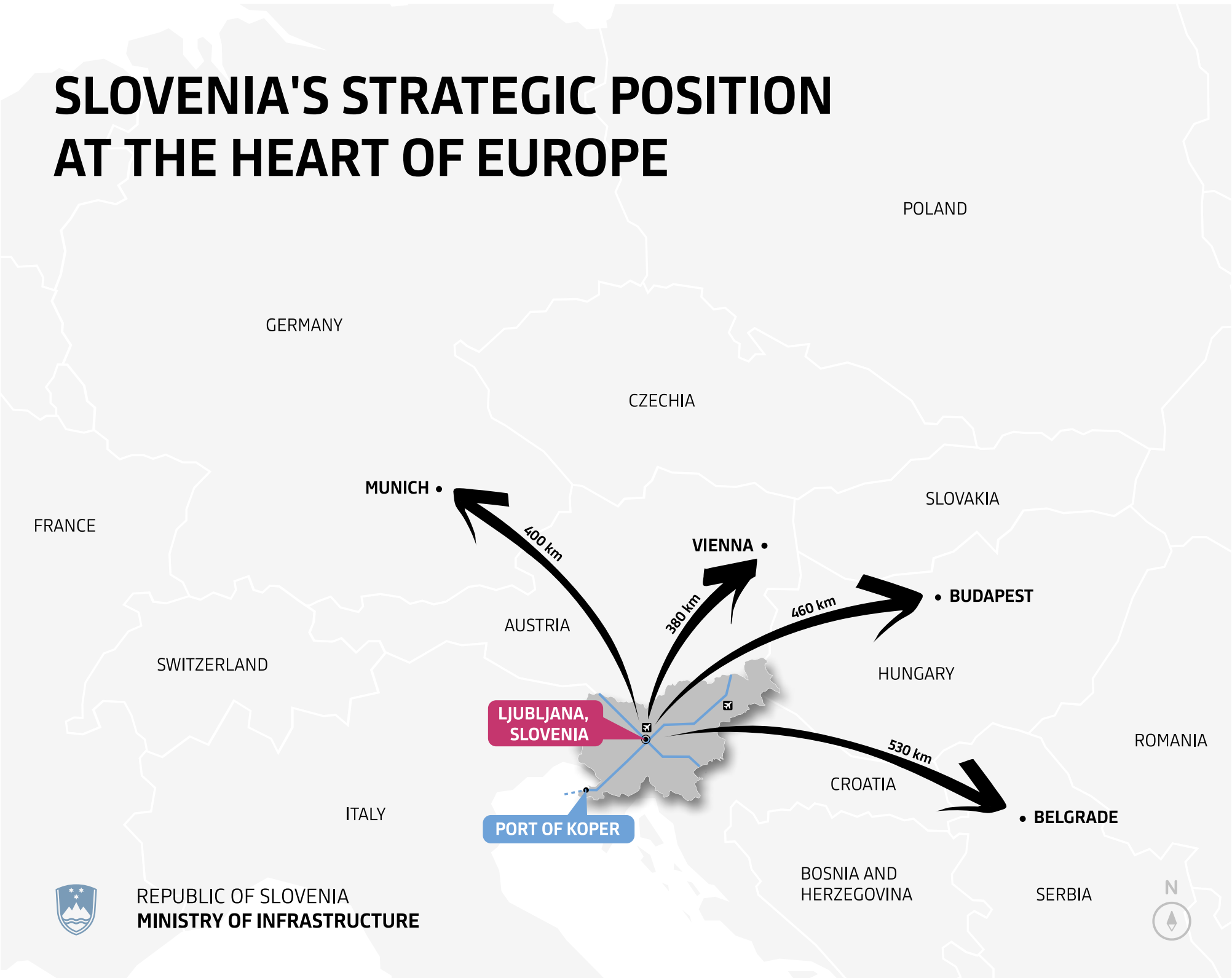
Finally, the UK and its EU partners must be aware that these initiatives will be less effective if the process of negotiating Britain's withdrawal from the EU weakens any further Europe's collective voice on the world stage. For Britain, its geography means that the EU will remain the first circle of its security and economic interests. For the EU, Britain's economic, diplomatic and military heft will be essential if Europe is to be a capable collective international actor. This is a time for Europeans to hang together, or they risk hanging separately. ●



Slovenia: saving you time

“The sea route from Asia to our Port of Koper is five to eight days shorter in comparison to maritime routes from Asia to northern European ports. This not only reduces shipping costs, but also minimises the impact of global trade on the environment.”

/ By Alenka Bratušek, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Slovenia



When this year’s edition of the Bled Strategic Forum ends, what will you remember when you return home? Surely, the cleverest ideas from the discussions – and surely the alluring image of Bled Island. However, when your thoughts wander back to the moments you experienced here, you should also recall Slovenia’s excellent geostrategic position – located in the centre of Europe, just like Bled Island adorns the middle of the lake.

The route to success

Slovenia may be small, but we have a lot to offer. The companies that have already invested here and those that have decided to settle in Slovenia have all made great use of their resources – and of one in particular. Mostly, what investors first discover about Slovenia is our excellent transport infrastructure and our connection to European road and rail corridors.

For example, the sea route from Asia to our Port of Koper is five to eight days shorter in comparison to maritime routes from Asia to Northern European ports. This not only reduces shipping costs, but also minimizes the impact of global trade on the envi-

ronment. What is more, at the beginning of this year we also started construction of the Divača-Koper second rail line to the Port of Koper, which will be in operation by 2026.

Time is the most precious resource. Come on in and optimise! In Slovenia, everything is close at hand.

This project has the support of many EU member states and it has also been discussed at the EU-China Connectivity Platform. In combination with other investments in our railway system and the expansion of international airports in Ljubljana and Maribor, the construction of the new railway will further enhance opportunities for entrepreneurial and business initiatives in Slovenia.

More than just hard infrastructure

However, there is much, much more to our country than its geostrategic position. Company managers are happy with our well-educated workforce because we have an excellent education system in which even tertiary education is tuition-free. There are also our reliable businesses and

entrepreneurs. As a small economy, Slovenia is export-oriented, which means our companies have to be among the best in the world to be able to compete in the global market.

Thus, the work ethic is strong and businesses always strive for innovation and excellence in their services and products.

Helping them succeed are responsive public services, well-developed ITC infrastructure, and one of the best energy systems in the world.

As you may know, Slovenia ranks sixth on the World Energy Council’s Energy Trilemma Index, which measures energy security, energy accessibility and affordability, and environmental sustainability.

Everything at hand

Of course, Slovenia is also a great place to have a great time. Whether you politically agree with former US President George W. Bush or not, he was absolutely right about Slovenia being “a big slice of heaven”, as he once said when visiting.

Foreigners that come to Slovenia by chance or by design usually decide to settle here because of the high standard and the comfort of living. If you stay in the capital Ljubljana, for example, you have only a one-hour drive to the mountains and to the sea.

And when you want to explore more than our nature parks, peaks, lakes and other natural attractions, you can always visit nearby countries – as already mentioned, Slovenia is in the heart of Europe, and so it is an exceptional starting point for leisure and business trips.

The Fourteenth Bled Strategic Forum is about strategic resources, and one of the most important and precious resources at our disposal is time. So, come on in and optimise! In Slovenia, everything is close at hand. ●



to the level of development of new technologies and make use of the new opportunities emerging", she pointed out.

"I feel this is a task governments have to undertake, because our people and our businesses are online anyway, so governments basically have an obligation to provide safe identity for example. And its not only technological solutions - it is only by the power of law that you can guarantee digital signatures for example."

Kaljulaid moreover noted the need "to teach people a lot and train them; to have cyber hygiene, for children to know that risks exist online etc."

Meanwhile, the Estonian president also plans to use her visit to strengthen economic cooperation between Estonia and Slovenia. She argued there was far less economic co-operation "right now than I would expect between two like-minded EU countries".

Another major topic at the Bled forum will be the future of the EU, especially new institutional appointments after the May elections to the European Parliament. Kaljulaid disagrees with the view that most key posts were occupied by candidates from so called old member states and that new members got the short end of the stick.

She in fact rejects the "old and new members" terminology, arguing it was inappropriate to speak of such a divide 15 years after the last major enlargement, as there are also no common denominators that would justify such distinctions.

Kaljulaid does agree that the distribution of posts in the EU should be merit-based. She believes the decisions on the latest appointments were taken with "quite a lot of thinking about who would be able to do the job and also by keeping in mind the bigger balances, for instance gender balance".

Asked whether she felt the new European Commission team would be able to strengthen public trust in EU institutions, Kaljulaid said that this in fact should not be the responsibility of the Commission as "the most technical body of the EU".

"You cannot charge the European Commission with the liability to overcome democratic deficit. There is the European Council which consists of elected presidents and PMs, there is the European Parliament that is elected directly by the citizens of the EU."

Kaljulaid also rejects fears related to the rise of nationalists and populists and those pushing for a greater role of national states or even for leaving the EU.

"Who is advocating for leaving the EU? One country decided for this, but I think there is nobody else thinking of following this line. On the contrary, I see European citizens trusting the EU more than before. We also saw an important rise in participation in the European Parliament election.

"I don't see that there is such a crisis of democracy in the EU institutionally as you seem to be thinking. Quite to the contrary, I think we have quite good opportunities to continue deepening our cooperation."

She argued that all the tasks faced by European politicians, "starting with climate change, or economic development, or even social development", can hardly be tackled more successfully "without the EU, by 27 members separately", in particular "nowadays when borders inside the union are not so important".

"We need to be responsible for the welfare of our global citizens," she said, describing the EU as "simply the more effective model, simply the rational way forward".

Kaljulaid also called for a strengthening of the EU's position in world, for a continuation of a common foreign policy strategy and "this harmonised thinking on European action globally".

She announced Estonia would also play its part in this as a 2020-2021 member of

the UN Security Council, announcing the country would cooperate closely with its EU partners.

Kaljulaid said this was not only about ties within the EU, but also within NATO and part of "our common effort to defend Europe as a whole".

"Our security is very much based on democratic values. There are many ways where we can work together and then make sure that resources are spent together efficiently and effectively. So it is very good that we're coming together and synchronising our thinking for the future and this is also why the Bled forum is taking place in my opinion."

Commenting on relations with Russia, which she labelled a problematic neighbour for the whole of Europe, Kaljulaid highlighted the partial occupation of Georgia and in particular the occupation of the Crimea peninsula and war in the Donbass region in Ukraine.

"States that respect liberal democratic values also all respect the Helsinki Final Act and they make sure that when they sign any international agreements they do keep to these agreements. Unfortunately Russia has not been doing so."

A normalisation of relations between EU and Russia can only come when Russia does away with the reasons that led to the introduction of EU sanctions against it, Kaljulaid said.

"Of course economically this has a higher cost for those who traditionally and geographically had close economic ties, but I can tell you that Estonian businesses are not complaining. They realise the political reality and they do accept the current unfortunate state of play." ●



state of our planet and what it can (still) offer. This year, Bled Strategic Forum is about stability vs. instability. My deep persuasion is that today, the issues of stability are more than ever connected to the issues of sustainability.

Sustainability as a synonym for the future.

If we want to make sure that the world, which we leave behind, will enable the same quality of life enjoyed by ourselves, we must resort to urgent actions and also be willing to sacrifice some of our habits. If our goals aim higher and we wish to make the world a better place for future generations, we must be decisive in the implementation of these actions.

While my wish would be that all necessary actions are well coordinated and respected, I am also aware of the reality. We

are past the point of thinking nothing can be done, unless it is coordinated and agreed globally. It is high time for a parallel bottom up approach. Much needed decisions on the national and global level should be held and they must be implemented and respected on all levels – from local, national to global – by individuals and governments as well as by multinational corporations, which are also among the factors of ensuring decisive sustainable actions.

Being aware of this responsibility, Slovenia strives to do its utmost to also promote the social aspect of the necessary change. This is an important building block of sustainable development. It is often associated with the actions and decisions of companies and organizations. But each one of us is key to achieving social responsibility. The personal commitment of each individual to act in accordance with values such as honesty, credibility, transparency, respect for social norms and the right to be respectful of one's neighbour, colleague, every individual, and to cultivate a careful attitude towards the environment and resources matters.

The EU as a global trendsetter. Ambitions for the future must never be feeble.

We are at the beginning of a new institutional and legislative EU cycle. Each such beginning offers an opportunity for new directions. Slovenia takes seriously its responsibility as an EU member and has high expectations and demands regarding standards that should be set and kept within the EU.

The second Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU will also be part of the upcoming EU cycle. If we know what kind of Europe we want, we will also be able to better shape and lead it: I expect that in the coming period, the EU will adopt policies that will unconditionally anchor the Union on

the path of sustainable thinking. I expect the EU to be able to ensure future oriented leadership, and be able to bring about inclusive and sustainable social as well as economic change.

Slovenia is committed to a strong, cohesive and united EU, which provides external and internal security and stability, an EU that can effectively face the key challenges and threats of the modern world while ensuring solidarity and the highest standards of human rights and dignity. This is also crucial in strengthening the resilience of our societies to a plethora of hybrid threats, which will surely continue to intensify. Most importantly, we need to restore confidence in the EU and its institutions, in fair cooperation and in the rule of law. People must be put in the centre of our activities.

Slovenia wishes to see an EU in which there is no room for divisions threatening common interests. An EU, which guarantees unity and searches for common interests and solidarity. An EU, which supports common solutions, respect for human rights, international obligations and the principle of justice in all areas, reduces mutual inequality, and ensures respect of our differences. We must pledge to build a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe. All with the aim of securing a sustainable and safe future for the next generation of European citizens and with the aim of setting global standards. Someone must lead the way. The EU can.

Slovenia as a future oriented Presidency.

It is never too soon to start planning. Slovenia has already started to envisage its second half of 2021 Presidency of the Council of the EU. In the preparations as well as discharge of this important task, we want to pursue a sustainable agenda.

The EU must be able to provide a high quality of life for all. This goal can only be achieved through balanced economic, social and environmental development that steps beyond the so-called "throwaway society", respects the constraints and capabilities of our planet and creates conditions as well as opportunities for present and future generations. In doing so when presiding over the Council of the EU, Slovenia will strive to promote the circular economy as well as the highest social and environmental standards. The EU should be able to reach this goal, upgrade it and spread it worldwide. We cannot only care for ourselves. The EU can only be a trendsetter if it also cares for all.

Challenges are a constant. Our responses should not be variable.

I am not entirely idealistic. I am well aware how difficult it is to tackle environmental pressures and climate change, demographic changes, migration and world inequality, economic challenges, food and water scarcity, the persistent rise of terrorism, conflicts, hybrid threats and more. But history proved that hiding away from these challenges just because they are difficult to tackle does not make them disappear. On the contrary. It brings us to the present situation.

Challenges to multilateralism and the growing temptations of isolationism and nationalism must also be acknowledged, including within the EU. I firmly believe that polarised politics and policies cannot be effective and sustainable. Unilateralism cannot be the answer. This awareness should also be part of our discussions on the future of the EU.

The annual Bled Strategic Forum is part of these endeavours. We must all strive to discuss and listen to warnings, ideas and solutions in an open manner. ●

Winning the ‘20s: a leadership agenda for the next decade

The emerging trends shaping the business world and what leaders need to stay ahead in the 2020s

/ By Martin Reeves, BCG Managing Director and Senior Partner, Global Director of the BCG Henderson Institute



The winners in business have shifted markedly in the last decade. When the 2010s began, the world’s ten most valuable public companies by market capitalization were based in five countries, only two of them were in the tech sector, and none was worth more than \$400 billion. As the 2020s approach, all of the top ten are in the US and China, the majority are tech companies, and some at least temporarily have surpassed \$1 trillion in value.

Given the relentlessness of change on multiple dimensions, the keys to success are likely to be just as different in ten years’ time. Several emerging trends—including the rapid advancement of AI, the changing nature of work, and increasing social scrutiny of the impacts of technology and business—are likely to shape the future competitive environment.

To stay ahead of these trends, leaders need to question their current assumptions and retool their companies for the coming decade. This goes for both traditional incumbents, who will need to evolve their businesses to embrace new technologies—

and for younger digital giants, who will need to tackle new challenges like achieving agility at scale, preserving stakeholder trust and bridging the physical and digital worlds.

So, what will it take to win the ‘20s?

A leadership agenda to win the ‘20s

While many aspects of the agenda will vary by industry and region, we see five

Technological, political, and social changes point to an era of protracted uncertainty, in which corporate life cycles are likely to continue shrinking.

powerful emerging imperatives that will cut across industries and geographies.

Master the new logic of competition. Internet and mobile technology ushered in the information age and profoundly affected technology-intensive and consumer-facing industries such as electronics, communications, entertainment, and retail. But the emerging wave of technology—including sensors, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence—will turn every business into an information business. The combination

of an exponential increase in data, better tools to mine insights from that data, and a fast-changing business environment means that companies will increasingly need to, and be able to, *compete on the rate of learning*.

Scale will take on a new significance in the learning economy. Instead of the static “economies of scale” that today’s leaders grew up with—based on a predictable reduction of marginal production costs across a relatively uniform offering—tomorrow’s leaders will pursue “economies of learning,” based on identifying and fulfilling each customer’s changing individual needs by leveraging data and technology.

The arenas of competition will also look different in the 2020s, requiring new perspectives and capabilities. The familiar picture of a small number of companies producing a common end product and competing within well-defined industry boundaries will be replaced by one where competition and collaboration occur within and between *ecosystems*. Because ecosystems are fluid and dynamic, and not perfectly controllable even by the orchestrator, companies will need to be much more externally oriented, to deploy

influence indirectly through platforms and marketplaces, and to coevolve with ecosystem partners.

Finally, companies will increasingly compete on *resilience*. Technological, political, and social changes point to an era of protracted uncertainty, in which corporate life cycles are likely to continue shrinking. Companies will therefore need to worry not only about the competitiveness of their immediate game but also about their ability to weather unanticipated shocks.

Most of today’s incumbents are not well adapted for this more dynamic environment. Therefore, today’s leaders need to fundamentally reinvent the organizational model in order to become future winners.

Design the company of the future. Big data and deep learning have transformed our ability to learn, and the next generation of technologies will undoubtedly bring even more possibilities. History has shown, however, that applying new technologies to existing processes and structures generally yields only incremental gains. To unlock the learning potential of new technologies, leaders need to reinvent the enterprise as a *next-generation learning organization*.

Merely applying AI to individual process steps is not enough: To increase the ability of organizations to learn in aggregate, they

must build integrated learning loops that gather information from data ecosystems, continuously derive insights using machine learning, and act on those insights autonomously, all at the speed of algorithms rather than the speed of human hierarchies.

Human cognition, meanwhile, should be re-focused on problems that are beyond the capabilities of machines today—such as decoding slow-moving forces, such as social and political shifts, that are increasingly transforming business; imagining brand-new possibilities; and designing the integrated learning organization itself. This division of labor also requires rethinking human-machine interfaces so that humans can trust and productively interact with machines.

Finally, the company of the future will require a new management model to match—one based on biological principles such as experimentation and co-evolution, rather than traditional top-down decision making and slow cycle planning.

Apply the science of organizational change. Leading companies may be understandably reluctant to unleash such fundamental change preemptively. But our research shows that the single biggest factor influencing the success of major change programs is how early they are initiated. It is therefore critical to create a sense of urgency within the organization to ensure that everyone truly understands the need for change.

Even for companies that are committed to such transformation, it can be a risky endeavor: our research shows that most large-scale change efforts fail. Therefore, leaders need to employ *evidence-based transformation*—understanding empirically what works

and why, rather than relying on plausible assertions and rules of thumb.

Leaders also need to de-average their approaches to change. Large-scale transformations comprise multiple change challenges,

Our study of more than 1,700 companies around the world shows that diversity increases the capacity for innovation by expanding the range of a company's ideas and options.

so leaders will need to tailor their approaches to change accordingly, moving beyond the monolithic programs centered on PMOs, pulse checks and Gantt charts. By adopting continuous change as the default, episodic change programs will give way to innovation and change as ongoing operating imperatives.

Embrace the business imperative of diversity. Diversity is not only a moral imperative—it can also make businesses more effective in the long run. Our study of more than 1,700 companies around the world shows that diversity increases the capacity for innovation by expanding the range of a company's ideas and options. And as the speed of change accelerates, innovation and reinvention are increasingly necessary to stay on top.

The most obvious sources of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, are indeed important in driving innovation, but variety in work experience and educational background is also significant. Importantly, these factors are mostly additive, so companies that are diverse on mul-

tle dimensions are even more innovative. But to unlock the full potential of diversity, organizations also need to foster an inclusive workplace and an environment that embraces new ideas.

Diversity also increases resilience. Like biological communities and organisms, companies that encompass more heterogeneity are likely to withstand unanticipated changes better. Enterprises that embrace diverse talent, ideas, and sources of growth will have an advantage in understanding and adapting to external shocks—which increasingly threaten the survival of individual businesses.

Optimize for both social and business value. Several trends are fueling resistance and resentment toward business. The climate crisis and other negative externalities are increasingly visible, automation is sparking fear about the future of work, trust in technology is falling, inequality has risen markedly within many countries, and the most successful companies are becoming larger, more visible, and more dominant. As a re-

role in addressing social challenges, which will be reinforced as newly adopted metrics and standards make their efforts and impacts more transparent. Leaders need to focus on their companies' *total societal impact*—in other words, they need to make sure that their businesses create social as well as economic value. Not only can this increase financial performance in the long run, but it can strengthen the social contract between business and society, ensuring that the relationship is able to endure. Leaders will need to master the art of corporate statesmanship, proactively shaping the critical societal issues that will increasingly change the game of businesses.

Winning the present is challenging enough, but a more essential task for top leadership is winning the future. The fast-changing world will test our status quo assumptions, and it is critical to look forward in developing an agenda for the next decade.

This piece is an extract from BCG's Winning the '20s: A Leadership Agenda for the Next Decade ●

Leaders need to focus on their companies' total societal impact—in other words, they need to make sure that their businesses create social as well as economic value.

sult, the role of business in society is coming under question, risking the sustainability of the current model of corporate capitalism.

To keep the game of business going, business needs to be part of the solution. Employees and other stakeholders increasingly expect companies to play a more prominent

BCG BOSTON
CONSULTING
GROUP

**Unlocking the potential
of those who advance
the world.**



A clean, well-lighted place...

Keeping the European perspective alive in the Western Balkans

/ By Majlinda Bregu, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

**“-What is an hour?
-More to me than to you.
-An hour is the same.
-No. It is not.”**

Most people perceive time differently. In our region the sense of history and its immersive emotions still define the time in which we live. This part of Europe has changed a lot over the last 20 years, but far from progressing fast. *Adagio lento* is the rhythm in play.

20 years ago Stability Pact was launched in Sarajevo. It brought together world's leaders to draw an end to the wars in our region and to set the course of cooperation around peace-security-stability-development nexus.

Today that pact is replaced by the Regional Cooperation Process, a mantra that speaks volumes on the need to stand by each other in a world that is changing fast.

A lot has changed since 1999. However, the region is still a set of paradoxes. Ambitious policies are crafted and economic stability is in place (economic growth is at 3.5% in 2019). Years ago it was dangerous to drive from one place to another. Today it is different. No danger. Apart from the roads that have not seen much improvement.

20 years ago a lot of people who sought refuge from the wars were coming back home.

Today young people, as many as 39% (data from the Balkan Barometer 2019) are ready to leave in search of lost hope.

20 years ago democracy was a work in progress.

Today 70% of citizens in the region do not trust their governments, parliaments and judiciary. (data from the Balkan Barometer 2019)

20 years ago there were almost no private companies or Foreign Direct Investments.

Today the FDI inflows across the region have almost doubled, increasing from 3.6 billion EUR in 2010 to 6.6 billion EUR in 2018.

20 years ago nobody would speak of trade, technological development, start-ups

or digital agenda, smart cities and human capital investment.

Today the region has embraced the concept of building the Regional Economic Area, even though not everything is running smoothly.

20 years ago the Stabilisation and Association Process was launched with a list of required reforms. Since then only Croatia became an EU Member State. The rest are struggling to keep the torch lit, while enlargement has 'the blues'.

I myself have witnessed different times of our European endeavour. Every time I call them to my mind, I fail to understand all of them. Sometimes it looks like during so many years we have been more of amusement seekers in rush of glitter and success than fanatically devoted to a European change at home and time after time it looks like the bar keeps moving up.

Although membership in the EU remains the ultimate goal of all six economies, there's still a long row to hoe.

Though 56% of citizens in the region are in favour of EU membership, keeping the narrative of membership perspective alive is no easy task.

True. The EU has been the single most important leverage in the region to promote democracy, rule of law, respect for fundamental rights and minorities.

True. European integration is the prime mover in the economic, political and geopolitical life in the WB. We must not forget that the EU's share in both FDI and exports in the region is well over 70%. Yet, different actors are playing their part, arousing fear, suspicion, and debts while accessing energy, infrastructure, markets and technology. Every time EU leverage shrinks, let's be bold and say it openly: a new (cultural) revolution is next door. While democracy has retreated across the globe, it is almost impossible for the region to stand tall vis-à-vis the engagement of external actors.

True. The prospect of eventual EU membership has been a driving force during all these years, for all Western Balkan countries. It has been the predominant factor in urging the countries to engage with one another in a more positive manner as well as to address

not only the domestic problems they face, but also the unresolved issues in the region.

20 years ago, resentment and identity issues within the region were high and the hardest to reconcile.

But besides that, the need for a strategic dialogue on the future of Europe between the economies of our region and the EU is not only related to geopolitics and third players.

Any lack of perspective and hope to join the Europe would create a vacuum that cannot be filled only by external actors. Populist, authoritarianism, illiberal policies can be even more dangerous in exploiting national, social and economic disparities.

Identities can be used to divide, but they can also be used to unify.

These are the times of decision-making for the Western Balkans (WB), and here I mean tough, important decisions on our future and perspectives. There are challenges which simply cannot wait!

WB needs to make sure that decision on the EU perspective is followed by decisive actions in that direction, and the EU needs to exercise its merit-based approach, rewarding those who deliver. The price for inaction and permitting further drifts is a dangerous one. Fuelling bilateral disputes makes no favours to their participants – and not resolving them blocks the entire neighbourhood's future, as the effects spill over to all joint endeavours, making the entire WB their hostage.

Europe is a state of mind as well, that's why the region needs a reshaped strategy of political engagement in order to support lasting reforms locally. It has to shift the language and attention from the date of joining the EU, the unfounded fear of enlargement or enlargement fatigue, to the real democratic transformation of WB. It should empower and speak the language of unity among the citizens by enhancing national reforms and regional cooperation with effect on the economic development of the region.

European Integration of WB is not a territorial agenda. It is a Transformational agenda. No one expects any shortage of sensitivities or emotional structures on display. But if we continue keeping the focus on the differ-

ences rather than seeing the world through the lenses of cooperation, we are simply welcoming an unacceptable risk. We are a small market composed of small countries. As one of the fathers of the EU, Paul Henri Spaak said: "there are two kinds of countries in Europe, -small countries and small countries that have not yet realised that they are small". In view of the current context of various trade, transport and movement obstacles, it is clear to us that the region needs to embark on a serious and wide-ranging facilitation agenda.

74% of citizens in the region believe Regional Cooperation will change their lives positively and faster.

Surprised? Citizens speak the language of unity. Enhancing national reforms and regional cooperation will have an effect on the socio-economic development of the region and is a recipe for a better region.

Time passes by and leaves us all in a solemn uncertainty which speaks far more of how much is now at stake. The past is still present, the view of the future might be bleak, but we lost a lot due to different injustices.

An hour lost in vain is equivalent with years of struggle to catch up with the rest of the world.

Yes, Western Balkans is an unfinished business for Europe. Nothing really good will come out of a shrunken EU perspective, but nothing will happen if we do not recall that we need to take care and transform our "small home" into a clean, well-lighted place...

By the way, "A clean, well-lighted place" is one of Ernest Hemingway's stories.

The time was different, but the story is the same. Still. ●

Regional cooperation for European integration and sustainable development

“The Central European Initiative (CEI)¹ contributes its share, through its 30-year experience of providing a political platform for multilateral diplomacy and multi-stakeholder participation in addressing common issues to the political and socio-economic project of European integration.”

/ By Roberto Antonione, Secretary-General, Central European Initiative

The increasingly unsettled and complex international environment, subject to rapid change, as well as multiple “internal” challenges, have been keeping the EU busy with reflections about its future: what kind of Europe can better respond to the needs of its citizens? How to address common challenges such as in the areas of migration, security, as well as socio-economic concerns. How to, for the first time in history, deal with the exit of a key Member State. How to narrow the distance perceived between citizens and “Brussels”. How to make sure the EU remains a key global player in a more geopolitical and less order-based world.

Let us face it. Europe is different today than at the time of the EU “big bang” enlargement in 2004 (and 2007). At that time, there was a shared enthusiasm and a joint vision of uniting Europe after the divisions of the post-cold war period. We can point to countless examples demonstrating the prosperity and stability brought to European citizens by the EU and its enlargement(s). Moreover, following the financial crisis, we are witnessing a renewed economic growth within the EU.

Nevertheless, the accession process of the Western Balkans seems at risk of becoming hostage to the above-mentioned concerns, or at least of the line of thought that the EU must firstly deepen or reform, in order to be able to enlarge again.

At the time of writing this text, the EU institutions are still in flux. The European perspective for European States able and willing to join the EU is included in the Strategic Agenda 2019 – 2024, adopted by the European Council. It is also reaffirmed by the President-Elect Von der Leyen in her guidelines for the next European Commission, together with her support for opening negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania.

We will see how vocal (and firm) the new European Commission will be about enlargement. At the same time, the continuation of the trend of individual national policies influencing the EU enlargement policy is quite predictable. Some of the viewpoints in the campaign for the recent European Parliament elections have once again showed that the will to match deeds with words (or promises) is less a truly shared one by all Member States.

The commitments undertaken by the EU and its Member States starting from the 2003 Thessaloniki Agenda, regarding the unequivocal European perspective, should not be delayed without a justified reason. Not because the EU credibility is at stake. Not even for the reason of keeping the reform process going in the region. Although, it goes without saying that the EU rapprochement is a key driver for change, as it was for the countries entering the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013. Reforms and transformations of societies are, in fact, not to be pursued to obtain EU membership. They are essential for the benefit of citizens, health of economies and the bright future of the region.

Commitments should be upheld, provided that required individual achievements and merits are met, and there is progress through

regional cooperation. The Western Balkans are after all a part of Europe: through geography, history, culture, and common challenges. Moreover, in the absence of a credible and sustainable path, it should not come as a surprise that the vacated space might be filled by other state and non-state actors, given the geopolitical shifts and the changing global order. Disillusion and (perceived lack of) perspective for youth are two consequences that should be borne in mind.

I believe that more engagement is needed with public opinion, especially in EU Member States that seem to exhibit growing skepticism: not only with decision-makers, but also with citizens. The message to be delivered is that enlargement is still a strategic interest of the EU, for the maintenance of peace, stability, security and prosperity.

European integration, however, is and should not, per se, be equal to the steps of the Accession Process. The responsibility for sustainable and prosperous economies and strong and independent institutions, forged through real reform processes of democratisation – the “Europeisation” of societies - lies with the countries of the region. There are recent constructive examples of political will and leadership setting positive steps for the region, thus overcoming long-term disputes such as the Prespa Agreement.

European integration is a broader concept and a path of aligning policies, standards and core value sharing. Yet, we are aware of the need to avoid having to see physical borders turn into barriers: to this aim, regional partnerships, and regional organisations such as the CEI, are crucial since they provide complementary multilateral schemes able to sustain the European integration process.

This is even more palpable for the CEI, as its membership allows for sharing experiences between EU and non-EU Member States from Central, South East and East Europe.

This model of EU – non-EU partnership, fostering know-how transfer underpinning multilateral diplomacy, is also key for the engagement of the CEI Eastern countries closely linked to the EU with the Eastern Partnership architecture.

To this end, the multi-stakeholder approach is conducive to fostering strong institutions and societies, as well as to supporting integration through multi-level partnerships. It is a driving force of inclusive processes of policy development and implementation. In this regard, the CEI provides a strong inter-governmental platform for political dialogue, as well as parliamentary and business dimensions. It is sustained by a project-oriented approach, based on a flexible use of instruments taking into account the needs of the wider CEI region. CEI activities involve a whole array of other actors, such as local institutions, private sectors, civil society, universities and academia, as well as young people.

This year’s 30th anniversary of the CEI - which goes back to an illuminated vision of the founding countries committing to good-neighborly relations and manifold cooperation just two days after the fall of the Berlin wall - is the right time to reflect on future ways of going about the main goals the Organisation is pursuing, i.e. European integration and sustainable development.


Adding to the commitment to supporting the enlargement to the Western Balkans region and the rapprochement stemming from the Eastern Partnership framework, the CEI

Ministers of Foreign Affairs have identified - in the need for reforms - one of the bases for enhanced cooperation, thus contributing to the very goal of European integration. Youth and cooperation between local and regional authorities will be in the limelight. The future of societies largely depends on the perspective of young citizens, and cooperation at the level closest to the everyday life of citizens fosters territorial and societal cohesion.

Synergies are crucial, and we are very much aware of this at the CEI, especially among regional partnerships striving for comparable goals.

Moreover, building synergies is essential also regarding the aims and activities of the EU and even of global multilateral actors, such as the UN. Not only does the UN Charter call for regional and sub-regional arrangements to complement and support UN efforts in the maintenance of international peace and security, but this support is essential also in certain areas, such as in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the UN Secretary-General has identified the development of partnerships between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations as a central pillar of the UN system reform.

I am convinced regional partnerships such as the CEI can foster multilateral solutions to challenges that transcend national borders, and thus contribute to both the political as well as socio-economic European integration project. ●



Enlargement is still a strategic interest of the EU, for the maintenance of peace, stability, security and prosperity.

Endnotes

¹ The Central European Initiative (CEI) is the largest regional intergovernmental regional organisation in Europe, bringing together at the same time 17 countries from Central, South East and East Europe area (Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine).

Whither Europe?

Responding to people’s fundamental concerns will simultaneously help member states and enhance the value of the EU for its citizens.

/ By Charles Powell, Director, The Elcano Royal Institute (Madrid)

As the European Union begins to think in earnest about life after Brexit and looks forward to the appointment of a new Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, the time seems ripe to look ahead and identify some of the major challenges it will be facing and how they might be tackled.

The EU is operating in an increasingly complex environment. Although globalisation and European integration have undoubtedly served to increase prosperity, the negative consequences of the former, which have hit the European working and middle classes especially hard, have provoked widespread discontent with politics, political parties and politicians generally. Furthermore, many European citizens have come to perceive the EU as part of the problem (whether or not this diagnosis is justified is an entirely different matter), rather than part of the solution.

The 2005 French and Dutch referenda provided a foretaste of this shift in opinion, which intensified after the worldwide financial and economic crisis of 2008. One possible interpretation of the Brexit referendum outcome is to see it as a reflection of these concerns.

It is in this context that political parties allegedly offering alternatives to traditional politics – featuring ready-made ‘solutions’ such as xenophobia, populism, protectionism, nationalism and Euroscepticism – have increasingly managed to elicit citizens’ sympathy for their programmes. Recent polls suggest that support for the EU is on the rise, and the European Parliament elections held in May 2019 did not result in the debacle some had feared, but it is important to acknowledge that a quarter of the new MEPs are openly hostile to the European integration project.

This troubling state of affairs makes it imperative for the EU to address a number of clearly identifiable socioeconomic and political challenges, including some related to identity and multiculturalism, and to provide appropriate and imaginative solutions to them. Responding to people’s fundamen-

tal concerns will simultaneously help member states and enhance the value of the EU for its citizens.

Not since the aftermath of World War II has Europe had to endure such a weak recovery from a crisis as that which we have experienced. Rapid technological change, open economic borders and the economic policies

Recent polls suggest that support for the EU is on the rise, and the European Parliament elections held in May 2019 did not result in the debacle some had feared, but it is important to acknowledge that a quarter of the new MEPs are openly hostile to the European integration project.

pursued by most EU states in the wake of the crisis have resulted in stagnant middle class wages, increased inequality (with growing concentrations of income in the top 10%) and new forms of poverty and social exclusion, particularly in the South. Furthermore, the quality of jobs available has declined even in those countries with low unemployment, and the working poor have emerged as a distinct social category. Many Europeans feel that their children will be worse off than they are, that they will not benefit in the future from current levels of welfare, and that they face declining economic opportunities. Moreover, many perceive that the EU, far from providing a buffer to protect them from these powerful global trends, is exacerbating

Proposal

These new taxes would finance a budget of 1% of GDP (up to €140 billion), which would fund policies in five concrete areas across the EU:

- Developing vocational dual education;
- Improving active entrepreneurial and labour market policies;
- Financing an Erasmus scheme for workers;
- Increasing investment in pan-European projects (green infrastructure and technology);
- Strengthening internal and external defence and security as per below.

Proposal

Ensuring economic growth and better jobs while making the euro sustainable in the long run are closely interrelated goals, even for non-eurozone member states. Both require innovation on the revenue and spending sides of the budget, at the national and EU levels. They will also require new economic policies.

- The EU must remain an open economy and reject attempts to return to protectionist policies. This openness, however, should not be allowed to lead to the dismantling of the European social model;
- The EU should have more scope for establishing guidelines to encourage member states to concentrate expenditure on specific areas, such as education, R&D, industrial policy and pan-European infrastructures. These guidelines could take the form of more specific recommendations in the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedures and the Stability and Growth Pact;

- The EU should take measures to increase internal labour market mobility, including those based on the budgetary instruments mentioned below;
- The EU should demonstrate stronger leadership in specific global initiatives seeking to achieve a more balanced globalization process, starting with the fight against tax evasion, the taxation of tech multinationals and the introduction of a Financial Transaction Tax to limit the influence of international finance in the global economy;
- The EU should introduce more equal and progressive taxation to achieve more effective redistribution leading to real equality of opportunity, particularly to protect those more severely affected by global trends. This will mean increasing progressiveness within national tax systems and ensuring that multinational corporations pay what they should in every member state, but also generating new sources of revenue that should be collected at the EU (or at least the eurozone) level. Unanimity in tax issues should end.

Proposal

EU security policy must adapt to the growing importance of non-conventional threats, terrorism in particular. This requires:

- Furthering cooperation in areas such as policing, intelligence and justice;
- Strengthening the cyber-security capabilities of some member states and partners in Central and Eastern Europe;
- The best contribution CSDP can make in the context of the ongoing migration challenge and the threat of terrorism is to help

address their root causes, i.e. instability in the broader southern European neighbourhood;

- A profound renewal of the EU’s neighbourhood policies towards the East and the MENA region, as well as Sub-Saharan Africa, with new and better financed and managed instruments.

them. A clear instance of this is the persistent innovation gap that is creating sharp divisions between labour markets, separating them along national lines. The result is that broad sectors of the population perceive intra-EU mobility as a threat, rather than an opportunity.

In short, there is a growing concern that neither the EU nor its member states are doing enough to compensate those who have lost out from the globalisation process. As a result, the sense of ongoing economic progress and rising shared prosperity that once characterised the EU has been significantly eroded. An era of diminished expectations has arrived, and economic insecurity and anxiety about the future are generating a backlash against globalisation in general and the EU in particular. Unless urgent measures are taken to protect Europe’s middle and working classes, we will face growing populist, anti-European and even undemocratic attitudes that could threaten everything the EU is meant to stand for.

The Global Financial Crisis and its aftermath have proved that the eurozone is unsustainable without further fiscal integration. Since the Greek debt crisis (2010), the leaders of the eurozone have tried to address the structural flaws of EMU, but many economists remain sceptical about the Euro’s chances of surviving another crisis. The recent European economic slowdown (particularly in Germany and Italy), the possible adverse effects of a no-deal Brexit and the impact of the US-China trade war makes EMU reform even more necessary.

Financial history suggests that banking unions cannot work without fiscal unions, but in the case of Europe, the latter is so far nowhere to be seen. The foundations on which such a fiscal union would need to rest do not currently exist: distrust is now widespread, and debtor countries feel the costs

of the crisis need to be shared, while creditor countries are adamant in their refusal to mutualise past and future debt, insisting that this can happen only if there is central control of national budgets. Countries with fiscal surpluses mistrust the ability and/or willingness of debtor and deficit member states to reform, and the latter in turn believe that the euro mostly benefits one particular economic model, distant from their own. Naturally, policymakers in less prosperous states worry about divergence in per capita incomes, but policymakers in the richest states should be concerned as well. After all, economic convergence has always been at the very heart of the social contract in the EU. Increasing divergence may stimulate disaffection among those who feel they are being left behind but will also alienate those

Proposal

A travel tax + a new environmental tax + a financial transactions tax + further taxes associated with the activities of the internal market (all could be agreed upon with an enhanced cooperation procedure). Their benefits would be manifold:

- First, they would generate a sense of ownership. People paying the tax would like to see tangible benefits and hence would also engage more with EU affairs;
- Second, they would be the embryo of a fiscal backstop for the eurozone, and perhaps a larger budget for the EU at a later date;
- Third, they would require the creation of a eurozone committee within the European Parliament, which, deciding jointly with the Eurogroup, would ensure the efficient use of these funds.



ly to all member states, and in all situations. In part, the Brexit vote reflects this concern. Meanwhile, many citizens resent what they perceive as German dominance of the European project and are dismayed by the failure of other governments to provide alternative policies and leadership. In the long run, this may lead not only to growing confrontation, but also to disaffection with a European integration model that appears to benefit some member states more than others.

The unprecedented 2015 refugee crisis stoked anti-immigration sentiment in many member states, which has been exacerbated by socioeconomic, security and identity concerns. Perceived competition between locals and immigrants for scarce public re-

Proposal

In an era of increased geopolitical tensions and great power rivalry, the EU needs to develop its own strategic capabilities. This means it must:

- Push forward with the development of the European Defence Union initiated with PESCO and the European Defence Fund;
- Revise and update its strategic relations with the US, Russia and China;
- Improve coordination between its trade and foreign affairs policies: these are two sides of the same coin and need to work in unison;
- Seek closer cooperation between both administrative and epistemic communities: economics and finance experts should work closely with their foreign affairs and defence counterparts;
- Advance the internationalisation of the euro, which is a good example of how economic and commercial activities cannot be separated from geopolitical considerations.

sources and fears about national identity have fuelled xenophobic movements that are especially strong among the least qualified sectors of society, and the fear of future waves of unregistered asylum-seekers hailing from Muslim countries have only served to intensify apprehension. Furthermore, terrorist attacks in France, Belgium, Germany and Spain have connected these fears with antagonism towards Muslim communities. EU populations – particularly in the South – are declining and ageing, but not many of our citizens share the optimism of experts who see the arrival of immigrants as a demographic blessing. Additionally, the arrival of poorly qualified immigrants is aggravating the difficulties already faced by stressed welfare states. Nevertheless, the survival of the EU in the highly-competitive global trade arena – and the future of its pension systems – requires it to attract highly-qualified immigrants, especially since it is still losing home-grown talent to the United States and other countries.

The threat of jihadist terrorism and its impact on Europe and the neighbouring regions has brought to the fore the importance of internal and external security for EU states and their citizens. The major threats to Europe emanate from three areas: the South, the Middle East (due in part to failed Western policies in Iraq, Syria and Libya), and Russia, whose recent aggressive behaviour in the East poses a threat to the EU and causes very real concern in the member states closest to its borders. All three areas require a robust and effective Common Foreign and Defence Policy, a reinforcement of anti-terrorist cooperation, and a renewed approach to neighbouring regions, where aid and development policies have been found totally wanting.

The growing rivalry between China and the United States will largely dominate in-

Proposal

Finally, the EU needs to accommodate growing internal divergences and different views on its own development. This requires:

- An imaginative use of available solutions to accommodate diversity and pluralism, and the avoidance of dogmatic interpretation of rules and procedures, so as to prevent the emergence of monolithic conceptions of the Union;
- A shift to methods of constitution-making and governance that increase inclusiveness and minimise unilateralism;
- Reinforcing joint scrutiny of EU and national governance in areas such as corruption and the rule of law.

ternational relations during the next few decades. The trade and currency wars we are already experiencing could have dire consequences for the world economy, and the EU cannot afford to sit back and watch from the side-lines. As the largest trading bloc in the world, it must make its voice heard in defence of a more inclusive and effective rules-based international order, which will require it to adopt a more strategic (and geopolitical) approach to trade and currency issues.

Citizens are demanding better European (and not just EU) governance. This will require better national governance, and an improvement of the EU's ability to enforce the rule of law, administrate effectively, and contribute to the fight against corruption. Instead of 'more Europe', what Europe really needs is a more constructive balance between the national and EU levels (with strong and effective member states). ●

who feel they are being taken advantage of. Convergence, however, cannot happen without new investment, and this requires fresh money.

The Union has become more internally differentiated than ever before. Many constituencies in a variety of member states object to one-size-fits-all solutions that apply equal-

WIND TURBINE

CORNICE ROOF

TERRACE

AWNINGS

GLASS FAÇADE

WINDOWS DOORS

CONFIGURE

www.starckwithriko.com

P.A.T.H. IS A UNIQUE TURNKEY LIVING SOLUTION FOR ALL, OPENING NEW WAYS TOWARDS DIFFERENT FUTURE BY COMBINING HIGH TECHNOLOGY, COMFORT, TIMELESS DESIGN, AND RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT INTO A SINGLE SOLUTION.

path@starckwithriko.com | T: +386 1 5816 300

P.A.T.H.

BY **STARCK**® WITH **RIKO**®

Building the digital economy that benefits everyone

What is the biggest myth about the digital economy? Probably that all you need to do is to provide people and businesses with access to internet and that alone will ensure that economy grows.

/ By Josko Mrndze, Country Manager, Adriatics, Google

The promise of digital economy is that it can bring a new impulse for the development of industry and services, and make the daily lives of people across the world better. But while reliable, affordable and fast internet infrastructure is indispensable in today's interconnected world, digital economy requires much more - learning, strategic planning and, above all, wise investment in order to ensure that technology benefits everyone.

Now more than ever, Europe has a historic chance to bet on the winning horse and transform its economy in a way that uses its full potential. Central and Eastern European economies are particularly well-suited to benefit from that transformation. But this chance must not be taken for granted.

Making technology work for everyone

The internet has already created a huge amount of opportunity for people and businesses. It enabled all businesses to go global and it makes it easier for people to find the skills and platforms they need to start a new career. We at Google have also seen how new technologies like machine learning are bringing improvements to the way we live and work. Products like Google Translate help us communicate more easily. Businesses use our advertising products to sell their goods and services to customers located thousands of kilometers away. And the advancements of our cloud technologies help enterprises large and small to optimize their processes and improve productivity.

Nonetheless, before we consider what comes next for our countries, economies and individual lives, we must ask whether those benefits will be enjoyed by everyone or just a few?

According to the European Commission, in the next 10-15 years, 90% of all jobs will require at least some level of digital skills, which means that if nothing changes in the way we train people, we are heading towards a significant skills gap across the EU. It is estimated that 14% of jobs could be replaced by automation and another 32% are set to change radically. At the same time, many new jobs will be created by technology that weren't possible before, but that still does not mean we should overlook the priority task - we need to help retrain people and aid them in acquiring new skills necessary in the economy that becomes progressively more digital every day.

Providing access to skills to prepare people for the future of work and the impact of

AI is crucial. Yet we know that not everyone gets access to these same opportunities. Recent research published by the OECD tells us that people in jobs most at risk from automation, such as low-skilled workers, or often, women, do less training than those at low risk. The OECD suggests that this could be due to motivation to train but also a lack of support from their employer, or a lack of time or money.

That is why Google has been working for a few years now to deliver such opportunity in Europe. This drives our Grow with Google programmes: free training, products and tools designed to help people find a job, advance their career or grow their business, which has now trained 10 million people across Europe, the Middle East and Africa. In Central and Eastern Europe, in partnership with ministries and NGOs, we have trained nearly half a million citizens and have helped about 150,000 to grow their careers or businesses. We are also investing a further \$20 million by 2020 in those programs and trainings to help reach even more people in the region.

We feel a deep responsibility to get this right. As a result of our programmes, we have developed a few recommendations on how industry can work with governments, educators and others to tackle these challenges.

Firstly, digital skills must be included in policy discussions at all levels. Only then can governments, businesses and educators work together to remove some of the barriers that prevent people from accessing training.

Secondly, partnerships are crucial. No single stakeholder can work this out in isolation. We are partnering with organisations that can help us better reach those at risk. In many countries we partner with ministries responsible for economic, social or education portfolios. But we are most grateful for the joint work with organizations that help reach those who stand a lower chance of getting such training in the first place - for example women in rural areas or those with primary education.

Lastly, we need to develop new ideas and experiment. Industry needs to work with more diverse partners to help industrial work adapt to new challenges. Not everyone has the time or opportunity to access skills available so we need to go to them to make it possible.

The next engine of growth

Helping people to acquire skills needed in this new economic reality is an urgent task to complete. Once we jointly solve this challenge we can look optimistically at what comes next - a historic opportunity for our part of Europe to kick-start the next era of its economic growth and prosperity.

Let us take a step back and look at the economic success in Central and Eastern Europe to date. Unquestionably, it has already been impressive. Of the 12 EU members to grow by 3% or more in 2018, nine are CEE countries. These developments suggests that is time to change our perception of what is possible to achieve for Central and Eastern European countries.

In the digital economy - understood as the entirety of modern economy, not just a technological sector - the opportunity is tremendous. McKinsey & Co has recently published a comprehensive study showing that the potential of digitization in Central and Eastern Europe could exceed 200 billion euro in added GDP over the next few years. The authors of the study concluded that the CEE region is full of "Digital Challengers" - countries that have very strong fundamentals, even when compared to the largest European countries, including their robust education systems, great talent pool and modern infrastructure. That last point is of particular importance - CEE economies are simply less tied up with older technology and legacy industrial solutions. So while it may be more difficult for Digital Challengers to compete in the traditional economy, they enjoy a level playing field in the digital economy.

As the region's traditional growth engines loses momentum, digitization could be the next major strategic growth driver for the all of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe - and a competitive advantage versus other European and world economies.

However, in order to realize this potential, a number of steps need to be taken. On top of improving digital skills, the crucial element

is for governments, businesses and other institutions in the region to work together to achieve market scale, build joint solutions and advance the digital agenda. This cooperation is largely missing and needs to be fostered. Forums like the Three Seas Initiative on the intergovernmental level, and national-level organizations like the Digital Coalition of Slovenia or projects like the Digital Board Initiative, which I had the privilege to help establish in Croatia, are showing the way forward.

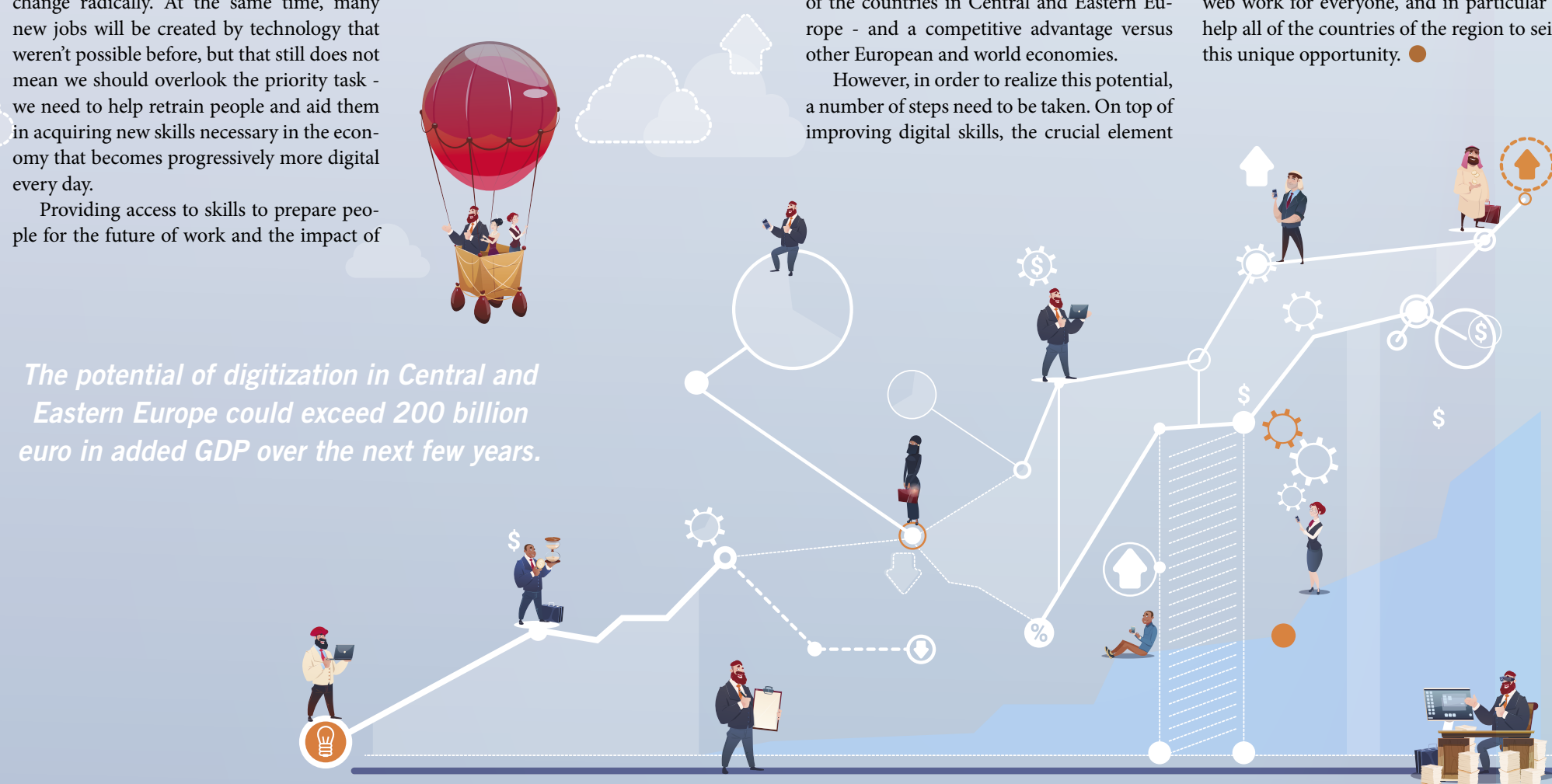
This needs to be followed by more granular actions - for example public and private sectors alike should improve their adoption of digital tools. Companies need to focus on using these tools to reach new customers and expand into regional and global markets. For new enterprises, this needs to be their default approach: in a digital economy their competition and clients are a click away and they face a global market immediately on the first day they are open for business. Fortunately, in the digital economy CEE countries are not playing catch-up with the rest of Europe. The talent, the infrastructure, the entrepreneurial ambition shows that we can also lead in many respects.

Seizing the opportunity

We at Google have always been fundamentally optimistic about the power of innovative technology everywhere - but we believe that the entire Central and Eastern Europe is particularly well-positioned to get ahead in the digital future. There is a vibrant digital ecosystem and growth in the region that we are proud to be a part of. We see it as our mission to help the success of as many companies to achieve regional and global success as possible.

We also realize that this shift can also bring uncertainty and challenges in terms of managing the transition. It calls on all companies across all sectors to work together with governments, academics and other stakeholders to ensure technology is serving the many, not just a few. It's our shared responsibility to help make technology and the web work for everyone, and in particular to help all of the countries of the region to seize this unique opportunity. ●

The potential of digitization in Central and Eastern Europe could exceed 200 billion euro in added GDP over the next few years.





Creating ‘virtuous cycles’

Sustainable quality & the climate change challenge in the coffee sector.

/ By Andrea Illy, Chairman, illycaffè

A cup of illy coffee is the culmination of a lengthy and complex process, reflecting a veritable obsession for absolute quality that started in 1933, when Francesco Illy chose Trieste to launch a business based on a dream: offering the greatest coffee to the world. This was the birth of illycaffè, which today manufactures and sells worldwide a unique, high-quality blend of coffee made of 9 varieties of Arabica beans from 9 different origins. Our mission is driven by a strong belief: sustainable quality begins at the very beginning of the chain, on the plant itself. This is why, over 30 years ago, my father Ernesto – the second entrepreneurial generation, pioneered the direct purchase model, which still represents illy business model today: selecting the very best Arabica beans all over the world; working hand-in-hand with the coffee growers, with whom we share our knowledge of the best agronomical practices through our University of Coffee, celebrating this year its 20th anniversary; rewarding them with a premium price for the sustainable quality; strengthening and consolidating our relationship with the producers through ‘the illy growers club’.

In fact, illycaffè’s sustainable business model aims at being ethical in the deepest sense of the term, but also a competitive advantage as it integrates revenue and business goals with environmental and social aspects. illy’s guiding principle in business is to create value for all stakeholders along the value chain and pursue sustainability through shared value (economic sustainability), personal growth (social sustainability), and respect for the ecosystem (environmental sustainability).

illy whole supply chain is certified, since 2011, by DNV-GL’s Responsible Supply Chain Process certification, which audits the process against over 60 KPI’s at all the chain’s levels, while the illy commitment to sustainability is reported every year in our Value Report, published online.

Fortunately, this model has influenced the whole coffee world since several years, and we can say that today – thanks to the rise of ‘specialty coffee’, the increase of coffee good reputation also in terms of health benefits and the consequent consumption growth – coffee’s sustainability has broadly increased,

even if a lot of work still has to be done. But today we are facing a true emergency, which of course is not limited to coffee and not even to agriculture, but to our own survival on earth: climate change. We observed that over the past two decades, coffee agriculture has been highly impacted by climate change, both in terms of quality and productivity. This is supported by different studies, among which is the one conducted in 2015 by Pro-

Today we are facing a true emergency, which of course is not limited to coffee and not even to agriculture, but to our own survival on earth: climate change.

fessor Jeffrey Sachs at Columbia University’s Earth Institute. To define how massive and critical this impact could be on the world coffee communities, we should consider that coffee beans are grown in more than 60 Countries by 25 million families worldwide, for most of which coffee is the only way to make a living.

The situation is expected to get worse, as the relation between global warming and environmental impact is complex and not linear: a combination of effects, resulting from higher temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns, will halve the land suitable for coffee production. The current coffee consumption, estimated in 161 million bags in 2018, is growing at an average of 2% thanks to the global economic development, and potential increase of per capita consumption in producing and emerging Countries.

Coffee production is very concentrated – Brazil and Vietnam alone provide more than 50% of the whole production. Total production of all other Countries is relatively flat. According to the last analysis, Brazil is one of the regions with the highest climate risk, but also with the largest agricultural land and investment capacity. Vietnam is a near-new coffee producing Country and it can be expected to potentially continue growing. All other origins are either relatively small in terms of agricultural land or significantly impacted by climate change and limited in their investment capacity. The estimation of the maximum production would be about 240 million bags around 2040.

As climate conditions become critical,

also the livelihoods of millions of farmers are at risk. With climate change, pest management and disease control are serious issues for farmers and their crops. Without investments in adaptation to climate change, they will be forced to migrate to regions where temperatures are adequate for survival, but most farmers won’t be ready or ever capable to do so. Many will simply choose to grow other crops - less vulnerable to climate change. Others may attempt to increase their coffee production, but the quality will almost certainly be compromised. Investment need to be made in countries where – together with market volatility and low levels of socio-economic development - access to subsidized finance is extremely difficult or almost impossible. These investments should be made by the growers themselves to finance agricultural projects applying new agronomical practices, developing new resistant varieties and planting new production areas.

Such an endeavor requires a public/private multi-stakeholder collaboration along the whole value chain. In the past two years, together with the Swiss Coffee Trading Association and a group of stakeholders including institutions, private sector and NGOs, we worked on a financial model which would provide the coffee growers with collaterals in order to allow them to do the necessary investment in their own plantations to face the climate change challenge.

illy’s has a consolidated experience in public-private partnership: we have collaborated with UNIDO in Ethiopia since 2015 and more recently in Mozambique, conducted educational programs in Colombia with SENA and cooperated with the Agency for the Reintegration of the former FARC guerrilla fighters in the coffee growing system. These partnerships are proof that this kind of collaboration can generate a virtuous circle, aimed to develop and support a sustainable coffee value chain also in these troubled areas.

While advancing these new model proposals for the coffee sector, we are now focusing our research to the first and main emergency that needs to be addressed if we want to survive on this planet: decarbonization.

The idea of a ‘virtuous agriculture’, developed with the contribution of academic and institutional experts, consists in a proposal for a soil-to-soil carbon cycle and started from the awareness that within the next 30 years the global economy must become carbon-negative. Failure to do so will have unimaginable catastrophic consequences to any form of life - including humans - on Earth. Agriculture must do its fair share: paradigm shifts are required in order firstly to adapt to climate change and secondly - being responsible for 25% of greenhouse gases (GHC) emissions - to mitigate it.

With a capacity over 3 times that of the atmosphere, soil is the second largest carbon sink after oceans. Enriching agricultural soil with organic carbon (SOC) represents an effective way to sequester GHG and increase soil quality and resilience, while also indirectly enhancing biodiversity, fertility and water retention. In several cases, high content of SOC can reduce dependence on agrochemicals.

To scale these environmentally beneficial practices, strong engagement of the two main stakeholders - growers and consumers - is necessary. Growers need a business model that is more rewarding than conventional agriculture, whose decreasing return is due to commoditization, leveling off yields, surging adaptation costs to climate change and increasing product liabilities caused by agrochemical residues. The new business model would contribute to meet several SDGs. As consumer preferences are driven by taste, health, price, convenience, with sustainability as their last priority, our main consumer-directed action is to link agronomical practices to food healthiness. Our objective is to demonstrate the positive contribution of coffee and its specific components (essential nutrients, polyphenols and other phytochemicals) showing how advanced agriculture (e.g. sustainable, environmentally protective, biofortified one) can not only decrease dangerous food components, but also increase those that are protective for health.

In short, it is a virtuous cycle driven by positive feedback and mutual reinforcement between each co-benefit demonstrating that taking care of the land means taking care of ourselves, contributing to meet the 1,5°C or well below 2°C Paris Agreement target, besides the above mentioned SDGs. ●

Are we really ready to risk our own future?

Circular Economy for sustainable economy and society

/ By Dr. Janez Potočnik, Co-Chair UN International Resource Panel, Partner SYSTEMIQ

While the population in the **20th Century** grew by a factor of 3.7 the total material extraction grew by a factor of 8 and GHG emissions grew by a factor of 13. Some of the planetary boundaries have already been breached.

Looking to the reality of the **21st Century** one can see that few people own the same as the poorest half of the world and the richest 1 % is wealthier than the rest of the world. Nearly 800 million people are hungry, over 2 billion suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, while over 2 billion people are obese. China has in just three years (2011/13) used more cement than United States during the whole 20th century and more than half of the cities estimated to exist by mid-century are yet to be built. We throw away one third of the food we produce.

Climate scientists gave us twelve years on the clock to halve the CO₂ emissions to stay inside temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius. According to the Living Planet Index we have lost 60% of our biodiversity in the last 40 years. It is estimated that globally 7 million people die prematurely due to air pollution. A million of plastic bottles are bought every minute, only 9% of plastic is recycled, 12% incinerated, 79% ends in landfills or environment. According to the latest research an average person consumes 130,000 plastic particles per year if drinking only bottled water from that source alone, compared to 4,000 if drinking only from the tap. We are the first generation more likely to die as a result of lifestyle choices than infectious diseases. In addition one can hardly see the limits of digitalisation potential and imagine the kind of the world artificial intelligence will lead us to.

Our socio-economic model and **our existence** are obviously **seriously challenged**. This was nicely summarised by a well-known Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek who said: “It is clear that we are approaching the ecological and digital apocalypse ... but we should not lose our nerves.” He added a famous quote from Mao Zedong: “Everything under heaven is in utter chaos; the situation is excellent.” In essence, the challenge is huge and urgent, but we also have unprecedented possibilities.

For the first time in a human history we face the emergence of a single, tightly coupled human **social-ecological system of planetary scope**. We are more interconnected and interdependent than ever and our individual and collective responsibility for our future has enormously increased.

The **agreement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** was the first important success in providing us with a logical and shared answer to the challenges we have created. By calling for integrated action on all three dimensions of sustainability SDGs recognise the deep systemic changes needed. As Steven Lang summed up in his recent article Existential Threat: Great Collapse or Great Correction: “We have a unifying template for a better world. The 2030 Global Goals provide a powerful focal point to strive for the world we need to create. Officially adopted by 193 countries, they provide humanity’s

ultimate scorecard. One to which we must now hold ourselves accountable. Certainly, one that future generations will judge us against. In this we have a clear North Star and there can be no excuses for not finding all means necessary to deliver them.”

It is not so difficult to argue and agree that most of the above listed challenges as well as solutions can be attributed to the increasing **economic activity of the growing human population**, which on one hand resulted in a remarkable development of parts of the population, but on the other hand also in an unjust distribution of wealth, inequalities, health and environmental pressures and impacts. In short, it resulted in social, economic and environmental imbalances. Human capital, for example healthy citizens, is in many cases undervalued and natural capital, such as healthy ecosystems, not valued at all. Since ‘the market’ is the main mechanism guiding our production and consumption decisions, and price signals are as they are, we should not be surprised by existing imbalances at all. They are just the logical consequence of the market signals sent by the central institutions and in a way a proof that markets work. In economic theory, this phenomenon is known as **externalities**. Costs which do exist, but which we deny, which we do not account for, and which producers and consumers do not pay for. These costs are very real, however, for those who pay them: the health system or, in the majority of cases, the next generation. Luckily enough for the current generation, the next generation cannot complain. In short, we live within an economic model, where to a large extent profits are privatised – often by a few privileged, and costs are socialised. We are environmentally and also socially indebted to future generations.

We all participate as economic actors in this globalised economy and we are all a part of the problem and a part of the solution. One of the conclusions of the UN International Resource Panel, which I am Co-Chairing, is that the “Trade-offs among various SDGs are unavoidable and **Sustainable Consumption and Production** is the most efficient strategy to mitigate them and

For the first time in a human history we face the emergence of a single, tightly coupled human social-ecological system of planetary scope.

create synergies to resolve the development and environmental challenges articulated in the SDGs.” The change of the existing economic model to a more just and sustainable one (economically, socially and environmentally) is essential if we are serious about our mission to deliver the SDGs.

To summarise, we should aim to redefine and reorganise our economic model to be consistent with the SDGs. This is an enormous challenge, in particular if social considerations are also taken into account, but it would also clearly provide us with new economic opportunities and jobs. Our economic model has been created and is maintained by governments, international organizations,

... as well as education particularly in universities. The model has been created with good intentions and it is complex to change it, because by now it is perceived as almost ‘natural’ – however, humans have created it and humans can, and have to change it. Natural resource use and its impacts could provide the essential lens and a guiding framework for this change to ensure true sustainability with minimal trade-offs between SDGs. This argument is underpinned by the following key insights.

Resources and resource management have so far been largely the missing link in policy making. The delivery of 12 out of 17 SDGs is directly linked to resources. Let me substantiate the importance of adequate resource management with some of the core findings of the latest IRP **Global Resource Outlook (GRO) 2019**, presented just few month ago.

Global resource use (biomass, fossil fuels, metals, non-metallic minerals, land and water) has more than tripled since 1970 and global material demand per capita grew from 7.4 tons in 1970 to 12.2 tons per capita in 2017, which means that an important part of the increased demand could be linked to higher economic activity. **Material productivity**, the efficiency of the use of resources, was growing till the end of the century and then started to decline and has stagnated in the recent years. Even if material productivity was growing in all countries during that period, it was declining on the global level.

How could that be possible? It can be attributed to the structural shift of production from countries that are more resource efficient to countries that are less resource efficient. To put it differently, more products we are buying today compared to few decades ago, are produced in Indonesia, China, India ... and less in countries like Japan or Europe.

Consumption of materials is unequally distributed. If measured by **Domestic Material Consumption** per capita - all materials domestic or imported directly used on the territory - upper-middle income countries, are already the highest consumers. The key drivers are the huge material requirements, in particular of non-metallic minerals, in fast developing countries, like China, needed for new infrastructure and cities. If measured by per capita **Material Footprint** – taking into account where products are actually consumed - high-income countries, including EU countries, are still consuming 60% more than the upper-middle-income countries and 13 times the level of the low-income countries. The reason for that is outsourcing of material and resource intensive production, including all connected direct environmental pressures, from high-income countries to other parts of the world.

One of the conclusions following the previous IRP work is also that: “In the mid-term, except in specific cases, resource shortage will not be the core limiting factor of our economic development. The **core limiting factors** are, and will be even more in the future, environmental and health consequences caused by this excessive and irresponsible





use of resources.” It is not the shortage of oil that brought together the national leaders in Paris to agree about necessary, even if insufficient, steps to address climate change. It was not the shortage of steel or any other material, which few years ago forced the Chinese government to close around 2000 companies around Beijing, but the polluted air in Beijing, to which these companies have contributed with their activities.

GRO 2019 also includes the analyses of **environmental impacts** in the value chain related to resource extraction and processing phase. 90% of global land-use related biodiversity loss and water stress can be explained by resource extraction and processing. Over 80% of both is linked to biomass, majority to agricultural activity. There is no solution of land-use related biodiversity loss and water stress without transformation of the agriculture, and broader food systems, to a more sustainable one. Also, half of global climate change impacts can be attributed to resource extraction and processing and one third of the air pollution related health impacts. Meaning, since the consumption phase is not included in analyses, if one would buy a new car and not drive it at all, one would already create one third of the air pollution due to extraction of the resources needed for the car and the car production itself.

Resource use and management are the **linking elements behind the major problems and solutions** of all major environmental and health challenges. They are the bridge between drivers and pressures caused by human activity (economy) and the states

and impacts visible in dangerously changing climate, biodiversity loss and various kinds of pollution. It is thus essential to decouple the growth of human wellbeing and economy from the use of resources and from environmental pressures and impacts. The analyses done by Material Economics showed that a more circular economy approach is an **essential ingredient in the efficient fight against climate change**. Switching from a linear to a circular economy could reduce EU CO₂ emissions from materials (steel, plastics, aluminium, cement) by 56% comparing to the base line, which already includes the applied energy related measures. The shift to shared mobility has a potential to reduce CO₂ impacts of materials for 70% compared to the current under-utilised private car ownership reality. This theoretical concept is called **de-coupling** and it is the essential ingredient for reorganising economic activity into a more sustainable model.

Circular economy should be understood as an instrument to deliver decoupling and as a part of the bigger picture of economic, societal and cultural transformation needed to deliver the SDGs. The European Union has already recognised the importance of the circular economy concept for future sustainability as well as for future European competitiveness. But it would be essential that the concept is accepted and developed also on a global level. This is necessary due to the challenges we are facing together as humanity, as well as due to the fact that the econo-

It is thus essential to decouple the growth of human wellbeing and economy from the use of resources and from environmental pressures and impacts.

my is globalised and the rules governing the transition to the new economic model would need to be aligned transnationally.

The introduction of resource efficiency as a flagship concept into the **European Union** economic strategy (“Europe 2020”), which I have proposed in 2010, and later the adoption of the Circular Economy Package in July 2014, were long-sighted starting points to provide a conducive framework for investments in the strategic transition: to break some of the lock-ins. They were not so much a spontaneous policy choice but a response to the inevitable consequences of changes in Europe’s relative comparative advantage, driven by globalisation and global resource pressures.

One of the conclusions of the World Economic Forum 2018 was that: “the challenge seems to not be one of inadequate scientific evidence anymore; rather one of cooperation and implementation. The complexity and scale of these challenges requires a space that allows actors with responsibility for environmental **governance mechanisms** to be able to experiment with both new forms of collaboration and more „systemic“ approaches ... through promoting multi stakeholder cooperation, more agile governance (including sub-state actors, such as cities, states and provinces), the use of new technologies, and enhanced accountability and transparency.”

The fact that we are for the first time living in the socio-ecological system of planetary scope, demands a **redefinition of sovereignty** and new ways and levels of (global) cooperation. Using the “circularity” language, we would need more sharing and less owning of sovereignty. Unfortunately, some of current trends like Brexit, or “America First”, are going in just the opposite direction, which is tragic and also worrying. The best example of sharing sovereignty, and thereby strengthening national ability to cope with the most challenging problems, is the European Union. Some decades ago, Europe was faced with a major challenge to restore peace and stability on our continent to avoid conflicts and wars in the future. Despite many challenges the EU still faces today and new ones that are emerging, the project proved to

We are environmentally and also socially indebtting future generations.

be really visionary and essential for a European future. The world is nowadays facing a similar challenge as Europe did decades ago. The alternative of not cooperating more while dealing with the complex global reality we face, could easily lead to more instability, more conflicts and wars. Europe is thus in an ideal position to understand the challenge ahead, and also credible enough to lead the process of addressing this challenge more effectively. As my knowledgeable colleague from the Prodi’s Commission Pascal Lamy wisely put it while presenting the strategic analyses of the future challenges: “Europe is not only blue with yellow stars. It is a rainbow - blue for freedom and democracy, red

for the importance of social values, green for the protection of environment and yellow for the essential role of culture. We can hardly picture Europe as the centre of the World, but we should do everything to ensure that Europe remains the center of the dreams of all the people of the World.”

There is no doubt that the responsibility for the implementation of the SDGs lies to a large extent in the **developed countries** and thus also in the European Union. We need to show we are willing and able to change our current model of production and consumption, address our high environmental footprint and move to a more sustainable economic and social model. We are, to a large extent, still mastering scientific knowledge and technological development and we should help developing countries avoid repeating some of the development mistakes we made and help them leapfrog to the true sustainability trajectory.

Why are the changes to a more sustainable economy and society so difficult in practice? I see three essential reasons:

First: While the challenges we face require a deep systemic change and long-term rethinking of the way how we govern our societies. Political cycles, public and financial institutions, to a large extent also private companies, have inbuilt **short-term focus and logic**. This inconsistency limits our ability for efficient and strategic action and needs to be addressed urgently.

Second: Production and consumption systems are based on the **logic of consumerism fuelled by quantity-driven profits and growth measured in GDP**. GDP could be best explained by saying, that one will not reach the goal by walking faster, if one is walking in the wrong direction! We have to fix a broken compass! There is a lack of strategic identification of risks and long-term, even mid-term, risk management and there is a clear lack of understanding what really matters for our wellbeing in all institutions focusing on GDP.

Third: A transition to a more sustainable economy and society will only be possible if it is **just, fair and inclusive**. We have to make our societies more equitable and do more in the fight against poverty. Social unrest is growing even in high-income countries and it is high time to hear the echo of the streets and the voice of a frustrated young generation.

To conclude. The transition to a more sustainable economy and society is unavoidable.

However, what is still missing, particularly among policy-makers, is the understanding of the urgency. It is absolutely urgent to join our forces and change sources of instability to (re)sources of stability, as the BSF 2019 is calling for. And if you are still wondering if that makes sense, please listen to the advice of prof. Guy McPherson: “If you think the economy is more important than the environment (I would also add ... and health), try holding your breath while counting your money”. ●

Gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean:

Milestones on the path towards women empowerment in the region

/ By Nasser Kamel, Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

The present article is based on the findings of the UfM Progress Report on gender equality endorsed by the UfM Ministers during the Ministerial meeting on Strengthening the role of women in society held in November 2017 in Cairo (Egypt).

Despite numerous international agreements affirming their basic rights, and universal recognition of their key role in society, poverty and illiteracy rates remain higher among women than men. Women are also more likely to be victims of domestic violence. Their access to economic opportunities, credit, training and employment is still limited. Moreover, they are less likely to be actively engaged in politics or obtain leadership positions.

Progress toward achieving gender parity worldwide is being made, but it remains slow according to the World Economic Forum's recent Global Gender Gap report (2018), which finds that only 15 countries will close their gender gap within the next half century. The biggest gaps to close are in the economic and political empowerment dimensions, which will take 202 and 107 years to close, respectively. The same conclusion was confirmed by the first SDG Gender Index¹ (2019), which finds that, across the 129 countries studied, no country has fully achieved the promise of gender equality envisioned in the ambitious 2030 Agenda.

What about women in the Union for the Mediterranean countries?

Progress has taken place in the UfM Member States in relation to women and girls' rights, and overall, gender equality matters have gained significant momentum. At institutional and political levels, all UfM countries expressed their commitments to gender equality within their constitutional, legislative, and international obligations such as laws, commitments to the Committee on

the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and constitutional assertions of equality between men and women.

Countries have introduced public bodies and departments at different levels of government structures that address gender issues and have made national strategic commitments. In addition, further positive actions have been undertaken at the level of parties, parliaments and local bodies to increase participation of women in political life, including the introduction of quota systems.

Legislative and regulatory measures have also been introduced in most countries to eradicate illiteracy and improve educational and training infrastructure, prevent gender-based discrimination, and facilitate the empowerment of women in education. Many States have reached or are close to reaching enrolment equality in primary education, and an increasing number of women

The biggest gaps to close are in the economic and political empowerment dimensions, which will take 202 and 107 years to close, respectively.

are completing university studies, often in higher proportions than men.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in labor legislations of Member States. Legal amendments have been adopted regarding equal wages and maternity leaves. Some countries have also opted for making their financial systems more gender-responsive. Furthermore, countries have increasingly undertaken gender analysis of their strategies, policies and laws.

In spite of those measures, the region continues facing considerable challenges regarding the achievement of gender equality, and a clear gap perseveres between legislative efforts and implementation. The prevalence of some discriminatory practices, the persistence of an archaic view on the role of women, and unequal access to services and resources continue to block the progress and

potential of women, who remain vulnerable to stereotypes. This, in turn, affects both their own decision-making process, as well as the support and opportunities available to them.

Women's participation in public life is an area where significant positive changes have occurred. However, even in countries with higher women representation in Parliament, such participation remains at 30% or less in most UfM countries. Female representation in senior positions in Government structures, advisory bodies, local authorities, and the judiciary remains limited. Quotas have been adopted by many countries, but they remain a contested issue with occasional preference for voluntary targets.

Women's economic empowerment is a domain where all countries are strongly committed. However, women experience grater obstacles than men when it comes to accessing both business and employment. For most countries, women are still underrepresented in top corporate jobs and on boards. Although some countries have introduced quotas and other measures

such as Corporate Governance Codes and public targeting setting, they have not been fully embraced. And even when women are participating in the labor market, their roles continue to be more limited than those of men, despite higher levels of enrollment and completion in higher education among women.

Violence Against Women and girls ('VAWG') continues to be a major concern in both Northern and Southern Mediterranean UfM countries. In Europe, it was estimated that 13 million women had experienced physical violence in the course of 2014. In Southern Mediterranean Countries, reliable data regarding the extent of VAWG are not available, but research studies and surveys show the gravity of such problem. One of the main challenges which are undermining progress towards eliminating VAWG in the

Euro-Mediterranean region in general, is the context of both conflict and austerity. A number of UfM countries are affected by at least one of the following challenges: armed conflict, political unrest, terrorism, influx of refugees, or political transition.

Several reports have recounted the cases of women who have been brutally killed, or abused and turned into slaves in conflict zones by radical groups. Displacement, also, significantly increases women's risk of being subjected to all forms of violence. The majority of cases of violence perpetrated against displaced women go unreported. Women in the northern UfM countries have been subjected to other forms of vulnerability because of the economic crisis. Policies of spending cuts and reductions in social services are undermining efforts to tackle gender violence in Europe. Austerity measures adopted by countries have led to the deterioration of social provisions: cuts to police and the criminal justice system, cuts to charities working on domestic violence that are funded by local government.

Gender equality in the region is also being challenged by ongoing political transitions, conflicts and the continued impact of the financial crisis. Political transitions in some countries have led to major constitutional changes, while other countries have engaged in a more progressive transformation, which, in some cases, distracted efforts from addressing issues such as gender-related reforms. Furthermore, regional conflicts and post-conflict situations have resulted in a large number of victims and weigh heavily on several countries, making it difficult to lay the foundations for the advancement of women empowerment objectives.

Better implementation, more impact measurement and reliable gender data collection systems

A strong legislative framework and scrutiny in relation to gender equality is essential for challenging stereotypes and advancing women's participation. In this regard, the key to fostering change will therefore be the

adequate implementation of these legal and regulatory frameworks. In the UfM region, the positive developments and policies undertaken by countries, contrast with a reality in which discrimination against women and girls persists at all levels of society. Therefore, the most identified pressing issues is the effective implementation of these strategies and their enforcement. Adopted measures and legal provisions have not led necessarily to an increase in women's access to economic resources and participation in decision-making and the impact of legal and institutional safeguards to protect women and girls from violence is slow to materialize.

The other structural issue is the insufficient gender mainstreaming in governance tools, policies and practices. While it is important to adopt laws that explicitly provide for gender equality, it is also essential to ensure that all laws and policies reflect gender equality considerations and are implemented in the right way to avoid different treatment and/or discrimination. While gender mainstreaming is increasingly evident across the UfM region, most policymaking processes across the region do not have a process for integrating gender considerations in a systemic manner. The biggest identified challenges in this regard are: the lack of resources, the lack of capacity/skills to implement an overall “whole of government” approach to gender mainstreaming, limited accountability, lack of monitoring mechanisms across public services, and the increased administrative complexities, especially with regards to gender impact assessments and gender-sensitive budgeting.

It is recommended to develop monitoring mechanisms backed-up with concrete indicators and gender data collection systems that will help to monitor changes and to better understand the impact of policies and the root causes of discrimination. Integrating gender mainstreaming in an effective way in all the policies is also needed in ad-

dition to providing institutional mechanisms with substantial budgets for mainstreaming and providing training for policy makers. And last, it would be relevant to evaluate the impact of quotas and encouraging the use of legally binding quotas at least on temporary basis with penalties in case of noncompliance. In the absence of quotas, it is recommended to implement a system of voluntary codes and targets alongside transparency and publishing progress towards these goals.

The UFM framework to promote gender equality and women empowerment

Promoting gender equality and the role of women is one of the main priorities of the UfM. This priority was confirmed by the Cairo UfM Ministerial Declaration and the UfM Roadmap for Action where the 43 Ministers have committed to take the necessary measures and policies to ensure the equal participation of women and girls, in economic, social and political life.

- Four priority areas have been identified by countries:
1. Increase women's economic participation by fostering their labor skills and promoting an equal access to the labor market and by creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.
 2. Strengthening women access to leadership positions in public and private sector.
 3. Combating violence against women and girls including in conflict and post-conflict contexts.
 4. Combating gender stereotypes and fighting against social norms that hinder the full participation of women.

Ministers recommend to give a particular attention to women and girls in specific con-

texts: women migrants and refugees, women in conflict and post-conflict context, women in rural areas and women with disability. An attention is also being given to the development of knowledge, research and data production on gender equality and women empowerment in the Mediterranean region. The UfM Strategy on Women has been progressively built and structured since 2013 in coordination with countries and stakeholders operating in the region, including local authorities, international organizations, donors, civil society and the private sector. The strategy is implemented through an integrated approach articulated around 3 dimensions that constitute the UfM Meth-

Female representation in senior positions in Government structures, advisory bodies, local authorities, and the judiciary remains limited.

odology of Work and that acknowledge the key importance of expanding and reinforcing cooperation, collective efforts and complementarities toward advancing the gender equality at the regional level. These three levels are as follow:

Establishing a regional policy framework for women's empowerment, through the UfM Ministerial process on Strengthening the Role of women in Society, which currently include 4 Ministerial meetings held respectively in 2006 in Istanbul, 2009 in Marrakech, 2013 in Paris and 2017 in Cairo.

Providing a regional multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue, launched in May 2015, which involves UfM governments, regional and international stakeholders and civil society organisations. The objective is to develop a multi-stakeholder framework for Dialogue and Technical Cooperation on gender equality and women empowerment in region, to monitor stakeholders' commit-

ments and to facilitate the exchange of best practices and partnership opportunities. Under this framework, the UfM is currently working to establish a regional gender follow-up mechanism that will be backed-up with indicators to monitor progress, assess the gap and provide recommendations to policy makers to advance the gender equality agenda in the region with participation of national statistic institutions and research centers.

Supporting concrete regional initiatives which effectively contribute to the enhancement of women's empowerment through the equal access to leadership and decision-making positions, to education and vocational training, to health, to labour market and to entrepreneurship. In addition, the UfM promotes also a crosscutting approach to mainstream gender equality within all activities and initiatives.

And while the UfM has been successful in many endeavors to develop an ambitious regional Woman's Agenda and lay the ground for gender equality in the Mediterranean, further efforts still need to be undertaken. The path towards gender equality in our region remains long and arduous and requires further exertions to foster gender equality in a manner that corresponds to the ambitions of Mediterranean peoples and governments. As such, the UfM Secretariat will continue to work with its Member States, international organizations, civil society, and international financial institutions towards unleashing the full potential of women in the EuroMediterranean region. ●

Endnotes
1 https://data.em2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/EM2030_2019_Global_Report_ENG.pdf

THE NEW TOYOTA CAMRY HYBRID





ALWAYS A BETTER WAY



Lead by example.

The new Camry Hybrid has it all. It combines all the advantages of a sophisticated sedan with all the benefits of a Toyota Hybrid. The result is a car that offers stunning looks, sophisticated comfort and a wealth of intuitive technology, while also delivering a rewarding driving experience that takes hybrid to a new level.

10 YEARS WARRANTY ON HYBRID BATTERY



Fuel consumption: combined cycle (l/100 km) 5.3-5.6, CO₂ emissions: combined cycle (g/km) 120-127 TOYOTA.SI

A world of rules or a world of power

The European Union and the geopolitics of big powers

/ By Iztok Mirošič, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

Classical geopolitics – between multilateralism and multicentrism

Change will be **significant**. We are entering a new geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological world order. A new global competitive environment has emerged, in which the centuries-long Western influence is faltering. Today, the influence is **shifting** to the East. The old rules are falling apart; new ones have not yet been established. The world disorder is characterised by a new race of the big powers. It is a struggle between democracy and autocracy, accompanied, above all, by pressure on the rule-based world order. The geopolitical equilibrium is being created anew. The balance is shifting from multilateralism, founded upon global liberal political and economic order, towards multipolarity or multicentrism, where the role of international institutions, organisations and international law is fading. The international community is being fragmented into several competing centres or poles of global power and hegemony. However, the multipolar world is in fact shrinking and regressing into a bipolarity of a new type. It is more and more obvious that the true future geopolitical competition will boil down to the economic race between the US and China, engaged in a new technological cold war. Europe and the EU are dangerously lagging behind.

Multipolarity – or multicentrism – brings about the re-establishment of dangerous concepts, such as the spheres of interest or influence of big international players, variable alliances, instability, and war. As a result, Europe/the EU remains a staunch supporter of multilateral cooperation. The incoming European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen has explicitly confirmed multilateralism and the “rule-based world order” as the only genuine “European path”.

Mutation of geopolitics in the 21st century

There is no doubt that alternative political and economic models appear and gain ground around the globe, posing a serious challenge to the Western liberal-democratic model. The global battle takes place between three systems: the liberal-democratic model based on free trade, state capitalism, and cyber-libertarianism. In a time of new technologies and globalisation, the European “state of welfare, solidarity, democracy and the rule of law” is drifting towards a middle-class crisis and, consequently, its very foundations are under threat. The world is getting less free. Since 2005, democracies have been on a decline. According to some, the liberal-democratic states simply cannot take decisions quickly enough to keep up with new technologies. Authoritarian, non-liberal systems (e.g. Russia, China) are able to take decisions more rapidly and exploit technological developments more effectively. Through economic, energy and political projects, they aim to increase their influence over the countries of Western, liberal democracy, seeing in the latter’s value system a threat to their existence. By creating divisions within the EU, they wish to gain influence and geopolitical advantage. They exploit and export digital technological **innovations** in order to **support** autocratic **politics worldwide**.

New concepts, such as global de-territorialisation of corporate **management** and the ensuing tax-dumping competition between states, cause additional indebtedness

of national states, increased public debt and budget deficit. This, in turn, leads to less political and democratic sovereignty of states, peoples and citizens, and results in populisms and sovereignisms that oppose, among others, the **international integrations**, as in the case of the EU. “Geo-economics” is always also about geopolitics.

The most important mutation of the modern power and, hence, geopolitics, is caused by the fast and smart technological and cyber advances, artificial-intelligence, robotics, the introduction of new digital currencies (e.g. Libra), virtual social networks, the Internet of things, and big-data. Entirely new forms of global competition and hegemony are emerging, predominantly digital. Connectivity represents a key element of new geopolitics and the source of political power and global ambition. The construction of reality is mutating with evident political, economic and social impact. With ever increasing speeds, the future is getting more complex, harder to grasp and less manageable. 5G will boost up the speed and increase the impact of everything, rendering the future even more difficult to manage.

The revolutionary advances in artificial intelligence, autonomous mobility and digital **supervising** systems will constitute the foundation of future (state and non-state) power. Already at present, one can observe technological developments that change the relations between the liberal Western world and the autocratic powers and cause new divisions, such as the global internet divide between the West (state regulated private enterprises in the US, Europe and Japan) and the East (state controlled internet in China or Russia). A possible solution in the interest of the democratic West, founded on common values, would be the adoption of a “digital free trade agreement”, which would set a global standard, potentially appealing also to China. In this way, the world could avoid a global digital divide and revive multilateralism. Today, geo-data represent the hottest element of geopolitics. Europe should seek data and digital sovereignty by developing its own new-generation digital network system.

A big problem in the contemporary world of new technologies is a Wild West of non-regulated new types of digital interaction and conflicts. A multilateral framework with agreed rules and digital ethics is not operational. The United Nations is **obviously** incapable of adopting anything of the kind. What is prevailing is the geopolitics of technological giants.

If, in the 19th century, geopolitics was related to the establishment of modern states, nowadays, the advanced technologies radically impact upon the state, the world and geopolitics. Digital platforms are prone to become the new Westphalian states. In relation to Big Tech, a democratic, liberal state is powerless. Aiming at profit maximisation, the former prefer collaborating with authoritarian powers. In the future, the power of a state will be determined with regard to non-state actors (private megacorporations) or depending on the quality and quantity of bilateral and multilateral relations of a state, i.e. on its capacity to become a global hub for inter-entity connections.

It seems that new technologies affect the emerging (geopolitical) balance between the Western democracies – deemed decadent,

unpopular and on the wane (President Putin) – and the rising autocracies. Consequently, the oligarchic technological oligopolies operate in a dubious manner – as if exempt from all democratic norms and the rule of law. Beyond any legitimacy, they create worlds parallel to those of states. With the introduction of parallel digital/crypto currencies, the (liberal democratic) state and the existing multilateral economic and financial international institutions may become obsolete. The development of revolutionary technologies and artificial intelligence is predominantly led by private, non-state actors, which implement the geopolitics of digital technological platforms. All this results in a mutating, even chaotic reality and geopolitical disorder.

In fact, such circumstances increasingly call for multilateral global action and the adoption of rules for a new high-tech world. Yet, it is precisely “terrestrial geopolitics” that, nowadays, pushes big powers to extend their conquest beyond Earth orbit. Space is becoming a new element of geopolitics. The new space race will require new norms and a new rule of law, as well as new control of arms and exploitation of resources. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty defines outer space as a province of all humankind that is not subject to any appropriation by claim of sovereignty. Nevertheless, such a general international law provision is interpreted by some as allowing new (private) players to freely establish their entities in space. Indeed, economic activity in space remains non-regulated. This, however, increases the possibility of perilous use of force beyond Earth or from space towards Earth. The US, France, Russia, China and India have already established special space military forces and commands. It is rather evident that already today the management of, and any activity in, space would require a systemic and multilateral regulation.

New geopolitical challenges ahead of the EU

In the next decade, the rapid mutation of geopolitics and ensuing shifts in world power will undoubtedly affect the global positioning of the European Union and its functioning in future multipolar/multilateral international relations, which will be very competitive in terms of not only politics, security and economy, but also of values and governance. Geopolitical future remains rather uncertain. The unpredictable United

States, the rising China and the vindictive Russia pose serious strategic challenges for the EU. The global power is shifting and by 2050, Germany will probably remain the only European country among the top ten world economies. Some even believe that the new world will be led by digital platforms, which already today hold more power than most countries.

The following are the external geopolitical issues that coincide with the EU’s areas of interest:

– On a global offensive, China is a long-term systemic **rival** for the EU. Technologically, it supports both autocratic and illiberal regimes, and thus sustains a global value system opposing that of the EU.

– With President Trump, his dubious foreign policy and erratic attitude towards the liberal, rule-based world order, the United States will remain an unpredictable partner also for the EU. With a possible second Trump term, the disruptive policy of the US would probably intensify even further.

– The economically stagnating Russia is increasing its military capacity and trying to divide the EU and the transatlantic community. Due to sanctions, the cooperation between Western countries and Russia will remain limited.

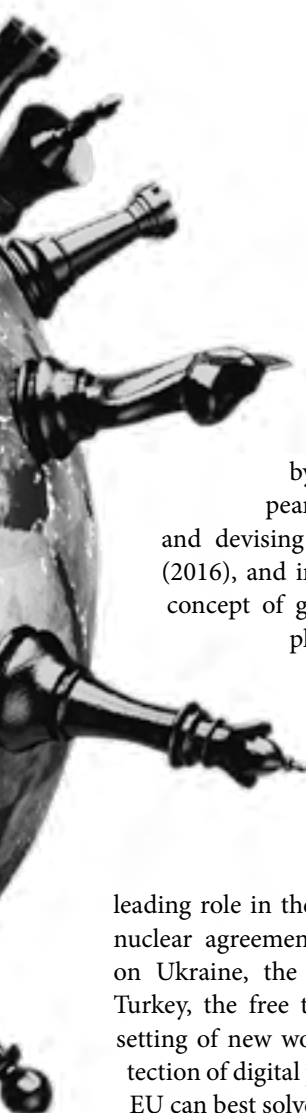
– In security terms, the EU’s Eastern and Mediterranean neighbourhoods remain vulnerable. Turkey is moving away from the Union. The EU plays no role in the stabilisation of the Middle East or Libya. Northern Africa will continue to be marked more by conflicts within the countries than between them. There is no EU strategy aimed at closing the Mediterranean migration route, which is shifting towards the Western Balkans.

– The Western Balkan situation is stalled. The region, which is of geostrategic importance for the EU, is becoming a geopolitical playground of Russia, China, Turkey and the Gulf states, all offering alternative development models. Reform processes in candidate and aspirant countries are at a standstill, democratic processes are losing ground. The enlargement process has been halted pending the internal consolidation of the Union.

– Global warming increases the geopolitical attractiveness of Arctic areas.

An advocate of effective multilateralism, the EU has tried to respond to the problems of a future multicentric or poly-nodal world





by overhauling the European Security Strategy (2003) and devising the EU Global Strategy (2016), and introduced a more flexible concept of global governance. By exploiting the unique mix of soft power, economic leverage and diplomatic skill, the Union has the ability to shape global geopolitics, as demonstrated by its leading role in the Paris Compact, the Iran nuclear agreement, the Minsk agreements on Ukraine, the migrant agreement with Turkey, the free trade agreements and the setting of new world norms (GRPR - protection of digital privacy). Nevertheless, the EU can best solve its biggest problems (migration, security, climate change) through multilateral cooperation.

The Union will need to adapt to the new world of pluralist power. This entails the redefinition of transatlantic relations within NATO and with the US bilaterally. Under President Trump, the former guarantor of European post-war security and prosperity has changed considerably. According to Trump, the EU is a global economic com-

petitor rather than a geopolitical ally. When united, the EU can exert significant normative and geopolitical influence on the world stage. Therefore, the United States should strive for greater transatlantic unity and support the unity of the European Union, rather than work towards its decomposition.

For a successful Europe/EU in the geopolitical context of a new polycentric world, Europeans will need to devote more attention to European diplomacy, security and defence, as well as to the prevention and resolution of external conflicts. PESCO, EDA, EDF and similar institutes represent only the first step in the establishment of an effective European defence. Concepts like "greater European strategic autonomy" gain ground also within the Union. The incoming Commission president von der Leyen has even mentioned the building of a European Defence Union. A strong US engagement within NATO will only last as long as Russia is seen as a threat. In the American eyes, the Russian threat decreases with the rise of China. The US attention is increasingly shifting towards Asia.

However, strengthening its geopolitical role will first require the Union to consolidate internally and solve the main problems, which strongly affect its unity. Populists contribute nothing to the EU's global power and sovereignists make it even weaker. A disunited Union, both internally and in external relations, cannot be an equal player in the geopolitical race of the big powers; even more, it risks drifting into geopolitical obsolescence. Against this backdrop, ideas about the diversified integration of the EU or a multi-speed EU come into play.

A new European Union for a new world
After the formation of the new European Commission, the EU will have to consider the global geopolitical reality very seriously. Failing that, an internally divided Union may become a mere playground for the big powers. The upcoming five-year term of the Commission will be decisive for the EU's role on the world stage. The main issues, which will critically influence the values of the future Union, are an effective internal application of the rule of law and successful migration management. The two challenges, along with **effective** decision-making, will also affect the EU's global geopolitical role. The

"If the Union fails to participate in the shaping of the world, the world will shape the Union. The EU simply must become an equal player in the global geopolitical race of the big powers."

decisions relating to foreign policy questions **probably** are to be taken in a more rapid and simplified manner – by qualified majority, not by consensus. However, the consensus for such a radical cut **tackling** the sovereignty of the member states, Slovenia among them, will not be easy to reach. Lacking consensus, the EU will further lag behind other geopolitical competitors.

The European Union ought to be more self-assured. It is among the biggest world markets, the global leader in the fight against climate change, defender of democracy and human rights, as well as development aid and the open trade system, the agenda setter for new technologies and the ethical use of artificial intelligence, and staunch supporter of multilateral organisations. In order to preserve its moral values and life style, it will have to **shape** global ethical norms

for these domains and maintain its technological sovereignty. It will need to strive for the emerging world (economic) order to be transformed into a multilateral, rule-based system; indeed, the world itself needs the EU, the global leader in the quality of life. The European way of life, which continues to attract millions around the world, should become sustainable also in the new geopolitical race of the polycentric world.

In today's geopolitical competition of the big powers, a strong and effective European Union is in the interest of its member states and its citizens. The member states alone, even the biggest one, do not have enough autonomous global geopolitical power and leverage. If the EU fails to become an important geopolitical and strategically sovereign player, it will drift into insignificance. This would have adverse consequences for all its member states and the entire continent, as well as

for the European norms and quality of life. The mere development of the EU's soft power will not suffice. Therefore, the planned changes within the Union – including the improved effectiveness of external policy decision-making and the development of its defence dimension – are a function of its becoming a geopolitical power. The key elements will be unified (not only common) European foreign and defence policies, aimed at strategic sovereignty. Despite the EU's preference for multilateral agreements, hard-power elements will also have to be taken into consideration. Yet, if the Union fails to participate in the shaping of the world, the world will shape the Union. The EU simply must become an equal player in the global geopolitical race of the big powers. ●

ARE YOU PROTECTED AGAINST CYBER ATTACKS?

TelekomSlovenije



An enormous amount of various data, which has a high value, flows through networks and systems every day. For this reason companies are exposed to hacks, data thefts and data manipulation. Ensure appropriate protection and monitor all aspects of cyber risks using the Cyber Security Operations Centre of Telekom Slovenije.
Get higher safety at lower costs.

THE TELEKOM SLOVENIJE CYBER SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTRE ENSURES:



REDUCTION OF OPERATIONAL RISKS RELATED TO CYBER SECURITY

+

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

+

DETECTION OF SECURITY OFFENSES, RESPONSE, REMEDIATION AND RECOVERY OF DATA AND SERVICES

www.telekom.si

How much future for our past?

The laboratory for European unity: the Council of Europe @70

/ By Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Belgrade



On 5 May 1949, meeting in London, the 10 western and northern founding states of the Council of Europe provided Western and later the whole of Europe with a unique platform designed to bring European citizens and states closer together. They decided to do so in all but certain times of the late 1940s, at the end of a decade that saw genocide, dictatorship, massive destruction and social and economic deprivation, as a result of the war that ravaged the entire continent. After the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies, countries in Europe saw themselves confronted with the onslaught of Communist dictatorship and the East/West division manifesting itself as of 1947. The struggle for safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms in the remaining parts of Western Europe gained critical momentum at the Congress of Europe in The Hague from 7 to 11 May 1948. The Council of Europe was the key to creating a better, more humane constitutional order on the European continent, allowing European governments, parliaments and non-governmental organisations to discuss and develop what it means to be European in the late 20th century.

On 5 June 1947 at Harvard, Secretary of State George Marshall committed the United States of America to European recovery and unity. The European Recovery Programme (ERP), also known as “the Marshall Plan”, was underpinned by the simultaneous development of economic cooperation and coordination in the OECD (founded on 16 April 1948). The establishment of NATO on 4 April 1949 added a cornerstone to European security. In two short years between 1947 and 1949, the key building blocks of postwar Western Europe were put in place, enabling Europe to develop a new culture of freedom, human rights, democracy, social progress, cultural and economic cooperation and integration. The Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly immediately used the momentum to advance concepts for supranational integration, with the European Community of Steel and Coal (ECSC) being the first result in 1950. The ECSC would be joined by the European Communities in 1957, and become in 1993 today’s European Union. As a bonus the project of European unity could be promoted as a standard setter and trail blazer for regional integration worldwide following European decolonisation: If the divided, belligerent and murderous Europeans can work together, others might probably be able to do it too. Hence, the end of European Great Power expansion and colonialism became an opportunity to transform global relations towards greater equality between people and states. This spirit was espoused in the creation and development of the United Nations.

Never again!

Today, some 70 years on, many Europeans are hardly aware of these momentous steps, briefly described above, that have

shaped their lives for the better. The steps taken within so few years by parliamentarians, governments and civil society, pushed by the European Movement, are proof of the wish to prevent any repetition of the horrors and misery that the cataclysm of genocide, two European World Wars and mass violence brought. “Never again” remains the single most important driver for European unity. What does “never again” mean for today’s and future generations? Starting in 1950, the Council of Europe put history, learning and teaching at the centre of a European citizenship and education and youth agenda. In August 1953 the first conference on “The European idea in history teaching” was convened in Calw (Germany). The points raised there have stood the test of time. They are an urgent reminder that: “If the younger generation is not taught recent history by historians, they will be left exclusively to the influence of press, film, radio, etc.” (Calw Conference 1953). In today’s historically unique situation of *information disorder* these risks are very real.

Europe's unity has become visible and tangible and thereby contestable to a degree that 70 years ago hardly anyone would have expected.

Take the case of Myanmar and the recent tragic events of organized mass violence and expulsion against the Rohingyas there. It shows us how easily bias and prejudice can be spun against minorities in environments where no democratic conception of history teaching exists and modern communication tools were introduced to almost everyone within a short period of time but without any *media literacy*. Realizing the urgent necessity to relaunch the Council of Europe’s work on history teaching and history textbooks, the French Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers from May to November 2019 tasked the distinguished Parliamentarian and promoter of European unity Alain Lamassoure to explore the idea of a European *Observatory on History Teaching*.

However, the principle of European unity has come under attack in the wake of a decade filled with crises. Changing rhetoric from the United States has more recently challenged European integration. What a contrast to the atmosphere and achievements less than a generation ago. Between 1989 and 1999 the Council of Europe made history within a decade, realising its pan-European vocation thanks to its new members from Central and Eastern Europe, and in the 2000s by including the Western Balkans and Caucasus countries. The foresightful leadership of Secretary General Catherine Lalumière from 1989 to 1994 made this possible. There was also bold commitment from the Heads of State and Government who set out a positive agenda of vision and values for the Council of Europe in Vienna 1993 and Strasbourg 1997. Today, 47 European states are members of the Council of Europe and the *reunification* of the continent under the roof of the Council of Europe was marked by a third and to date last Council of Europe summit in Warsaw 2005.

History lessons for today

From today’s perspective 2005 might be a crucial year for European unity. It was just a year after the EU turned itself from a Western into a pan-European organisation thanks to enlargement. But, also in 2005 a majority of French and Dutch voters rejected further integration and the EU constitutional treaty. Around the same period conflicts in the

Caucasus and Eastern Europe persisted and increased in intensity. As of 2009, the effects of economic and financial crisis changed the perception of European integration. The decision of most voters in the United Kingdom in June 2016 to leave the European Union has been a culmination of these developments changing the nature and direction of European unity.

While it is not the first time in the last 70 years that rules-based European cooperation is under attack, this time many Europeans across the continent seem beset by paralysis and exhaustion in face of these attacks. There is a sense of apathy and passivity, especially in areas where European cooperation should deliver and failed in their view to do so. Too little impact is seen for safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles of the European common heritage. Based on their own experience, too many people doubt that European unity is achieving economic and social progress. It has become very difficult for many citizens, in particular young ones, to see a European purpose in national politics.

Many feel unprotected from group-based hate speech, the spiraling *information disorder* and the onslaught of violent and fact negating nihilism. They see too little resolve to tackle questions of social, ecological and economic renewal in Europe, in a world that has changed dramatically over the past few years and where human rights and individual freedoms are being challenged by an increasing number of political leaders.

When probed thoroughly few Europeans would however question or doubt the need for more common action in economic, social, cultural, scientific, legal and administrative matters. More people than ever in Europe want the maintenance and further realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is the result of a remarkable civilizational achievement. The last 70 years of European cooperation are now constituting a uniquely European element of world heritage. The question is how this heritage can help to inspire and lead present and future generations.

European Convention of Human Rights

How much future for the immediate European past? What constitutes the new layer of joint heritage created by the Council of Europe and others? The central and largest jewel in the crown of achievements is the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). Signed in Rome in Palazzo Barberini on 5 November 1950, the convention set in motion a human rights protection system, including the Court in Strasbourg, which has allowed an increasing number of European citizens to realize their fundamental rights and freedoms. The work on the Convention also led to the abolition of the death penalty in all Council of Europe member states. This evolution of the ECHR is testimony to the continuity and change over the last 70 years, as much as the achievements in gender equality, recognition of sexual identity and LGBTI, the fight against racism and discrimination, including anti-Gypsyism.

On the one hand, the evolutionary interpretation established by the Court made the ECHR meaningful throughout time, on the other hand the jewel only came to shine because a new crown was constructed to hold it. Differently from traditional international organisations, the Council of Europe benefits from the tensions between Member States governments’ representation in the Committee of Ministers (CM) and the force of the free deliberations of members of Parliament

in the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE). Thanks to the European Movement back in 1948, participation in the work of the Council of Europe is not limited to those two, but includes local and regional authorities, expert bodies with representatives of academia, civil society and societal stakeholders, including trade unions and business. All play an important role in advancing ideas for progress. This innovation of the Council of Europe’s methodology created the dynamics that added further jewels to the crown: the European Cultural Convention (1954), the European Social Charter (1961), and conventions to protect the natural habitat of humans and non-humans. It included more than 200 European conventions and actions covering fields ranging from bioethics to artificial intelligence (AI); cooperation mechanisms to develop Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the Group of European States against Corruption (GRECO), the European Youth Foundation and European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), to name but a few.

How can this history be told today?

A future for our past

The Council of Europe would have failed in its ambition had it not invested some thinking into such questions of heritage narration. 1975 was the Year of the European Architectural Heritage. With the motto “A future for our past”, the Council of Europe put the protection of material heritage of European towns and villages on the agenda. It was a seminal turn for our thinking about heritage protection, resonating until today. The *turn* was not to isolate individual aspects or buildings of architectural heritage but to maintain the *ensemble* and the character of places as well as experiment transformation into adapted new forms of use. The 1975 heritage year exhibition illustrated this approach across the continent: from Novgorod and Vilnius, to Bath, Bergen and Bologna, among many other places.

Keeping the *ensemble* of rights, freedoms and cooperation intact in order allow for new growth is essential for European unity today. A lesson from the past is that protecting and developing European unity will fail by isolating some aspects at the expense of others. European values risk becoming disfigured by tearing apart fundamental rights and freedoms from the development of science and technology, by neglecting arts, culture and education or the protection of nature and landscapes. The real character of European unity is too often hidden, as the *European project* can seem like an assortments of rules, standards a norms which seem to have developed lives of their own.

Europe unity has become visible and tangible and thereby contestable to a degree that 70 years ago hardly anyone would have expected. The success of European togetherness needs to be told and reflected upon as living heritage and by strengthening the tissue of cooperation and integration so that it does not become threadbare at breaking point. The Council of Europe is well placed to spearhead such efforts, not least because the diversity of its members and their at times deeply difficult relations offer multiple perspectives on drawing *History Lessons for Democracy* of today and tomorrow.

The author is writing in his personal capacity. The views set out here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Council of Europe. ●

On democracy and its opponents. Notes from Southeastern Europe

Nationalism, with its dichotomy of ‘good vs the other’ is upon us again. If liberal democracy is not protected we are on a dangerous path to inhumanity...again.

/ By Vedran Džihčić, Senior Researcher, Austrian Institute for International Affairs, lecturer at the University of Vienna and Director of Center of Advanced Studies, Southeastern Europe (CAS SEE)



Here are some of the book titles trending in the past few years: ‘How democracies die’, ‘Democracy in crisis’, ‘democratic rollback’, ‘Competitive authoritarianism’, ‘The new totalitarian temptation.’ All of them suggest that something has gone wrong with liberal democracy, that a certain fatigue and a state of crisis have replaced the era of vitality and functionality of democracy. Admittingly, there are few scholars and thinkers trying to make a counterpoint and arguing against the cultural pessimist view of decline. Steven Pinker’s book ‘Enlightenment now’ is probably the most powerful recent account of optimism based on facts, spreading the message that ‘life is getting better’ and liberal humanism is prevailing. The debate is controversial and the situation across the globe varies. Therefore, a closer look at specific regions may tell us more.

How can we describe times that we live in? It seems that the era in which liberal democracy was a predominant socio-political system rapidly spreading across the globe, has come to an end.

So, where to begin the story about democracy and the crisis of democracy? It is difficult to say, especially in the case of Southeastern Europe (or particularly in the Western Balkans) – where we are witnessing a regression of democratic standards and values before democracy has ever managed to become the “only game in town.”

I believe that there is no space for relativism – freedom is under attack again. And yet, contexts, circumstances and reasons why such attacks are not only possible, but seem plausible and justified to so many people, have to be found in “thick descriptions” (Clifford Geertz) of stories. Scholars and experts discuss the decline of democracy under various terms including authoritarianism, despotism, illiberalism, nationalist and far right populism. What unites such regimes

are open attacks on fundamental rights, freedoms and liberal values, obstruction and dominance of formal state institutions and clientelism combined with a strong nationalist rhetoric. In Europe specifically, particularly since the beginning of the so called ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015, a new populist and nationalist, mostly right wing discourse has become more prominent. The proponents of

It seems that the era in which liberal democracy was a predominant socio-political system rapidly spreading across the globe, has come to an end.

this new right wing nationalism claim that protecting the purity of “our” cultural nations against (mostly Muslim) immigrants, and by doing so protecting the national sovereignty, is the ultimate task. What has followed is a continuous rise of populist and nationalist parties all over Europe.

New nationalist ‘Othering’ and authoritarian governance

Populist nationalism is on the rise in the Western Balkans too. Whatever definition we take, populism always includes an attempt to turn the symbolic and emotional project of an exclusively defined ethnic/cultural group into a political, nationalist project. Such a process ultimately results in divisions, in putting borders and demarcation lines to the forefront. The process of drawing new boundaries (in Europe for example since the refugee movements of 2015) and reiterating old ones (like in the Balkans following the wars of the 1990s) is an integral part of the nationalist mobilization that we see today.

This mobilization goes hand in hand with the moralization of the community. “Our” community is portrayed as authentic, brave, pure and morally on a higher ground than the community of “others”, which is endangering our moral consensus. Such a mor-

alization is dangerous as it operates on the basis of the politics of fear – the motto being ‘demonizing the other to protect ourselves’. The most dangerous aspect of nationalist demonizing or ‘othering’ is not only the rhetorical but also real exclusion of those that do not belong to us. In the Western Balkans the ‘others’ could be Albanians, Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs. In Europe the ‘others’ are immigrants, ‘foreigners’, Roma, etc.

The idea of excluding the ‘other’ has become normal. Once that happens, an even greater danger looms – a constant evolution of who constitutes the ‘other.’ It could be political opponents or someone that looks different. Where does it stop? This, indeed, is a very dangerous path.

A new type of (semi-)authoritarian governance has emerged, not only in Europe and the European neighborhood but also globally. This trend is partly building up on new populist and nationalist moment and is partly a consequence of weaknesses of formal institutions and democratic political culture. As Charley Tilly put it in the early 2000s, “de-democratization” seems to be immanent to any kind of democratization. It has also become increasingly clear that liberal democracy is only one possible final outcome of democratization processes. Forms of rule and regimes beyond democracy with strong man und ruling parties “running the show” have proven to be perceived as attractive, flexible, and partly functional alternatives to democracy. Such regimes are seemingly able to reconcile competitive elections, multi-party systems, parliaments, constitutions and other elements usually associated with liberal democracies with the functional logic of authoritarianism and the mechanisms and techniques often applied by authoritarian regimes.

Curiously enough, these new regimes use democracy as a façade for establishing a

powerful but clientelist and corrupt system based on alleged reforms, on deregulation and on restructuring. Such a system is accompanied by a whole set of neoliberal discourses on pragmatism, efficiency, economic reforms, etc. At the same time it completely neglects the social dimension of deepening inequalities, low wages, a new precariat, and unbearable life conditions for parts of the population.

Hope as practice – Quest for new democratic engagement of citizens

Ágnes Heller, the great philosopher who died recently, had one major message she kept repeating in the last years of the life: ‘Liberal democracy is imperfect, in some places more imperfect than in others. But we do not have anything else to protect. This is the only thing we can protect.’¹ I am convinced that protecting liberal democracy can only be achieved by renewed democratic engagement of citizens based on renewed hope that better and more just societies are possible.

One particular form of engagement is the one that we see in social movements or protest movements, particularly in Southeastern Europe. Not all protest movements are ‘progressive’ by nature; they may very well be conservative or nationalist. In the region we have seen strong reformist, democratic forms of social engagement with huge potential to rejuvenate the notion of democracy. The “Colourful Revolution” in North Macedonia stands as an important milestone and role model for democratic change. Protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina (‘Justice for David’), Serbia (‘One of five million’) and recent protests in Romania, do represent a fundamental critique against the “untouchable” political elites, against injustice, corruption, malfunctioning of state and economy, and generally against non-democratic political practices.

A new enlightenment is needed, argues the young Spanish philosopher Marina Garcés,² a radical enlightenment based on the education, on a re-thought relationship between the knowledge and emancipation, fighting against the authoritarian will and retrotopian visions of the society (Zygmunt Bauman). I am deeply inspired by citizens of the Balkans that are resisting and fighting authoritarian power. I am convinced that the fight for new enlightenment has to be entrenched in the principle of hope, including political hope based on the universal principles of human dignity, freedom, justice and equality.

Martha C. Nussbaum – In her recent account on “hope”³ introduced the term “practical hope”, one ‘that is firmly linked to, and energizes a commitment to action.’ If all types of hope-based actions – be it in form of protest movement, through civil society engagement, through investigative journalism (to name only a few) – continue engaging and fighting for just, democratic, equal, and livable societies, freedom will ultimately prevail. ●

Endnotes

- 1 Ágnes Heller: Orbán is a tyrant, PoliticalCritique.org, 13.8.2018, <http://politicalcritique.org/cee/hungary/2018/agnes-heller-orban-is-a-tyrant/>
- 2 Marina Garcés, Neue radikale Aufklärung, Turia+Kant, Wien-Berlin 2019
- 3 Martha C. Nussbaum, The Monarchy of Fear. A Philosopher Looks at Our Political Crisis, New York 2018, p.204

The promises and perils of Big Data

Will Big Data bring big benefits for all, or will it only increase sociopolitical inequalities?

/ By Jolene Creighton, Editorial Director of Boma Global

It has been less than fifty years since computers entered mainstream society, and already, virtually every industry is saturated with information. According to reports produced by DOMA, more than 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are created every single day, and the rate of production is increasing annually. By next year, it is estimated that more than 1.7 megabytes of data will be created each second for every single person on Earth.

This is the era of big data.

From genomics and astronomy to healthcare and policing, this deluge of data is transforming our understanding of the world and revolutionizing how we make decisions. Judgements that were once left to humans alone are increasingly being handed off to complex algorithms, which analyze massive swaths of data and counsel us on how it should be interpreted and what actions we should take as a result.

We can already see the effects of this cognitive shift at play in a number of sectors. In precincts, predictive analyses trained on historical crime data help direct officers' patrol routes by forecasting where and when a crime is likely to occur. Once suspects have been taken into custody, big data is fed into recidivism algorithms to help us shuffle defendants through the legal system. These risk assessment tools offer advice regarding the rehabilitation services that should be obtained, whether or not a defendant should be confined ahead of their trial, and even how severe a convict's sentence should be.

When it comes to healthcare, in particular, the impact of big data has been profound. In urban centers, some outpatient departments see more than 10,000 people a day. This excessive pace of patient intake and outtake pushes many health facilities to the breaking point, leading to misdiagnoses and patients receiving subpar care. However, big data has allowed researchers to create new diagnostic applications that assist with patient processing and assessment. These tools monitor the care that is provided, track improvements or deteriorations in health, and analyze medical images to identify tumors and other signs of illness. This data is then

used to offer advice regarding everything from the specialists that patients should see to the kinds of interventions and treatments they may need.

Such machine-assisted decision-making saves time and lowers the cost of medical assessments, which increases the number of patients that can be treated and helps boost access in underserved regions. This has allowed us to both improve life quality and avoid preventable deaths. And by using similar data collection and analysis processes to monitor health trends across a population, we have successfully predicted epidemics and have started targeting and tailoring interventions for vulnerable groups.

In the future, new data-driven technologies could be deployed to coordinate and analyze other data swaths that are current-

ses have revealed that a number of data sets aren't reflective of the general population and are saturated with biases.

In one case, researchers at Google found that, although the United States accounts for just 4% of the global population, it contributed over 45 percent of the data for ImageNet, a database of labeled images that's used to train image classification algorithms. Meanwhile, China and India combined, which account for over 36 percent of the global population, contributed just 3 percent of the data. As a result of this skew, algorithms that were trained on the ImageNet data set were prone to errors and biases. They would use words like "woman" and "bride" to correctly label an image of a traditional U.S. bride, but they would mislabel an image of an Indian bride with words like "costume."

Similar biases found in other data sets have resulted in black defendants in the U.S. being falsely flagged as future criminals and facial-analysis programs failing spectacularly when it comes to identifying non-white individuals — even going so far as to mistake members of Congress for convicted criminals. And when it comes to healthcare, data-driven technologies aimed at identifying neurological diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and multiple sclerosis have been shown to exclude individuals from non-Western nations.

It's clear that, if we are to secure a future where big data is used for the betterment of all, we will need more and better data and computer scientists to address the technical and ethical demands of our increasingly data driven world.

To begin with, we need to ensure that experts are trained on proactive strategies to de-bias data, such as implementing data collection techniques like stratified random sampling. At the same time, they must know how to reduce bias amplification by, for example, imposing model constraints to specify the statistical distribution of predictions or designing sampling rules that regulate how the outputs generated from predictions are fed back into the system.

Yet, the problems posed by big data must not be relegated to the domain of comput-

er scientists and engineers alone. We need lawyers who are well versed in the unique challenges that exist at the intersection of big data, security, and privacy — individuals who can verify that data is being used in our political and social systems in a way that respects basic human rights and adheres to existing laws, especially laws that are related to discrimination.

Given the rapid pace of change, our educational institutions will also need to reform and start focusing more on critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This will help ensure that future generations of lawyers and scientists can keep pace with the advances in data-driven technologies, efficiently and accurately assessing novel applications and responding accordingly.

Put simply, the solutions we need will demand a close collaboration across industries, educational institutions, and governing bodies — both nationally and internationally. As Pascal Weinberger, an AI researcher and founder, notes, "data and computer scientists' trainings focus on looking at distributions and analyzing data sets, but many of the people who end up using these tools don't have the necessary training or expertise to properly analyze this information." Scientists will need to work hand-in-hand with the industry experts and policymakers who are charged with overseeing the implementation of a predictive system. This will help ensure that the proper individuals are able to understand the veracity of both the data set and any conclusions that are made using it.

Finally, in order to truly verify the accuracy of our data sets, we would greatly benefit from shared data standards and collaborative data exchanges. We need to develop sound, international data guidelines that guarantee quality and ensure that data sets from different origins are compatible for pooling. These pools should be rigorously tested and regularly audited to verify that the data is neutral, representative of the appropriate population, and secure.

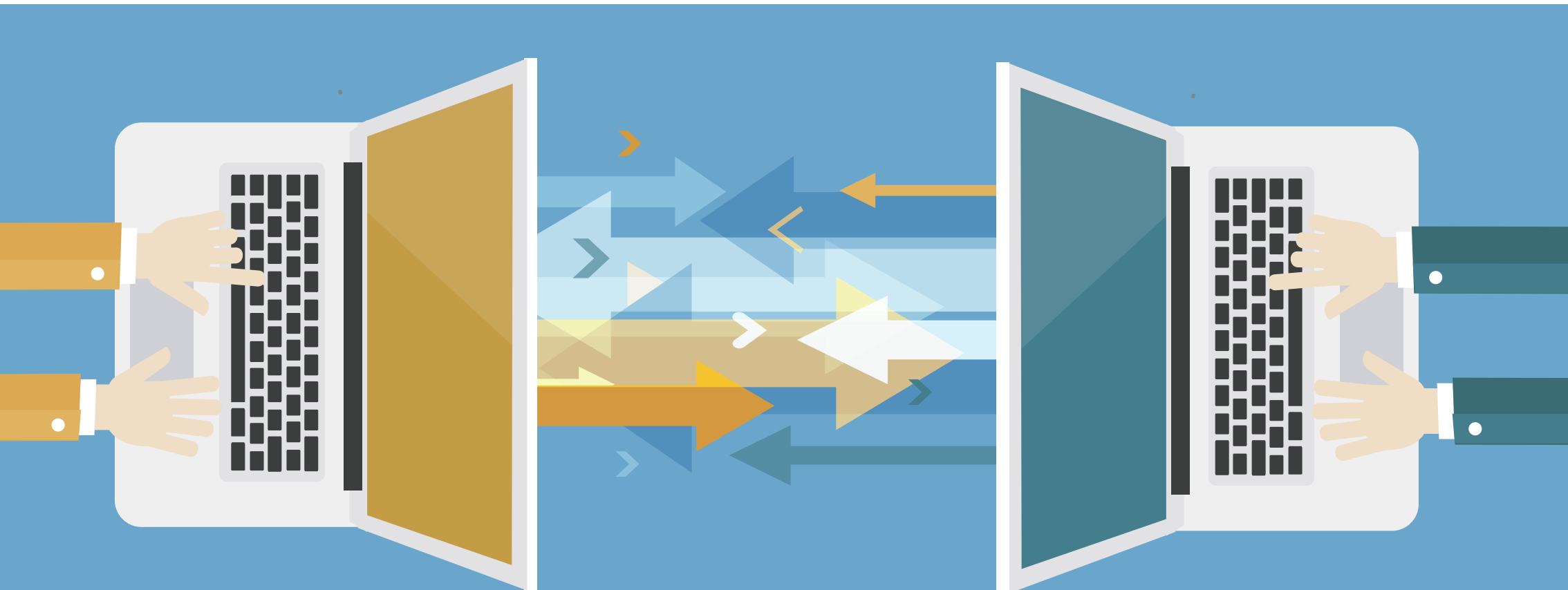
Until these cross-collaborative workflows are established, it will remain unclear whether big data will enhance society and increase the quality of life for citizens or serve only to increase sociopolitical inequalities. ●

By next year, it is estimated that more than 1.7 megabytes of data will be created each second for every single person on Earth.

ly too multifaceted and complex for us to make sense of, allowing us to better predict complicated phenomena like the weather or changes in the job market. They could even be deployed to analyze learning behaviors and improve students' educational outcomes.

Although it is impossible to fully understand the exact ways that big data will impact our world, it is clear that virtually no aspect of society, or human decision-making, will be left untouched. As Kenneth Cukier and Viktor Mayer-Schönberger note in their landmark text on big data, "big data is poised to shakeup everything from businesses and the sciences to healthcare, government, education, economics, the humanities, and every other aspect of our society."

This is an exciting pronouncement, but it should give us pause — because not all data is created equal. Although it is possible to make predictions and extrapolate meaningful information from large data sets, the veracity of the conclusions that are generated will only be as good, and as neutral, as the data set itself. And alarmingly, recent analy-



Learning and teaching in the era of Artificial Intelligence

The promise and implications of Artificial Intelligence in Education

/ By Dr. Jernej Pikalo, Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia



Artificial intelligence¹ (AI) is one of the central challenges and topics of the era of converging technologies with profound implications for human beings, cultures, societies and the environment. AI is likely to transform the future of education, sciences, culture and communication.

While AI has the potential to transform the future of humanity for the better and in favour of sustainable development, there is also a prevailing awareness of the risks and challenges associated with it, particularly in terms of deepening existing inequalities and divides. In order to sketch possible scenarios and unlock AI's potential to grasp development opportunities, while managing risks, it is important to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how societies are transformed by disruptive technologies, such as AI.

For education and learning, there is a consensus that the impact of AI has its benefit-risk duality. To reinvent the education systems in the era of AI, policy makers will need to examine benefits and potential risks of AI in the context of inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. I suppose, when we speak about AI in education, we need to address some key challenges.

Firstly, what should students learn? What is the impact of AI on the curriculum and renewal of core essential concepts - what should be added, what removed? To address this challenge, we must use a multi-disciplinary approach and bring together theories and methodologies from fields including AI, cognitive science and education.

Secondly, the innovations AI brings to the field of education and training. There are many promises and still unforeseen implications of AI for teaching and learning, such as how AI works in education, what is the nature of knowledge, and how is it represented? How can an individual student be helped in the process of learning? Which styles of teaching techniques are effective, and when should they be used? What types of AI techniques, intelligent tutoring systems, explor-

atory learning environments should be used?

Can we imagine a completely open, global and transparent educational environment that is guided by AI? An environment, which will be constantly adapting to individual needs and preferences and make learning a personalized and enjoyable experience?

AI holds the potentials to overcome some of these challenges, such as reducing barriers to access education, automating management processes, analysing learning patterns and optimizing learning processes with a view to improving learning outcomes. There is no doubt that AI will revolutionize the delivery and management of education and learning, but the key question is how AI can improve learning outcomes. And while

Can we imagine a completely open, global and transparent educational environment that is guided by AI?

we believe that teachers will not be replaced by machines by 2030, we still need dynamic reviews and social dialogue on how AI will transform teachers' roles. This will require a transformational approach to teacher training and we need to provide continuous support to prepare teachers to work with AI in an AI-rich education environment.

To maximize AI's benefits and mitigate its potential risks for education, system-wide planning and collective actions to reinvent the core foundation of education and learning are required. To achieve this, in Slovenia we are starting to test the *AI readiness* of all stakeholders particularly policy makers, system managers, and teachers.

Building on its mandatory roles of laboratory of ideas, normative instrument development and consensus building, our government is committed to acting as a convener among the civil society, media, the technical community, academia, and the cultural and creative industries in exploring the best possible ways to leverage AI for sustainable development.

AI challenges the role of education in societies in many respects. Firstly, AI requires a rethinking of the societal role of education. The labour displacement caused by some forms of AI requires, among other measures, the retraining of employees, and a new approach to formulate the final qualifications of educational programmes. Moreover, in a world of AI, education should empower citizens to develop new forms of critical thinking, including "algorithm awareness" and the ability to reflect on the impact of AI on information, knowledge, and decision-making. A second field of ethical questions regarding AI and education concerns its role in the educational process itself, as an element of digital learning environments, educational robotics, and systems for "learning analytics", all of which require responsible development and implementation. Finally, engineers and software developers should be appropriately trained to ensure responsible design and implementation of AI.

AI, therefore, will urge societies to rethink education and its social roles. Traditional formal education might no longer be enough in the rise of digitized economies and AI applications. Until now, the standard education model has typically been to provide core knowledge and has focused on formal literacies like reading, writing and mathematics. In the 21st century, information and knowledge are omnipresent. This demands not only data literacy that allows students to read, analyse and efficiently manage this information, but also "AI literacy" to enable critical reflection on how intelligent computer systems have been involved in the recognition of information needs, selection, interpretation, storage and representation of data.

Moreover, in a continuously developing labour market, the educational system can no longer aim to educate people for one specific profession. Education should enable people to be versatile and resilient, prepared for a world in which technologies create a dynamic labour market, and in which employees need to retrain themselves on a regular basis.

Current ideas about lifelong learning might need to be up-scaled into a model of continuous education, including the development of other types of degrees and diplomas.

Slovenia has a long track record of research in AI being involved from the early start in 1970. There are more than 300 researchers in AI making Slovenia one of the leaders of AI research capacity per capita. Slovenian research institutions and our four main universities are well connected to all main AI research centers across the world and actively involved in numerous international AI communities.

Slovenia is aware that we should be cognizant of the AI divide and the AI development disparities across countries, and be mindful that without a local sustainable ecosystem for developing AI technology for education and other sectors, the resources will be further drained by AI developers. Governments and institutions should aim to make a transition from a pure consumer driven approach, which is characteristic of the business sector, to joint-development and self-development approaches.

This is the aim of the new International Research Centre on AI under the Auspices of UNESCO that my Government proposed to establish. Its goal is to connect AI research centres across the globe into an open and inclusive international network that will gather experts from various fields, and tackle the wider questions related to AI. The Centre will conduct research, educate and provide mechanisms for building capacities in AI in any part of the world.

With continuous development of policies and mechanisms, we need to ensure that AI is open, transparent and accountable. This is why we need to work together to develop education that is global, open, transparent, inclusive, dynamic and enjoyable. ●

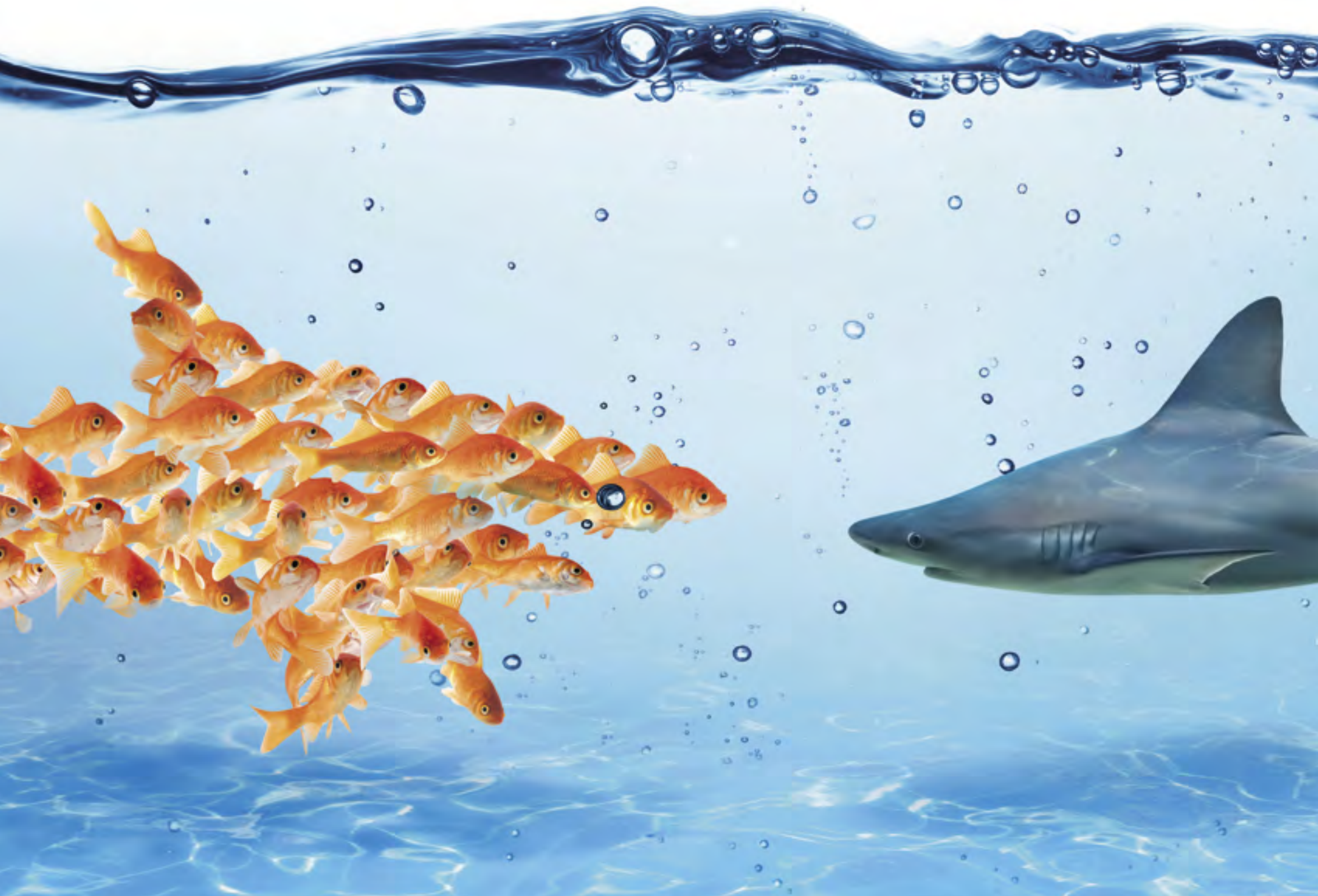
Endnotes

¹ While there is no one definition of "Artificial Intelligence" (AI), debate tends to focus on machines capable of imitating certain functionalities of human intelligence, including such features as perception, learning, reasoning, problem solving, language interaction, and even producing creative work.

Central and Eastern Europe at the heart of the EU

The evolving Russian – Chinese relationship will impact Central Eastern European countries and thus affect the unity and stability of the EU

/ By Katja Geršak, Executive Director, Centre for European Perspective and Editor-in-Chief of Bled Strategic Times



Geopolitics is upon us again. The global power is shifting from West to East and the coming decade will be marked by an intense geopolitical rivalry between the US and China. Other resurgent regional powers are also increasingly asserting their political and economic interests. A multipolar world will be much more insecure and unstable.

In our globally interconnected world, projecting power also involves projection of global might in high tech development as well as projection of culture and values. China has become representative of the fact that huge economic leaps and social progress are possible without a system of liberal democracy. Rule of law is no longer the only game in town and it cannot be taken for granted. Furthermore the Chinese government is using Artificial intelligence and big data as a way of increasingly controlling its citizens specially when dealing with minorities. There are a number of authoritarian states which consider such a system of control a boon. Therefore the world will increasingly be divided between democracies struggling to maintain a rule of law based political systems and authoritarian states using the latest technology to control and when need be repress their citizens.

The Global unipolar moment of the West provided a relatively secure geopolitical en-

vironment in which the EU, aided by an irreplaceable alliance with the US, flourished. The global migration of power to the East will have profound consequences for Europe in the coming decade. Beyond the US-China dichotomy, the Russian-Chinese relationship will greatly influence security and geopolitics in Europe. After all Europe, China and Russia are positioned on the Eurasian continent and geography still very much matters.

While the EU remains a mighty force with the second largest economy globally, it has also failed to achieve greater unity and political integration. Therefore it is entering this era of multipolarity with a number of challenges stemming from within. Political differences, economic divergence and social inequalities between EU member states will make the Central and Eastern member states particularly vulnerable to meddling by outside powers.

The evolving Russian-Chinese relationship

Russian-Chinese relations have had their fair share of ups and downs. In the past decade they have strengthened and a partnership between them was further solidified in 2014 after the Russian invasion of Crimea. But this friendship is not bound to last.

Russia, the largest but mostly flat continental power, defines its security in terms

of territorial might. In that sense it has been through a particularly rough thirty years, with territorial losses in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. It has witnessed first a rise of NATO on the east and now a rise of China on its western border. Yet Russia still perceives Eastern Europe as well as Central Asian states as vital to its security and political interests. China has its eye on both of these regions. It is becoming a significant player in Central Asia, a region bountiful in natural resources which the Chinese market craves, but which Russia still views as 'its backyard.' By investing heavily in infrastructure (roads and pipelines) China is drawing the region closer. The interests of Russia and China in Central Asia already diverge, the gap will only grow bigger.

China entered Central and Eastern Europe through the 16+1 Initiative. While the stated objectives are purely economic, it would be hard to overlook the geographical fact that the majority of countries included in the Initiative belonged to the former Soviet Union or what in the Cold War was known as the Eastern Block. Russia still views this region as strategically important. Again, the interests of Russia and China will soon diverge here too.

The Chinese have also acquired the port of Piraeus in Greece as one of the entry points to Europe. Greece now entered the 16+1

Initiative, promptly making it the 17+1 Initiative. This too should give pause to Russia.

Russia will also have to contend with China in the East where they share a territorial border. The Chinese population is heavily concentrated in the eastern part of China and there is a steady flow of Chinese migrants settling in far-east Russia in search of a better life. The Russian population is concentrated in the western, European part of the continent and the regions bordering China remain sparsely populated. The fluidity of that border is an item on the agenda of Russian-Chinese relations, which is, sooner or later, going to become more prominent. Russia is increasingly going to perceive China as a growing challenge to its interests in the East and West.

Beggar thy neighbour

The evolution of Chinese – Russian relationship is not one of two equal powers destined for rivalry but is increasingly being skewed in favour of China.

Russian economy remains dependent on revenues from natural resources (natural gas, coal, oil hydropower) which its leadership has used to quadruple its military budget. President Putin has not implemented reforms that would make Russia more attractive not only for investment but namely as a role-model for the former Soviet Union

countries of Central Asia. Russia is also facing a population decline, current trends indicate that population will shrink from 141 million to 111 million in 2050. The percentage of muslim population is growing and will, in parts of the country, reach up to 20% in the coming decade. Russia will threfore have to invest more into maintaining social cohesion of its society and be faced with minority issues, which may include not just muslim but Chinese minorities too.

Given the Russian acrimonious relations with the West, it is becoming more and more dependent on the Chinese market. Russia is increasingly diverting oil to China, purchasing advanced weapons systems from China and increasing the share of yuan in its foreign currency reserves (in an effort to avoid the dollar). In addition Russia has recently signed a deal with Huawei to develop its 5G equipment. Russian President Vladimir Putin once said that the country with the most developed AI will rule the world. In a Machiavellian twist of faith, the Russian President will now be getting AI (at least the hardware) from China. As the balance of relations tilts towards greater Chinese influence, there may also be an opportunity for a strategic reset of Russian relations with the West. Such shifts are certainly not unprecedented. One of the factors which will crucially impact Russian-European relations is the political path that Russia chooses in the long-run. Whether it will pick a path of greater control over its population though developing AI technology or turn in a more liberal – a more European - direction.

EU – state of play
How will this rivalry impact on Europe? In what shape is the EU entering this new multipolar era?
The EU remains a place to which millions of people around the world aspire to migrate in hopes of creating a better life. EU’s attractiveness shows that values do matter and de-

Beyond the US-China dichotomy, the Russian-Chinese relationship will greatly influence security and geopolitics in Europe.

mocracy is a brand. The EU has contributed to economic growth and social development in all of its member states. With a vibrant economy, it remains an attractive destination for investment.
However it is not all sunshine and roses. Lately we seem to be spending much more time discussing EU’s problems. With Brexit, the EU is losing an important economic and political power. While the process itself has sparked a boost in unity and popularity among EU’s continental citizens, it will still leave the EU weaker. The Franco-German motor is losing steam – it is less coherent and seems to lack strategic depth. There is a need to deepen EU integration. The lesson of 2008 financial crisis has (or should have) taught us that we need further fiscal integration (and consequently also political) integration to ensure Eurozone’s endurance during cycles of economic downturn and in turn provide greater political stability in the future (as economic hardship results in resurgent nationalisms within Europe). However, in reality many populist politicians within the EU

are calling for greater sovereignty, for ‘less EU’ and are in favour of ‘taking back control.’ One of the key reasons is the rise in inequality within the majority of EU member states over the past decade, which has helped in resurgence of latent nationalisms.
Europe is lagging behind US and China, the top two tech innovators. None of the technology giants come from Europe and with the current levels of investment into R&D, nobody is expecting the EU to be a potential leader of digital economy of the future. The EU will not project global power as a unified entity in financial, military or political terms in the coming decades. Despite of it having the market and people potential for doing so.

Centrality of CEE
The absence of EU as a unitary political and military force, the unpredictability of US partnership, a revisionist Russia and a growing China leave Central Eastern European (CEE) countries particularly vulnerable. CEE is still battling with its past in terms of economic and socio-political development. ‘Eastern European citizens still earn about 40% less than the average European. Despite significantly higher growth rates, income levels in Eastern European countries remain significantly below that of EU-15 countries.’¹ The gap is not likely to close anytime soon. Democracy and rule of law in CEE remains vulnerable to upswings of populism and nationalism. The rule of law is not yet deeply entrenched in countries of CEE, which means that backsliding is a real possibility.
Russia, which has a vested interest in CEE, continues to upgrade its military and particularly its hybrid capabilities and is actively

pursuing a policy that aims to weaken the unity and coherence of the EU and NATO. China, on the other hand, is using its vast financial means to raise its political influence in the region. It is hard to overlook that the 17+1 initiative includes countries, which are also of strategic interest to Russia. CEE countries will increasingly be caught up in the complex relationship between Russia and China. Therefore it is imperative that the EU designs its policy towards China with greater unity and clarity, starting with screening and coordination related to Chinese investment in the EU and greater transparency related to funding of academic, think tank and other organizations.
CEE is of key importance to EU’s wider stability. A prosperous region that is progressively closing the gap with the most developed EU countries, thus further rooting its interests, social and economic well-being within the EU, will be less susceptible to the courting (and meddling) of outside players. CEE region should be more connected. Initiatives, such as the Three Seas Initiative, should be welcome as they strive to further elevate the development of the region. US engagement in the region should not be viewed as an unwanted intrusion but should be taken in the context of further strengthening the Transatlantic partnership. After all, it is a partnership of democratic countries, which seek to promote a rules-based international world order.
Deeper integration is crucial to our common European future. The only path leading to a secure and prosperous Europe is ‘more EU’ ●

Endnotes
¹ ‘How Unequal Is Europe? Evidence from Distributional National Accounts, 1980-2017’ Thomas Blanchet, Lucas Chancel, Amory Gethin, April 2019, pg 25-26)

Protect those satisfying moments.

We'll protect the rest for you.

**GENERALI**

We put satisfaction first


080 70 77 | generali.si



The politics of migration

Europe's migration crisis is far from over – it has just changed shape

/ By Camino Mortera-Martinez, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for European Reform



Just when it looked as if the European Union's migration problems were finally behind us, they have bounced back with a vengeance. This time, however, they have less to do with the number of people coming to Europe and everything to do with the emotive politics of migration. Even though irregular arrivals are at their lowest level for five years and down by 90 percent since the peak of the 2015 crisis, Europeans say they are more concerned about migration than about the economy, climate change or crime. The fact that attitudes towards migration do not appear to correspond with the number of arrivals shows that other factors are at work. Populist and nationalist politicians across Europe have tapped into voters' concerns about migration and help fuel them further. This state of panic has proved to be fertile ground for nativist political parties across the EU.

On the face of it, citizens are being presented with a binary choice: either vote for those who think the only way to control migration is not to have migrants at all, or support those on the other end of the spectrum who think Europe is a little more than a fortress. There is no coherent migration narrative coming from the

On migration – as in so many other policy areas – fact-based debates have given way to emotionally charged conversations.

political centre ground, which allows the conversation to be dominated by more extreme anti-migration elements who often also shout the loudest. A quick look at social and other media would seem to confirm this theory.

And yet, recent scientific research shows that real life is more complicated. In most Western countries, the extremists make up only a small part of society. The majority of people belong to what researchers have called the “conflicted middle” or the “exhausted majority”, a disparate group whose opinions are not always coherent. This group is less set in its views than their more extreme counterparts. But the conflicted middle has nowhere to turn to. Mainstream politicians have not yet realised that, while the populists may be giving the wrong answers, they are probably asking the right questions.

This polarisation makes navigating the politics of migration increasingly tricky.

European and national officials in charge of migration policies are faced with the fallout of decisions based solely on identity questions. Take the EU's latest efforts to find a way out of the asylum deadlock. The Italian government has rejected offers to reform the Dublin system in a way that would take asylum seekers off its hands, even though accepting it is clearly in Italy's best interest in the long term.

Migration will surely be at the top of the agenda once the new EU administration takes office on 1 November. However, the new top EU team faces both a political and a policy problem that will make it very difficult for them to solve the Union's migration woes. First, the politics. The incoming EU administration lacks strategic foresight. EU leaders and political families did not nominate von der Leyen, Michel, Borrell and Sassoli because they had a particular vision for Europe. They appointed them because the alternative was not on offer. Surely, all of them are experienced politicians who will undoubtedly do a decent job. Nevertheless, they are also rather predictable politicians (all from Western Europe) at a time a populist wave is sweeping the world. They will also have to navigate a Parliament and a Council of Ministers that are fragmented as never before. Von der Leyen has already made a number of contradictory promises to several political groups to secure her nomination, including the migration critics from Poland and Hungary. Yet, she and her peers will soon realise that it is not possible to solve the EU's political migration problem by trying to appease the populists. In fact, this will only make them stronger.

The incoming EU administration's policy problem with migration ensues directly from its political dilemmas. The new EU top team faces an interesting challenge: not only will the new leaders need to design migration policies that work; they will also need to be appealing and convincing to all sides of the spectrum. This is a near-impossible task: on migration – as in so many other policy areas – fact-based debates have given way to emotionally charged conversations. Ignoring this will only make policies fail. Instead, the new EU administration needs to think beyond numbers, borders and international debates, and start considering ways to sell their migration policies to the exhausted majority.

The new global realities will make it impossible for the next set of EU leaders to sit on the fence on the question of migration. Whether they want it or not, migration will most likely be one of the first questions von der Leyen and her peers will have to meet heads-on once they take office. They would do good not to repeat the mistakes of the Juncker Commission.



The “last chance Commission” and its mixed migration record

The response of Juncker’s “last chance” Commission to the refugee crisis has been to reduce the number of people reaching the continent and to send back those who arrive on European shores and do not qualify for asylum. The EU is pursuing several strategies to secure its borders.

One approach has been to beef up border security. The strengthened European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) supports frontline member-states in their efforts to prevent irregular access to the EU’s passport-free Schengen area. The Commission plans to increase the powers and mandate of Frontex, to cultivate a fully-fledged EU border force – with plans for 10,000 new European border guards by 2020. Frontex’s budget will increase to €11.3 billion by 2027, so that the agency can purchase its own equipment rather than relying on member-states.

The EU has also tried to improve its poor record of returning irregular migrants. Last year, only one third of the 516,000 people that its member states ordered to leave actually left the Union. Returning rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants to their countries of origin or transit is arguably the most difficult part of any domestic migration policy, as it requires procedures for verifying the person’s identity and ensuring their safe return. That is why trying to secure the help of origin and transit countries has been central to the EU’s return strategy. The EU has struck international readmission agreements with 17 countries and is negotiating a further six. This is not exempt of problems: public opinion in migrant-sending countries can be hostile, as people view the deals as an obstacle to their free right to migrate. Because of how difficult it has become to convince countries to sign this type of deals, the EU has instead set up what it calls ‘practical co-operation’ schemes to return people to places like Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Ethiopia.

The EU has also been striking other types of deals to keep migrants out. In March 2016, it signed a deal with Turkey to return some categories of migrants and asylum seekers to Turkish soil and stop departures from the Turkish coast. In 2017, the Union agreed to help Libyan authorities stop and return migrant boats, with Italy playing a key role. Despite the questions about the legality and morality of these deals, both seem to have helped curb arrivals to Greece and Italy. The EU has also signed migration ‘compacts’ – international agreements to boost co-opera-

tion on migration policies – with five ‘priority’ countries: Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. Furthermore, it has intensified its engagement with six others: Afghanistan, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria and Pakistan. While these deals are not restricted to co-operation on returns, help with readmission is a crucial component.

If governments continue to refuse even to consider legal routes to Europe until irregular migration levels are down to near-zero, they will miss out on the economic opportunities that legal migration offers.

The EU has been trying to address the root causes of migration, mostly by sending money to countries of origin and transit. In 2015, it launched the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, worth €4 billion. The Fund aims to help African governments manage flows of migrants and foster political stability and economic growth. Migration and border management projects account for almost a quarter of the Fund’s budget.

The logic behind the Emergency Trust Fund appears to be sound: funding for policies to raise domestic employment and manage borders. The hope is that this will, in turn, reduce migration to Europe. But this approach has a number of flaws.

First, by explicitly tying aid to migration management, the EU’s highly regarded development policies risk becoming vulnerable to political pressure, particularly anti-immigration rhetoric. The Union prides itself on being the world’s top aid provider, which, in turn, allows it to be a global norm-setter, by making support conditional upon respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law. This, of course, takes time – the EU follows long and bureaucratic procedures so that all boxes are ticked before releasing funds. However, the Fund is designed in a way that allows the Commission to disburse funds swiftly in the case of a political crisis, sidestepping the necessary checks if need be. This means that the Fund could be used to pay for less-than-optimal migration control projects, at the behest of the political leader *du jour*.

Second, the EU’s shift to migration control has alienated partners, in Africa and elsewhere. The Fund’s lack of clear eligibility criteria may prove counter-productive. In February 2017, the EU expanded the Trust Fund to Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana and Guinea, with little justification, leading some to believe that the selection was politically motivated. One senior African official from a non-priority country remarked: “It’s clear

that the more irregular citizens you have in Europe, the faster you’ll receive funding from the trust. So we’ll let them leave”.

Finally, evidence suggests that improving economic conditions in source countries can actually increase migration. Emigration rates are much higher in middle income countries than in poorer ones. Higher incomes lead

to increased aspirations, and mean that people are more likely to be able to afford the journey, and the cost of starting a new life elsewhere. Furthermore, the declining child mortality rates combined with high fertility rates create a booming working age pop-

ulation. The International Monetary Fund estimates that in order to meet the employment needs of African populations, an additional 18 million new jobs would need to be created annually for the next 25 years.

What next?

If one measures the results in terms of lower irregular migrant arrivals, the EU’s migration strategy has been successful. However, this fails to take into account the reality that people will inevitably come to Europe, regardless of borders and perils they face on their trip. The Union needs to find a way to allow them in, without risking their lives; the stability of the host country; or the integrity of the Schengen area. This will require member states to accept more integrated migration policies.

Ideally, the new EU leaders would be more open about the fact that people in poorer parts of the world will want to come to Europe, regardless of the obstacles, and that political instability, natural or man-made disasters and climate change will inevitably lead to an increased number of asylum seekers trying to reach the West. However, European voters have clearly shown they will not accept chaotic migration, so those opposed to populists need to embrace both border controls and an expansion of legal routes.

Hopes that the EU will soon be able to find a sustainable plan to manage asylum seekers are fading. EU institutions and the national capitals have been working on overhauling the Union’s common asylum system (CEAS) and its main law, the Dublin Regulation. However, so far, reform talks have largely stalled, as frontline and destination member states disagree on the terms of the reform. Some EU countries, like Hungary and Poland, have refused to take in any asylum seekers at all. A recent French initiative to redistribute asylum seekers has gained the

support of 14 member states, but – and this is crucial –it has failed to get Italy, one of the most affected member states, on board.

Ultimately, distributing asylum seekers among EU member states is not just a matter of quotas or courts. It is a question of convincing voters that the Union’s duty to help those fleeing conflict or facing repression is compatible with the host country’s prosperity and values. This is easier said than done. One idea would be to overhaul the global refugee pact, signed in 1951. Proponents of this solution argue that the laws, which were suitable for those escaping the hardships of World War II, are no longer applicable.

The question of economic migration is comparatively less complex. There are no internationally binding rules that the EU must follow when deciding what to do about those seeking to move and work in Europe. The bloc and its member states are, in principle, free to pursue whatever economic migration policies they see fit. So far, they have chosen to focus on curbing arrivals. But an approach to migration that includes legal pathways to Europe is necessary if the EU’s migration policies are to be sustainable in the long term, provide answers to Europe’s demographic crisis and give third countries an incentive to co-operate with the Union.

Conclusion

The European Union has failed to build a longer-term strategy to deal with future migration problems. This is because EU leaders were under pressure to deliver swift solutions to the large inflows of people coming from Libya, Syria and Afghanistan during 2015. But Europe’s next migration headache will probably come from elsewhere. While securing borders and making deals with third countries may help the EU to stop massive flows, they will not do much to ensure that the Union is ready to face emerging migration trends. To be sustainable, the EU’s migration plans should take into account not only security considerations but also economic, geopolitical, climate and demographic factors.

The next European administration should be less shy in bringing up the topic of legal migration. While an EU wide legal migration scheme will be difficult to agree, member states could co-ordinate their efforts better, for example by setting up co-operation programmes with countries of origin, which could benefit both migrants and host societies. Most importantly, EU countries should realise that legal migration cannot be an afterthought. If governments continue to refuse even to consider legal routes to Europe until irregular migration levels are down to near-zero, they will miss out on the economic opportunities that legal migration offers. Moreover, perhaps counter-intuitively, they will encourage irregular migration by failing to deal with pull factors such as labour shortages in some member states.

The new European Commission should have a better understanding of the trade-offs involved in using foreign and development policies to manage migration. Some of the deals the EU has made with African and other countries depend on the goodwill of dubious security partners, and may end up being counter-productive in the long term. It is perfectly legitimate for the EU to use its soft power to encourage better border management in migrant-sending countries. But migration control cannot be the only criterion for striking deals with third countries. Some African governments have understood that migration is a bargaining chip in their relationship with Europe and are ready to use it as such. Other countries are experiencing economic growth and would like to be treated as serious trade partners. If it is to find a mutually beneficial relationship with the African continent, the Union will need to take account of its new reality.

This piece draws on the author’s previously published work. ●

Youth perspectives on a social and sustainable Union

The European Union has chosen Ursula Von Der Leyen at the helm of the Commission. What lies ahead for young generations of this continent?

/ By Giorgio Trichilo, Master's Degree Student in International Security Studies, Università di Trento

The new President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen, has vowed to introduce novel propositions to the EU's programmatic vision. She pledges for a greater social economy, serious climate change investments, stronger gender balance within EU institutions and a relaunching of Dublin reforms. The ambitious goals laid out by the new President reveal a comprehensive course of action, which seems to address the demands of a vulnerable European youth living in a period of perceived uncertainty. Young Europeans are looking for signals of stable integration in the labor market and want for their ever-expanding skill sets to be matched with proportionate pay in order to assure prospects of economic security.

After claiming the absolute majority of votes by MEPs in Strasbourg needed to confirm her designation by the European Council, Ursula Von Der Leyen is set to become the first woman in the top EU role. However, her supporting coalition remains a feeble one. Several were the defections within the Socialist and Popular parties, along with the Green party, which voted against Mrs. Von Der Leyen – despite her ambitious environmental program. The traditional political arrangement seen over the last decade with a PPE-PSE sort of Grossekoalition seems to have collapsed for this mandate, shedding light on the fragmentation of leftist and centre-right parties. Also, the failure of implementing the Spitzenkandidat system has raised many eyebrows towards Mrs. Von Der Leyen who was not chosen by any of the parties as a leading candidate. All these are factors to take into consideration when the new Commission head will want to enforce her program.

Social economy: economy to serve people

A centerpiece of Mrs. Leyen's program is that of trying to "reconcile the economy with the people". It is comforting to hear from the perspective of a generation that suffers from such prolonged and elevated rates of youth unemployment (14.2% in 2019 for ages 15-24), that macroeconomic action will be focusing on the social dimension. This approach marks a shift from a more market-based and neoliberal agenda stressing capital accumulation for markets rather than creating the circumstances for low-middle income growth. It is crucial for youths to be able to harness their human capital through a system of greater economic tutelage and integration within the job market across the EU. If popular trust is to be brought back to the EU institutions, the EU should demonstrate that it can truly address unemployment, poverty and social inequality – despite these prerogatives being part of member states. To this end, the proposed implementation of a Minimum European Salary and an 'unemployment safety net' through an Unemployment Re-insurance Scheme in order shield workers from potential future economic shocks would be much needed guarantees. If a lesson is to be drawn from the rise of populist parties in Europe, is that a large part of the vehiculated discontent has to do with a sense of loss of economic security, beyond factors linked with identity. One of the approaches to addressing this challenge would be to give greater legal power to trade unions, whose authority over the past decades has been progressively carved out by legislators.

By giving purchasing power back to workers, aggregate demand rise in those



countries which are still suffering from the recessive effects of 2008-2011 shocks. Creating mechanisms of collective wage bargaining for employers and workers through a European framework would thus help preserve workers' rights. This approach should also be accompanied by firmer action on systemic tax evasion by large corporations, for instance through a 'web tax' as indeed suggested by Mrs. Von der Leyen. This would signal the predisposition of the EU of acting as a greater regulatory authority and prevent massive leakages in the fiscal systems of member states, signaling a shift in attitude from her predecessor on the issue. We need to be looking for ways to redistribute wealth and lower the socio-economic disparities in Europe, which are damaging the very social fabric of states and creating perceptions of a 'broken' social ladder.

Environment – Green Deal for Europe

Another critical juncture in the new President's program is climate change and environmental sustainability, an issue that is at heart to European youth – as shown also by the electoral leap of the Green Party in the 2019 elections. As Commission head, Von der Leyen seeks to establish a European Climate Law in what she calls a Green Deal for Europe, echoing the ambitious New Deal program made to lift the US from a period of crisis. This would be a way to contrast pollutant emissions that are a slowly but inevitably destroying global ecosystems and our collective wellbeing.

EU should take a two-pronged approach: enacting systemic changes at a production-business level while also nudging consumer behavior through targeted policies. It is irrational to think that market supply for sustainably made products will increase if this is not matched with changes in market demands. The new Commission head thus proposes to unlock investments for over 1 trillion euros by transforming parts of the European Investment Bank into a Climate Bank and propose a Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. Involving the banking sector

and setting into law targets of reducing CO₂ emissions by 50% by 2030 could be a winning formula. Von der Leyen is also committed to creating a Carbon Border Tax to avoid carbon leakages and institute a Just Transition Fund to help with a cohesive transition for SMEs towards a circular economy. To this end, Europe would become the first carbon neutral continent in the world, according to Mrs. Von der Leyen. Having Europe be a model for sustainable development in a way that can tangibly demonstrate an increased economic efficiency while lowering pollution is something that future generations will appreciate.

Youth and Women: "protecting most vulnerable groups"

In her speech, Mrs. Von der Leyen also directly addressed youth, women and other vulnerable groups. For instance, the tripling of the Erasmus budget would provide a chance for more university students to travel and study in other European nations. As someone who has personally benefitted from the Erasmus + program in exchange at Sciences Po Paris, learning new didactic approaches and meeting people from diverse backgrounds has been a truly enriching intercultural experience that has strengthened my appreciation for the EU overall. Additionally, Mrs. Von der Leyen proposes to turn the existing Youth Guarantee into a permanent instrument as part of her goal to give further procedural and substantive role to the European Pillar of Social Rights. In this light, a Child Guarantee would support the delivering of basic health care and education to every child in order to prevent social exclusion or marginalization at a young age. Respectively, Von der Leyen wants to push for the joining of the Istanbul Convention and propose to "add violence against women on the list of EU crimes defined in the Treaty".

Refugees also have to be taken into account as belonging to the vulnerable groups. Migration towards Europe should be tackled with empathy and decisive action. That is to

say that one should view the migratory situation as an opportunity for social enrichment, demographic growth and economic growth in respect of basic human rights principles and customs of international law. This means predisposing humanitarian corridors and creating European agencies conciliating migrant demands from countries of origin with business labor force demands in the EU through qualification criteria. In this sense, Von der Leyen's proposed new pact on migration and asylum by reforming the Dublin Regulation goes in the right direction to stem the power and resources of criminal organizations.



Action, Now

Von Der Leyen's ambitious program for a more euro-centered Europe goes in the right direction for a more integrated and sustainable continent that can work for all, including youth. We should also consider enlarging the prerogatives of the European Parliament, thus increase the degree of democratic accountability in the eyes of voters. Also, modifying the voting mechanisms from one of unanimity to one of qualified majority for decisions relating to Foreign Policy would be welcomed, as the current system has impeded the EU from enacting much needed reforms.

Yet, much remains to be seen. Firstly, the European Commissioners still have to be selected so there is no certainty that Von der Leyen's views will be fully espoused. Secondly, her thin parliamentary majority will likely force her to jostle with political forces that will seek compromise. The EU however cannot remain idle, if it wants to combat the current trend of rising euro-skepticism it must provide responses to the needs of new European generations, and it must do so now. ●



GET Bled Strategic Forum Mobile Application

- 1 Scan the QR code to download the **Bled Strategic Forum 2019** app from  Apple App Store or  Google Play Store.
- 2 Register with the e-mail that you used in the BSF application form.
You will receive an unique code to log in.
- 3 Make the most out of your **#BSF** experience by easily accessing all the **info** about the conference, sharing your **impressions**, and networking with **other participants**.

www.bledstrategicforum.org

CREATIVE CAPITAL UNITED CREATIVE CAPITAL UNITED

CREATIVE FORUM

12 ————— 15 November

2019
LJUBLJANA



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط



giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



Bled Strategic
Forum



european creative hubs network

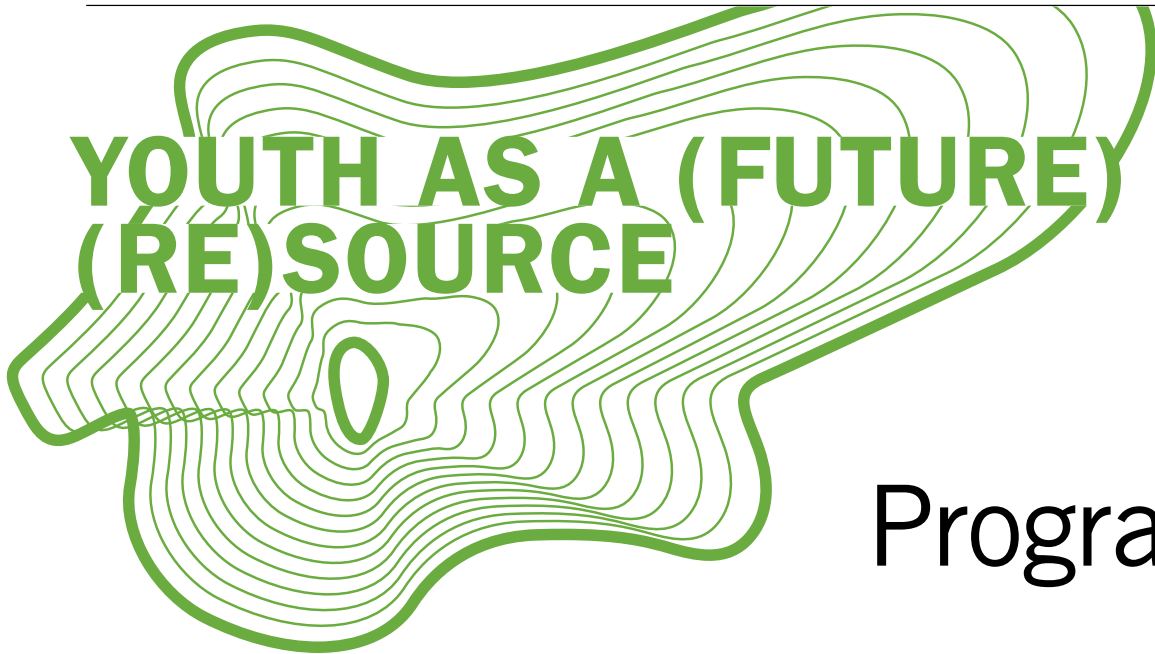


REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA GOSPODARSKI RAZVOJ IN
TEHNOLOGIJO



City of
Ljubljana

The event is organized
within the framework of
Bled Strategic Forum.



Programme

Friday, 30 August

14.00 Gathering and Registration
–16.00 @City Hotel Ljubljana

16.00 Opening of the Young BSF 2019
–16.30 @National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia
Welcome address:
› **Mr Dejan Židan**, President, National Assembly, Slovenia
Opening remarks:
› **Mr Peter Grk**, Secretary-General, Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia
Address by:
› **Ms Katja Geršak**, Executive Director, Centre for European Perspective, Slovenia
Chair:
› **Ms Meliha Muherina**, Programme Director, Young Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia

16.30 Young BSF Chat “Future of work”
–17.30 In partnership with The Boston Consulting Group.
@National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia
Speaker:
› **Mr Nikola Vuković**, Partner, The Boston Consulting Group

Moderator: **Mr Mart Dekleva**, Managing Director, Adriatic Business Group

17.30 Empowering Creative and Responsible Youth Toward Better Future
–19.00 In partnership with Femmes Sans Frontières Foundation.
@National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia
Speakers:
› **Ms Caroline Assaf**, Founding Director, Young Speakers, France/Canada
› **Dr Nadja Štante Furlan**, Associate Professor, Science and Research Center Koper, Slovenia
› **Ms Ann Godart**, Project Manager, Luxembourg-City Incubator, Luxembourg
› **Dr Lucija Mulej Mlakar**, Associate Professor, Budnjani, Slovenia

Moderator:
› **Dr Jerca Legan Cvikl**, President & Senior Consultant, Femmes Sans Frontières Foundation, Slovenia

19.00–19.30 Reception
@National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia

20.00 Let’s talk about Cross-Regional Cooperation: WB6 and V4
–21.30 In partnership with International Visegrad Fund.
@City Hotel Ljubljana
Speakers:
› **Mr Jan Beneš**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Czech Republic
› **Mrs Kamilla Duda-Kawecka**, Charge d’affaires, Embassy of Poland
› **Ms Mirjana Jeremić**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Serbia
Mr Lukáš Kajan, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Slovakia
› **H. E. Mr Pëllumb Qazimi**, Ambassador, Embassy of Albania
› **Ms Mirela Tuzović**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Montenegro
› **Ms Krisztina Varju**, Chargé d’affaires, Embassy of Hungary

Moderator: **Mr Mak Selimović**, President, Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations

21.30–22.00 Reception
@City Hotel Ljubljana

Saturday, 31 August

09.00 Let’s go on a Networking Scavenger Hunt
–12.00 In partnership with Zavod Ypsilon.
@City Hotel Ljubljana
Facilitators:
› **Ms Nejka Šegatin**, Director, Zavod Ypsilon, Slovenia
› **Mr Dino Kovačević**, Programme Director, Zavod Ypsilon, Slovenia

13.00 Youth and Euro-Atlantic Integrations of Western Balkans and the role of V4 – Preparing Policy Recommendations
–17.00 In partnership with International Visegrad Fund.
@City Hotel Ljubljana
Introductory remarks:
› **Dr Miran Lavrič**, Associate professor, University of Maribor, Slovenia

14.30 Working Lunch
–15.00 @City Hotel Ljubljana
Table moderators:
› **Ms Jana Juzová**, Research Fellow, EUROPEUM, Czech Republic
› **Ms Anna Korienieva**, Secretary General, Model United Nations Prague, Czech Republic
› **Ms Aleksandra Pikus**, President, BETA Polska, Poland
› **Mr Ferenc Németh**, Researcher, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary

› **Mr Mak Selimovic**, President, Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations
› **Mr Juraj Hajko**, Researcher and Project Manager, The Slovak Foreign Policy Association
› **Ms Lilla Judit Bartuszek**, Relations Team Officer, V4SDG, Hungary
› **Ms Meliha Muherina**, Programme Director, Young BSF, Slovenia

19.00 Connecting Youth
–22.00 In partnership with Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform.
@City Hotel Ljubljana
Introductory remarks:
› **H.E. Ms Majlinda Bregu**, Secretary General, Regional Cooperation Council, Bosnia and Herzegovina

19.30 Reception
–20.00 @City Hotel Ljubljana
Facilitators:
› **Ms Krisela Hackaj**, Executive Director, Cooperation and Development Institute, Albania
› **Ms Dafina Peci**, Secretary General, National Youth Congress of Albania
› **Mr Mak Selimovic**, President, Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations

Sunday, 1 September

10.00 Providing accessible information for diverse populations
–12.00 In partnership with Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.
@City Hotel Ljubljana
Speaker:
› **Mr Markland Starkie**, Head of Content for GOV.UK, UK Government Digital Service

Moderator: **Dr Martina Bofulin**, Research Fellow, Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

14.00 Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education - Hackaton
–16.30 In partnership with Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia and Youth Council of Slovenia.
@Hotel Lovec, Bled
Working Lunch Facilitators:
› **Ms Meliha Muherina**, Programme Director, Young BSF, Slovenia
› **Ms Anja Fortuna**, President, Youth Council of Slovenia
› **Ms Tjaša Sobočan**, Project Manager, Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia

16.30 Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education – Policy Recommendations
In partnership with Digital Innovation Hub and Youth Council of Slovenia.
@Hotel Lovec, Bled
Speakers:
› **Dr Emilija Stojmenova Duh**, CEO, Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia
› **Dr Jernej Pikalo**, Minister of Education, Ministry of Education, Slovenia
› **Ms Tanja Fajon**, Member of the European Parliament, European Parliament
› **Mr Peter Ribarič**, Co-founder and Director, Silicon Gardens Fund

Moderator: **Ms Anja Fortuna**, President, Youth Council of Slovenia

18.00 “State of the World” with H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly
@Café Belvedere, Bled
Speaker:
› **H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, President of the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly

Moderator: **Ms Sabina Carli**, Diplomat Trainee, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

19.00–19.30 Reception
@Café Belvedere, Bled

19.30 Closing of Young BSF 2019
–22.00 @Café Belvedere, Bled
Closing remarks:
› **Mr Andor Dávid**, Executive Director, International Visegrad Fund, Hungary

Moderator: **Ms Federika Fait**, Co-founder and Board Member, V4SDG - Visegrad for Sustainability
Chair: **Ms Meliha Muherina**, Programme Director, Young BSF, Slovenia



Programme

Monday, 2 September

09.00 –12.30 Conflict and Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Mare Nostrum or Global Space?
In partnership with Istituto Affari Internazionali.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Voda Hall
Welcome remarks:
➤ **H.E. Paolo Trichilo**, Ambassador, Italy
Opening remarks:
➤ **Mr Dobran Božič**, State Secretary, Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia
Adress by:
➤ **Dr Ettore Greco**, Executive Vice-President, International Affairs Institute (IAI), Italy
A region in turmoil: Geopolitical dynamics and Social Change in the Mediterranean
Speakers:
➤ **Dr Djallil Lounnas**, Professor of International Relations, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco
➤ **Dr Neil Quilliam**, Associate Fellow, Middle East & North Africa Programme, Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs, United Kingdom

Moderator: **Dr Ettore Greco**, Executive Vice-President, International Affairs Institute (IAI), Italy

Prospect of Regional Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the role of international organizations
Speakers:
➤ **Dr Ekaterina Stepanova**, Head of Peace and Conflict Studies Unit, National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russia
➤ **Ms Sibelle El Labban**, Executive Assistant for Research Support, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
➤ **Prof. Dr Musa Shteivi**, Director, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan

Moderator: **Mr Emiliano Alessandri**, Senior External Cooperation Officer, OSCE Secretariat General, Austria

Concluding remarks
➤ **Mr Gregor Perič**, Head, National Assembly's delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Slovenia
➤ **Ms Meliha Muherina**, Programme Director, Young BSF, Slovenia

12.30–13.00 Reception
In partnership with Italian Embassy to Slovenia
@Hotel Rikli Balance

Monday, 2 September

13.00–14.00 Gathering
@Bled Festival Hall

14.00 Opening of the 2019 BSF
–14.30 @Bled Festival Hall
Welcome address:
➤ **H.E. Dr Miro Cerar**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia
Address by:
➤ **H.E. Mr Marjan Šarec**, Prime Minister of Slovenia
Keynote Address:
➤ **H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly
Chaired by:
➤ **Mr Peter Grk**, Secretary-General of Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia

14.30 Conversation with Presidents
–15.15 @Bled Festival Hall
Speakers:
➤ **H.E. Ms Kersti Kaljulaid**, President of Estonia
➤ **H.E. Mr Borut Pahor**, President of Slovenia

Moderator: **Mr Ali Aslan**, Presenter and Journalist, Germany

15.15 Multilateralism at Crossroads
–16.15 @Bled Festival Hall
Speakers:
➤ **H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly
➤ **H.E. Mr Josep Borrell Fontelles**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation of Spain
➤ **H.E. Mr Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey
➤ **H.E. Dr Miro Cerar**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia

Moderator: **Mr Ali Aslan**, Presenter and journalist, Germany

16.15–16.30 Coffee Break
@Bled Festival Hall

16.30 Winning the '20s: A Leadership Agenda for the Next Decade
@Bled Festival Hall
Speaker:
➤ **Mr Martin Reeves**, BCG Managing Director and Senior Partner, Global Director of the BCG Henderson Institute, United States

17.05 Presentation of the BSF
–17.15 Distinguished Partner 2019 Award
@Bled Festival Hall

➤ **Mr Iztok Mirošič**, Ambassador-at-Large / Special Envoy of the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia
➤ **Ms Alenka Bratušek**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Infrastructure of Slovenia
➤ **Prof Enrico Letta**, Dean, Sciences Po Paris, France

17.15–18.15 Let's Talk About Sustainability
@Bled Festival Hall
Keynote Speaker:
➤ **Prof Jeffrey Sachs**, Director, Center for Sustainable Development, United States
Speakers:
Dr Andrea Illy, Chairman, illycaffè S.p.A., Italy
➤ **Dr Janez Potočnik**, Co-Chair, UNEP International Resource Panel
➤ **Prof Jeffrey Sachs**, Director, Center for Sustainable Development, United States

Moderator: **Ms Ladeja Godina Košir**, Founder and Director Circular Change, Ljubljana, and Chair of CG ECEP, Brussels

18.30 The (Soft) Power of Creativity: The Entertainment Industry in International Relations
–19.30 @Bled Festival Hall
Speakers:
➤ **Ms Katarina Čas**, Actress, Slovenia
➤ **Prof Bill Elliott**, Professor of Contemporary Writing and Production, Berklee College of Music, United States

Moderator: **Mr Žiga Pirnat**, Bled Strategic Forum Creative Director, Slovenia

20.00 Networking Reception
–22.00 @Grand Hotel Toplice, Grand Hall
Addresses by:
➤ **Mr Janez Fajfar**, Mayor of Bled, Slovenia
➤ **Mr Janez Škrabec**, General Manager, RIKO, Slovenia

Chaired by: **Mr Peter Grk**, Secretary-General of Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia

22.00 Night Owl Session – Creating a Resilient and Inclusive Future
In partnership with Global Diplomacy Lab.
@Grand Hotel Toplice, Lake Lounge

Contributors:
➤ **Ms Cecilia Barja**, Community Organizer and Writer, Bolivia
➤ **Ms Amina Benkhadra**, General Director, ONYHM, and President, RNI Women Organisation, Morocco
➤ **Ms ElsaMarie DSilva**, Founder and CEO, Red Dot Foundation, India
➤ **Ms Elizabeth Maloba**, Change and Growth Facilitator and EAC Member, Global Diplomacy Lab, Kenya
Young BSF Representatives:
➤ **Ms Lilla Judit Bartuszek**, Relations Team Officer, V4SDG, Hungary
➤ **Mr Ivan Nikolovski**, Junior Researcher, Institute for Democracy „Societas Civilis“, North Macedonia

Tuesday, 3 September

9.00 NATO: What's Next? – Views on Euro-Atlantic Security 70 Years after the Washington Treaty
–10.30 In partnership with Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Arnold I Hall
Keynote Speaker:
➤ **Mr Karl Erjavec**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Slovenia
Speakers:
➤ **Dr Damir Črnčec**, State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister of Slovenia
➤ **Mr Sven Sakkov**, Director, International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia
➤ **Mr Pedro Serrano**, Deputy Secretary General for CSDP and Crisis Response, European External Action Service
➤ **Ms Radmila Shekerinska**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of North Macedonia
➤ **Mr Róbert Vass**, President, GLOBSEC, Slovakia
➤ **Mr Scott M. Weber**, President, Interpeace, Switzerland
Young BSF Representative:
➤ **Mr Emir Hasanović**, Program Development Officer, Chemonics, North Macedonia

Moderator: **Ambassador Jelko Kacin**, Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Security Policies, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

9.00 (Re)sources on the Move
–10.30 @Rikli Balance Hotel, Arnold II Hall
Speakers:
➤ **H.E. The Honourable Carmelo Abela**, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta
➤ **Ms Nina Gregori**, Executive Director, European Asylum Support Office
➤ **Ms Shada Islam**, Director for Europe and Geopolitics, Friends of Europe, Belgium

12.00 Resources of Modern Diplomacy:
–13.30 Honorary Consuls and Their Renewed Role
In partnership with World Federation of Consuls.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Voda Hall
Keynote Speaker:
➤ **Dr Marko Smole**, Director, FICAC World Federation of Consuls, Slovenia
Speakers:
➤ **Prof. Dr Klemen Jaklič**, Judge and Professor of Constitutional Law, Constitutional Court of Slovenia
➤ **Mr Nikolaos Margaropoulos**, Secretary General, International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations (FICAC), Greece
➤ **Prof. Dr Ernest Petrič**, Senior Adviser to the President of the Republic, Slovenia
➤ **Mr Leif-Kristian Sverstad**, Director and Chairman of the Trade and Economic Development Committee, International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations (FICAC), Norway

Moderator: **Ms Katja Geršak**, Executive Director, Centre for European Perspective, Slovenia

16.00 Start:up Slovenia Meet-up with
–17.30 Yossi Vardi (by invitation only)
In partnership with Start:up Slovenia, organised by Venture Factory, Slovene Enterprise Fund and Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Zrak Hall

BUSINESS BLEDED STRATEGIC FORUM

Tuesday, 3 September

8.30 AmCham Reinvention Breakfast –
–10.00 Predicting the Unpredictable: How to Win in the Flow of Constant Change?
In partnership with AmCham Slovenia.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Sonce Hall
Reinvention: Necessity, Creativity or Natural Process?
Speakers:
➤ **Ms Ina Kukovič Borovnik**, Founder, BELAVODA, Slovenia
➤ **Mr Nikola Slavnič**, CEO, In Your Pocket, Slovenia

Technology: Empowerment or Supremacy?
Speakers:
➤ **Mr Joseph Dumoulin**, Chief Technology Innovation Officer, Verint Intelligent Self-Service, United States
➤ **Mr Marten Kaevats**, National Digital Advisor, Government Office of Estonia
➤ **Mr Josko Mrndze**, Country Manager Adriatics Region, Google, Croatia
➤ **Mr Gregor Potočar**, Managing Director South-East Europe, SAP, Slovenia
➤ **Dr Matthias Sachs**, Director Corporate Affairs, Microsoft CEE, Germany

Security in an Unpredictable World
➤ **Mr Uroš Majcen**, Head of Security Operations Center Department, S&T Slovenija d.d., Slovenia

Moderator: **Ms Ajša Vodnik**, CEO, AmCham Slovenia

10.00 Tourism for All Destinations:
–13.00 Dispersal over Place and Time
In partnership with Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenian Tourist Board.
@Grand Hotel Toplice, Grand Hall
Speakers:
➤ **Mr Zdravko Počivalšek**, Minister of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia
➤ **Ms Maja Pak**, Director, Slovenian Tourist Board
➤ **Ms Daniela Wagner**, Regional Director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, PATA, United Kingdom

Panel Speakers:
➤ **Ms Eva Štravs Podlogar**, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia
➤ **Mr Andrew Agius Muscat**, Secretary General, Mediterranean Tourism Foundation, Malta
➤ **Ms Valeria Dufлот**, Co-founder, CEO, Venezia Autentica and Over-tourism Solution, Italy
➤ **Prof Tanja Mihalič**, Professor, School of Economics and Business, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Moderator: **Mr Jaka Repanšek**, Partner, Republis Consulting, Slovenia

10.15 The Three Dimensions of Artificial Intelligence: Science, Business & People
In partnership with Siemens.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Sonce Hall
Keynote Speaker:
➤ **Dr Yossi Vardi**, Entrepreneur and Investor, Israel
Speakers:
➤ **Mr Joseph Dumoulin**, Chief Technology Innovation Officer, Verint Intelligent Self-Service, United States
➤ **Mr Julian King**, European Commissioner for the Security Union
➤ **Dr Michael May**, Head of Data Analytics & AI, Siemens Corporate Technology, Germany
➤ **Dr Jernej Pikalo**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia
➤ **Dr Matthias Sachs**, Director Corporate Affairs, Microsoft CEE, Germany
➤ **Dr Emilija Stojmenova Duh**, Director, Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia

Moderator: **Ms Pika Šarf**, Junior Research Fellow, Institute of Criminology, Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

11.45 Invest Talk Slovenia 3.0: Trends and Challenges of Global FDI: A Threat or an Opportunity?
In partnership with Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Sonce Hall
Welcome Speech:
➤ **Mr Zdravko Počivalšek**, Minister of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia
Keynote Speech:
➤ **Dr James Zhan**, Director of Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD
Speakers:
➤ **Mr Aleš Cantarutti**, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of Slovenia
➤ **Dr Rastislav Chovanec**, State Secretary, Ministry of Economy of Slovakia
➤ **Prof Valerio De Luca**, Executive President, Global Investors Alliance, Italy
➤ **Mr Miha Polak**, Acting Head of EBRD Residence Office in Ljubljana, EBRD
➤ **Mr Boštjan Skalar**, Executive Director, World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies

➤ **Mr Luka Vesnaver**, Partner-in-Charge of Financial Advisory Services, Deloitte, Slovenia
➤ **Dr James Zhan**, Director of Investment and Enterprise, UNCTAD

Moderator: **Mr Sebastian Shedadi**, Global Markets Reporter, fDi Magazine Financial Times Group, United Kingdom

14.30 A Climate-Neutral Smart Economy
–16.00 – Greentech
In partnership with Center of Energy Efficient Solutions and Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Sonce Hall
Speakers:
➤ **Dr Saša Bavec**, Group Marketing Director, Member of Executive Committee, Group Knauf Insulation, Belgium
➤ **Mr Gregor Benčina**, President, Slovenijales Group, Vice president Center of Energy Efficiency Solutions, Initiator of GreenTech Slovenia, Slovenia
➤ **H.E. Mr Bernard Fautrier**, Vice-president CEO of the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, Minister Plenipotentiary, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on sustainable development issues, Monaco
➤ **Mr Tom Fux**, CEO, Toyota Fleet Mobility Europe, Germany
➤ **Dr Janez Potočnik**, Co-Chair, UNEP International Resource Panel
➤ **Ms Ana Roš**, Chef, Hiša Franko, Slovenia
➤ **Mr Rok Vodnik**, Member of the Management Board, Petrol d.d., President of the Board, Center of Energy Efficiency Solutions, Slovenia

Moderator: **Dr Martin Porter**, Executive Chair, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, United Kingdom

16.00 Pitch your Green Idea!
–16.30 *In partnership with Center of Energy Efficient Solutions, EIT InnoEnergy, and ABC Accelerator.*
@Rikli Balance Hotel, Sonce Hall

Getting around BSF: Map of Bled



- 1 Bled Festival Hall (Cesta svobode 11)

2 Hotel Krim (Ljubljanska 7)

3 Hotel Park (Cesta svobode 15)

4 Grand Hotel Toplice (Cesta svobode 12)

5 Best Western Premier Hotel Lovec (Ljubljanska cesta 6)
- 6 Kompas Hotel Bled (Cankarjeva 2)

7 Rikli Balance Hotel (ex Hotel Golf) (Cankarjeva 4)

8 Hotel Savica Garni (Cankarjeva 6)

9 Hotel Astoria (Prešernova 44)
- 10 Vila Zlatorog (Veslaška promenada 9)

11 Vila Bled (Cesta svobode 18)

12 Shuttle Point

CONTACT INFORMATION
info@bledstrategicforum.org
General Information: **+386 (0)41 411 079**
Media Information: **+386 (0)41 411 092**
Medical Emergencies: **+386 (0)41 411 126**

f t i M y #BSF2019

Download Attendify via



BSF 2019

Speakers' biographies

Young Bled Strategic Forum

Opening of the Young BSF 2019

**Katja Geršak**

Executive Director of the Centre for European Perspective, co-organiser of the Bled Strategic Forum, and Editor-in-Chief of the Bled Strategic Times. She previously worked as Vice-President of Business Angels of Slovenia. She is the co-founder of Regional Dialogue, a non-governmental organisation working on the justice sector reform in Uzbekistan.

**Peter Grk**

Secretary-General of Bled Strategic Forum and Western Balkans Coordinator at the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, he chaired the Committee on the Civilian Aspect of Crisis Management in Brussels, and was Adviser to the Foreign Minister and Chief Foreign Policy Adviser to the Prime Minister. He holds a degree in political science.

**Meliha Muherina**

Project manager at the Centre for European Perspective, where she focuses on the role of youth and the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans. She graduated in international relations from the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. She is also Vice President of Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for the United Nations.

**Dejan Židan**

President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia and President of the Social Democrats. His previous positions include Chairman of the Board of the Panvita Group, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, and Member of Parliament. He has a Master's degree in Veterinary Science.

Young BSF Chat "Future of Work"

**Mart Dekleva**

Managing Director at ABG – Adriatic Business Group LTD with a demonstrated history of working in the logistics and supply chain industry. Skilled in entrepreneurship, event management, manufacturing, and production planning.

**Nikola Vuković**

A partner and member of the senior leadership team for SEE in the Boston Consulting Group. He has over 13 years of experience in strategy management consulting with the primary focus on strategy, commercial excellence and transformation topics in consumer goods and retail industry. A senior core team member of BCG Global & CEE Consumer Practice Area.

Empowering Creative and Responsible Youth Toward Better Future

**Caroline Assaf**

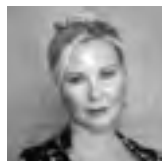
Founder of Young Speakers, a social initiative empowering youth through communications and connections. She served as President for Sustainable Cities International and led a government-funded youth internship programme in Latin America and Africa. She is Member of the Advisory Board to the World Economic Forum and about to graduate with a Master's degree in Sustainable Development at Harvard Extension School.

**Ann Godart**

Project Manager at Luxembourg-City Incubator, in charge of communication and providing young entrepreneurs with driving solutions in scaling their business. Her previous positions include Communication and Digital Coordinator, HR Business Partner at Indosuez Wealth (Europe), Career Development Manager at Crédit Agricole Luxembourg focusing on high potentials and women heading for C-suite positions, Training Manager in Swiss and Dutch banks.

**Jerca Legan Cviki**

President of the international women's foundation Femmes Sans Frontières, anthropologist, lecturer, publicist and philanthropist. Strategic communication expert for institutions within the public and private spheres, locally and internationally. Author of several books, including monographs on the media phenomenon, focusing on gender and elites in contemporary society. Her multilingual fairy-tale was put up as a theatre play.

**Lucija Mulej Mlakar**

Business anthropologist, sociologist, public speaker and writer. Under the motto "Perceive, Awaken" she combines hard-core science with subtle spiritual and subconscious concepts. Her paradigm is Budnjani 4Q, (IQ, EW, SQ, PQ), the connectivity of intelligences, engaged in the ideas of "insight economy".

**Nadja Štante Furlan**

An Associate Professor of religious studies and Senior Research Fellow at the Science and Research Centre of Koper. A Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley for the 2008–09 academic year. She is a member of the Commission for Women in Science and Equal Opportunities, an expert body at the Slovenian Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

Let's talk about Cross-Regional Cooperation: WB6 and V4

**Jan Beneš**

Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Slovenia. He previously served as Head of Office of the State Secretary at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held several positions in academic institutions. He graduated in international relations from Charles University in Prague.

**Kamilla Duda-Kawecka**

A lawyer specialised in the institutional law of the EU. A diplomat since 2002, she has served both at Polish embassies abroad and at the EU Delegation, dealing with the law of treaties, human rights and the Western Balkans.

Mirjana Jeremić

N/A

**Lukáš Kajan**

Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Ljubljana. For several years he worked for an NGO that promoted EU and NATO membership. He has held several positions at the Slovak Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, and served at the Slovak Embassy in Warsaw.

**Pëllumb Qazimi**

Former Chief of General Staff of the Albanian Armed Forces with the ranks of Brigadier General, Major General and Lieutenant General (2000–2006). Ambassador of Albania to Croatia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007–2014), 2014 Ambassador to Slovenia. In 2012 he authored the book Albania, the Military and the Foreign Influence, 1912–1991. He holds a PhD from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb.

**Mak Selimović**

A passionate advocate for regional reconciliation and cooperation. He graduated from Georgetown University, School of Foreign Service where he developed a strong interest for Peace and Justice Studies, regional cooperation and sustainable development. Previously, he served the UN - ICTY and was a member of BiH's delegation to the UNODC. He currently chairs the BiH Association for the UN.

Mirela Tuzović

N/A

Krisztina Varju

N/A

Let's go on a Networking Scavenger Hunt

**Dino Kovačević**

Programme Director at The Ypsilon Institute, responsible for business development through sales and partnerships, and passionate about building communities for young, purpose-driven professionals. He was previously Account Manager at Belgium's Fieldrive, now Community Brands, world's leading technology provider for purpose-built organisations, based in the US.

**Nejka Šegatin**

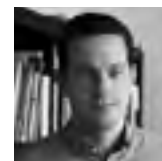
Director of The Ypsilon Institute. She started her professional career as Head of the mentoring programme of The Ypsilon Institute. She has a Bachelor's degree in comparative literature and is preparing her Master's on the youth sector in Slovenia. Her goal is to enable young people to find their own paths in life.

Youth and Euro-Atlantic Integrations of Western Balkans and the role of V4 – Preparing Policy Recommendations

**Miran Lavrič**

Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Maribor. He has participated in a number of research projects focusing on youth in Slovenia and Southeast Europe and has published a number of scientific articles in international journals on sociological topics.

Working Lunch

**Juraj Hajko**

Researcher and project manager at the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) with the main focus on the EU, France and the Balkans. Before entering SFPA, he worked in several media and in the NGO sector. As a foreign correspondent in Brussels, he reported on EU topics and continued his career as a reporter of the Radio and Television of Slovakia. He holds a degree in International Relations from Masaryk University, Czech Republic.

**Lilla Judit Bartuszek**

A Hungarian law student and Relations Officer at V4SDG, a youth-led international organisation striving to give a brand new, sustainability-based profile to the Visegrad Group and the countries involved in it. Besides the UN Sustainable Development Goals, her main fields of interest are international law, international relations and European public law.

**Jana Juzová**

Jana Juzová is a Research Fellow in the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy. Her research focuses primarily on

regionalism, Visegrad cooperation, democratization and European integration of the Western Balkan countries, and EU enlargement. Her previous worriece include the EULEX Mission to Kosovo, GLOBSEC or Institute of International Relations in Prague.

Anna Korienieva
An international relations student at the University of Economics in Prague. The desire to make this world a better place to live motivated her to join the MUN Prague organisation, and she has been its active member for the last three years. She has taken part in numerous MUNs around Europe, among others in Germany, France and the UK.

Meliha Muherina
(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Ferenc Németh
Research Fellow at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) in Budapest. He was previously a journalist of a Hungarian political newspaper, covering the politics of Southeast Europe, and an intern within the Press Office of EULEX. He is strongly committed to media freedom and to the Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans.

Aleksandra Pikus
Chair of the Polish branch of BETA Europe, BETA Poland, the organiser of the annual conference Model European Union Warsaw offering participants from all around Europe an insight into the functioning and aims of the European Union and encouraging them to participate in decision-making processes. She is graduating in International Economics with a Master’s thesis on regional convergence processes across EU regions.

Mak Selimovic
(See Let’s talk about Cross-Regional Cooperation: WB6 and V4.)

Connecting Youth

Majlinda Bregu
Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council. From 2007 to 2013, she served as Minister of European Integration. As a Democratic Party member (Centre Right), she was elected Member of Parliament of Albania for three consecutive legislatures (2005–2017). During the 2013–2017 Parliamentary term, she initiated several legal initiatives against gender-based and domestic violence which are currently in force.

Reception

Krisela Hackaj
Since 2011 Director of the Cooperation and Development Institute – CDI, an independent think tank based in Tirana that focuses on research in regional cooperation, economic and social development dynamics, and institutional governance. Her main research topics relate to the EU integration process, regional cooperation, connectivity agenda and youth in the Western Balkans.

Dafina Peci
A young political scientist, Secretary General for NYC Albania and an Associated Professor of Classic and Contemporary Political Philosophy at the University of Tirana. For 7 years she has been contributing on community development and youth engagement in politics. She is the representative of Albanian youth on the RYCO Governing Board.

Mak Selimović
(See Let’s talk about Cross-Regional Cooperation: WB6 and V4.)

Providing accessible information for diverse populations

Martina Bofulin
Research Fellow at the Slovenian Migration Institute at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. She was previously a JSPS postdoctoral fellow at Osaka University and Erasmus Mundus Basileus fellow at Belgrade University. Her research interests include various forms of Chinese mobility, migrant integration, and migrant heritage.

Markland Starkie
Head of Content for GOV.UK, based at the UK’s Government Digital Service. His previous position was Deputy Head of Digital at the University of Bristol and he has spent over 10 years working in digital teams for universities and the public sector. He has a particular focus on content design, content strategy and product management.

Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education - Hackathon

Anja Fortuna
President of the National Youth Council of Slovenia. Before that, she was Vice President for international cooperation. In her years as a youth activist, she was a scout, rural youth vice president, board member of the Slovenian rural youth, president of the Idrija student club, board member of Youth Centre Idrija and others.

Meliha Muherina
(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Tjaša Sobočan
Project Manager at Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia, supporting digital innovations within education and civil society. She holds a Master’s degree in Diplomacy with a special focus on social innovations and public diplomacy. She is a Professional Tech Fellow Alumni by WorldChicago (2018) and IVLP Alumni in Digital Economy and Emerging Technologies for Social Good in U.S. (2019).

Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education – Policy Recommendations

Tanja Fajon
A politician and journalist, currently serving as a member of the European Parliament (MEP), the Vice Chair of Socialists and Democrats, and the Vice Chair of Social Democrats of Slovenia. A strong advocate of freedom of movement and its economic benefits, Fajon was a rapporteur on the visa liberalization process for the Western Balkans. In 2014, she was re-elected as an MEP and became the first Slovenian women to have won her mandate with preferential votes.

Anja Fortuna
(See Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education – Hackathon.)

Jernej Pikalo
Slovenia’s Minister of Education, Science and Sport. In 2003 he obtained a PhD in Political Science from University of Ljubljana. During his academic career, he was also a Marie Curie fellow at the University of Warwick in the UK. In 2013 he became Full Professor of Political Science at the University of Ljubljana. He was Minister of Education, Science and Sport during 2013/2014.

Peter Ribarič
N/A

Emilija Stojmenova Duh
Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana and coordinator of the national FabLab network. She is Director of Digital Innovation Hub Slovenia, the national one-stop-shop for digital transformation and digital competence development. She coordinates several projects on digitalisation for innovation and rural development.

“State of the World” with H.E. Ms María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the General Assembly of the UN

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés
President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, the fourth woman – and the first woman from Latin America – to hold this position. She has over 20 years of multilateral experience, as Ecuador’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of National Defence, Coordinating Minister of Natural and Cultural Heritage and Permanent Representative to the UN in New York and Geneva.

Sabina Carli
Diplomat trainee, assistant to the Director-General for Economic and Public Diplomacy at the Slovenian Foreign Ministry. She was the UN Youth Delegate of Slovenia in 2017/2018. She finished her MA programme at University of Kent and postgraduate specialisation programme in diplomacy at the China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing.

Closing of Young BSF 2019

Andor Dávid
Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Hungary in Slovenia, 2014–2018. Adviser to the Secretary General of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Head of consular section at the Hungarian Embassy in Kosovo, 2011–2012. Diplomat (EU/NATO) integration affairs and Deputy Consul at the Embassy in Montenegro, 2009–2011. Department for the Western Balkans at the Foreign Ministry, 2006–2009.

Federika Fait
Co-founder and board member of V4SDG, a youth-led non-profit initiative aimed at encouraging action and cooperation on the UN SDGs in the Visegrad Four countries. She is also working on the establishment of a new international school in Budapest, grounded in the concepts of entrepreneurial learning through real life projects and education for sustainability.

Meliha Muherina
(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Conflict and Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Mare Nostrum or Global Space?

Emiliano Alessandri
An international security expert with a focus on Euro-Mediterranean security and transatlantic relations. He currently serves the OSCE Secretary General in Vienna where he is in charge of the Mediterranean and migration portfolios. He also a visiting professor at the College of Europe in Bruges.

Dobran Božič
State Secretary in the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His previous positions include Director of the Government Office for the Protection of Classified Information, Military Adviser at the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations in New York,

Chief of the General Staff and numerous command and staff positions in the Slovenian Armed Forces.

Sibelle El Labban
Executive Assistant for Research Support at the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), American University of Beirut (AUBPilgram). Prior to her current position, she worked as a Senior Research Assistant at FAFS, focusing her research on food and nutrition security and sustainable food consumption in MENA. She aspires to drive societal change through food and nutrition policies.

Ettore Greco
Executive Vice President of Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) and Head of the Multilateralism and global governance programme of the institute, which he managed from 2008 to 2017. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution from January 2006 to July 2007.

Djalil Lounnas
Professor of international studies in Al Akhawayn University, specialist for Jihadi organisations in North Africa-Sahel. Author of the upcoming book Jihadi Movements in North Africa-Sahel (Editions l’Harmattan) and of several academic articles, including in Middle-East Policy, Political Violence and Terrorism.

Meliha Muherina
(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Gregor Perič
Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia since 2018 (Modern Centre Party, SMC), Head of the parliamentary delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Chair of the Committee on the Economy, Member of the Committee on European Union Affairs and of the Committee on Infrastructure, Environment and Spatial Planning. Holds a BA in Political Science.

Neil Quilliam
Associate Fellow with the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House. He was previously Senior Research Fellow heading the Programme’s Future Dynamics in the Gulf project. Prior to that, he was project director of Syria and Its Neighbours policy initiative and acting head of the MENA Programme, having first joined Chatham House in January 2014.

Musa Shteivi
N/A

Ekaterina Stepanova
She heads the Peace and Conflict Studies Unit and is a lead researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) in Moscow. She edits the journal Pathways to Peace and Security and teaches on international programmes at MGIMO University, the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow, and at the European University at St. Petersburg.

Paolo Trichilo
Career diplomat since 1990, currently the Italian Ambassador to Slovenia. His previous postings abroad include Mulhouse (Consul), Ankara, New Delhi, and the OECD. Previous assignments in Rome: CSCE/OSCE; International Antiterrorism, Iraq Task Force, Crisis Unit; Diplomatic Adviser to Labour Minister. Other previous activities: scholarship at the University of Iowa (Political Sciences Department); University Assistant to the Italian Judge at the ECHR; Lieutenant in the Carabinieri.

Bled Strategic Forum

Opening of the 2019 BSF



Miro Cerar

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia. Between 2014 and 2018, he served as Slovenian Prime Minister. Before entering politics, he was a Full Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana, and legal adviser to the National Assembly. He has authored and co-authored numerous Slovenian and foreign books and scientific papers.



Marjan Šarec

Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia from 2018. He enrolled at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana, where he graduated in 2001. He was Mayor of Kamnik from 2010 to 2018. By running in the presidential election of 2017, he caught much attention on the national political stage.

Peter Grk

(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Conversation with Presidents



Kersti Kaljulaid

As of 2016 she is President of the Republic of Estonia. From 2004 to 2016, she was a Member of the European Court of Auditors, responsible, inter alia, for the research and development funds and structural policies. Prior to that she served as Prime Minister Mart Laar's Economic Advisor. She also worked for various Estonian companies.



Borut Pahor

During his long political career, he was member of the European Parliament and served as President of the National Assembly and as Prime Minister of Slovenia. In the 2012 presidential ballot, he became the fourth elected President of Slovenia by winning the support of 67.37 per cent of voters. In 2017 he was re-elected for a second term.



Ali Aslan

Internationally renowned TV presenter and journalist with over 20 years' experience. His journalistic career includes work for CNN, ABC and Deutsche Welle TV. He regularly moderates at high-level global conferences and has shared the stage with top world leaders, including Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron, Justin Trudeau and Bill Clinton. He studied International Politics and Journalism at Columbia University and Georgetown University.

Multilateralism at Crossroads

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

(State of the World" with H.E. Ms Mar.a Fernanda Espinosa Garc.s, President of the General Assembly of the UN".)



Josep Borrell Fontelles

Spain's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation since 2018. Aeronautical engineer, economist and professor of mathematics who served as Secretary General in the Government, Minister of Public Works and Transport, and as President of the European Parliament. He is nominated to become the next High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu

N/A

Miro Cerar

(See Opening of the 2019 BSF.)

Ali Aslan

(See Conversation with the Presidents.)

Winning the '20s: A Leadership Agenda for the Next Decade



Martin Reeves

Managing Director and Senior Partner at Boston Consulting Group. He is the global director of BCG Henderson Institute (BHI), BCG's strategy think tank, which explores ideas beyond the world of business, ideas which may have implications for business strategy. He has led strategy assignments in healthcare, consumer goods, financial services, and industrial goods in Japan, the US, and Europe.

Presentation of the Bled Strategic Forum Distinguished Partner 2019 Award



Iztok Mirošič

Ambassador-at-Large, Special Envoy of the Minister and Programme Director of the BSF. He previously served as Deputy Foreign Minister and State Secretary, Ambassador to the UK, Italy, Libya, Tunisia, Malta and San Marino and Permanent Representative to the UN IMO, FAO and WFP. He worked as policy adviser to the Prime Minister, Director General for European affairs and bilateral political relations and as negotiator for the Arbitration Agreement on the state boundary with Croatia.



Alenka Bratušek

Slovenian Minister of Infrastructure. From March 2013 until May 2014 she was Prime Minister of Slovenia, the first woman to hold this position. She took charge of the Government at the most challenging period for independent Slovenia as yet. She also served as a Member of Parliament.



Enrico Letta

Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) at Sciences Po and President of the Jacques Delors Institute. In June, he was appointed President of APSIA (Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs). He was the Prime Minister of Italy from April 2013 to February 2014.

Let's Talk About Sustainability



Andrea Illy

Chairman of illycaffè, a family-established business founded in Trieste, Italy in 1933, with the singular mission of producing the world's highest quality coffee. Honorary Chairman of the Association for Science and Information on Coffee (ASIC), from 2012 to 2016 Chairman of the International Coffee Organisation's Coffee Market Promotion and Development Committee, and since 2013 Chairman of the Fondazione Altagamma.



Janez Potočnik

Former EU Commissioner for science and research and for the environment. He is currently Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme and SystemIQ Partner, as well as a member of the European Policy Centre's Advisory Council. In 2013 he received the United Nations Champions of the Earth Award.



Jeffrey D. Sachs

University Professor and Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, where he directed the Earth Institute from 2002 until 2016. He is also Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and a commissioner of the UN Broadband Commission for Development. He has been adviser to three United Nations secretaries-general.



Ladeja Godina Košir

Founder and Executive Director of Circular Change. She is currently Chair of the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in Brussels and co-author of the first Roadmap towards the Circular Economy in Slovenia. She was finalist of the Circular Leadership Award 2018 (Davos WEF), recognised as the regional engine of circular economy transition.

The (Soft) Power of Creativity: The Entertainment Industry in International Relations



Katarina Čas

Slovenian actress who regularly acts in international film and television productions. She has worked with some prominent names, including Martin Scorsese, Leonardo DiCaprio, Margot Robbie, Al Pacino, Christopher Plummer, Brendan Gleeson, Mike Myers, Ashley Judd etc. She is also active in her home country.



Bill Elliott

A Grammy- and Emmy-nominated composer, arranger and conductor, Tony Award winner, Professor at Berklee College of Music. He has worked with such diverse artists as Beyoncé, Tony Bennett, Donna Summer, Stevie Nicks, and Smokey Robinson, conducted the Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Detroit symphonies, among others, and contributed original songs/arrangements to numerous TV shows and films.



Žiga Pirnat

An award-winning musician who left a promising diplomatic career to pursue music. His creative work includes projects with artists such as Barbra Streisand, Josh Groban, Andrea Bocelli, and Rihanna. He holds three Bachelor's and a Master's degree in diverse fields, including international relations and music; currently, he is a PhD candidate in linguistics, his other love.

Networking Reception



Janez Fajfar

Mayor of Bled. He graduated in Ethnology and Geography from the University of Ljubljana in 1979. After travelling the world in the '80s, he joined the Iron Forging Museum in Kropa as a curator. In 1984, he became a reception manager at Hotel Vila Bled and, in 1991, he was appointed the hotel director. In 2006, he was elected mayor of Bled, to be re-elected in 2010, 2014, and 2018.



Janez Škrabec

Founder and Managing Director of Riko, today recognised as the most successful engineering company in the wider region. Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Morocco and of the Republic of Belarus and a member of many diplomatic and business clubs.

Peter Grk

(See Opening of the Young 2019 BSF.)

Night Owl Session



Cecilia Barja

For 20 years, she has led complex programs in her home country of Bolivia and in the US. Currently, she is a community organiser in North Carolina, creating collective power to ensure fair treatment of immigrants. Former councilwoman of La Paz and national secretary of Movimiento Sin Miedo, a political party. She writes regularly for Bolivian media.

Amina Benkhadra

N/A



ElsaMarie D'Silva

Founder & CEO of Red Dot Foundation (India) and President of Red Dot Foundation Global (USA), whose platform Safecity crowdsources personal experiences of sexual violence and abuse in public spaces. Since Safecity was launched in 2012, it has become the largest crowd map on the issue in India, Kenya, Cameroon, and Nepal.

Lilla Judit Bartuszek

(See Working Lunch.)

Elizabeth Maloba

N/A

Ivan Nikolovski

N/A

NATO: What's Next? – Views on Euro-Atlantic Security 70 Years after the Washington Treaty



Karl Erjavec

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Slovenia since September 2018, he previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Environment and Spatial Planning. During his term as Defence Minister between 2004 and 2008, he presided over the Summit of NATO ministers and co-shaped the EU's defence policy during Slovenia's EU Council presidency. He holds a university degree in law.



Damir Črnčec

State Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister. He served as director of the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency and was an adviser for defence policy to the Chief of the General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces. Holder of a PhD in Political Science, he is the author or co-author of numerous professional and scientific articles.

Dimitrij Rupel

Obtained his PhD in sociology at Brandeis University in the US. Served as Slovenian Foreign Minister during the first years of Slovenia's independence, later as Mayor of Ljubljana and Ambassador to Washington. In 2005, he was Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. During the Slovenian EU Council presidency in 2008, he was in charge of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the EU. Currently, he teaches at Ljubljana's New University.



Sven Sakkov

Between 2015 and 2017 he served as Director of NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and between 2008 and 2015 as Policy Director at the Ministry of Defence of Estonia. Previously he was posted to the Estonian Embassy in Washington and Mission to NATO, and worked as a national security adviser to the President and as Director of policy planning at the MOD.



Pedro Serrano

Deputy Secretary General for the Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response at the European External Action Service. His previous positions include Managing Director for Crisis Response and Operational Coordination at the EEAS, Principal Advisor on External Affairs to the President of the European Council, Head of EU Delegation to the UN in New York, and Head of Civilian Crisis Management Directorate at the General Secretariat of the Council.



Radmila Shekerinska

Minister of Defence and Deputy Prime Minister of North Macedonia. She was the Deputy Prime Minister who succeeded in making the country an EU candidate. Previously a four-term MP; she headed two OSCE/ODIHR EOMs. She received her MA in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.



Róbert Vass

Founder and President of GLOBSEC, a Bratislava-based think tank committed to enhancing global security, prosperity and sustainability. Its mission is to shape the future by generating new ideas and solutions for a safer world. Ranking among the top 5 conferences in the world, the GLOBSEC Forum is regularly attended by influential politicians, businesspeople and thought leaders.



Scott M. Weber

President of Interpeace, an international organisation for peacebuilding. Previously, he worked in the Office of the United Nations Director-General in Geneva and in disaster preparedness. He holds a BA in International Relations, Economics and Russian from Georgetown University; Certificates of Executive Education in Leadership from Harvard University’s JFK School of Government and Oxford University’s Saïd Business School.

Emir Hasanović

N/A

Jelko Kacin

N/A

(Re)sources on the Move



The Honourable Carmelo Abela

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of the Republic of Malta. In 1990, he joined the Mid-Med Bank Ltd, today HSBC Bank Malta plc, where he worked as a Manager until April 2014. Until December 2014, he worked with the Prime Minister as the Government Spokesman and Whip. In 2014, he was ppointed Minister for Home Affairs and National Security. On the 9th of June 2017, he was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion.



Nina Gregori

In June she took over her duties as Executive Director of Malta-based European Asylum Support Office (EASO). She previously occupied senior management posts in the area of asylum, migration, integration and internal administrative affairs at the Slovenian Ministry of the Interior. She has a university degree in political science from the University of Ljubljana.



Shada Islam

Director for Europe and geopolitics at Friends of Europe, she is also Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Natolin) and a Fellow at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). Politico has named her as one of twenty most influential women in Brussels. She is the author of Friends of Europe’s much-read Frankly Speaking commentary.



Karin Kneissl

From December 2017 to June 2019 she served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria. She studied law and Arabic at the University of Vienna, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at GU. She is a graduate of ENA. Served in the MFA between 1990 and 1998, then turned into a freelance analyst; she has authored several books on energy and geopolitics.



Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

Cardinal Peter Turkson, former Archbishop of Cape Coast, served as Relator during the II Synod for Africa in 2009 and is President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. He has been appointed by Pope Francis as first Prefect of the new Dicastery for promoting Integral Human Development.



Matteo Villa

Research Fellow for the Migration Programme at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI). He is an expert for the T20 Task Force on Forced Migration and has contributed extensively to policy analyses on migration topics for the European Parliament, the Italian Parliament, the Lombardy Region, and the Municipality of Milan.



Amélie Jaques-Apke

Currently head of the Franco-German department at the think tank EuropaNova (Paris) and co-teaching at SciencesPo Paris, Amélie had several missions in the public sector (French Parliament, Franco-German Youth Office, the Ministry of Interior in Paris (migration, asylum) and the European Union Delegation in Washington DC). Her PhD addresses the post- Berlin wall security environment.



Martijn Pluim

Director for Migration Dialogues and Cooperation at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). He supervises the ICMPD’s project portfolio and the secretariats of the intergovernmental migration dialogues supported by the ICMPD, including the Prague Process, the Budapest Process, the Khartoum Process and the Rabat Process. He previously worked for the European Commission and was a member of the EU advisory board on trafficking in human beings.



Camino Mortera-Martinez

Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Reform in Brussels. Prior to joining the CER, she advised the European Commission and worked at a law firm and a large German company. A qualified lawyer; holds a MA from the College of Europe.

Protectionism as a Source of Global Instability



Lawrence Agyinsam

With over 20 years’ experience in banking, finance and investment management, he assumed office as CEO of the Ghana Export-Import Bank in March 2017, effectively collaborating with export credit agencies and EXIM Banks across the globe for SME and industry development, capacity building, strategy development, export promotion and reduction of Ghana’s import bill in specific sectors.



Sandra Gallina

Having joined the European Commission in 1988, she is today Deputy Director General at DG TRADE and the EU chief negotiator for the EU-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement. Between 2014 and 2018 she was Director for Sustainable Development, Economic Partnership Agreements – ACP, Agri-food and Fisheries at DG TRADE.



Rem Korteweg

Senior Research Fellow at the Clingendael Institute in the Netherlands. His current research interests include the future of the global trade system, Brexit, and Europe’s relations with China and the US. He has worked at the Centre for European Reform in London and the Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was a Fulbright scholar at Johns Hopkins SAIS.



Mojmir Mrak

Full Professor at the School of Economics, University of Ljubljana and Visiting Professor at universities in Austria and France. His main research fields include public finances as international trade and capital flows. He has served as a consultant to international organisations and to governments of several SEE countries.



Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen

Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD from January 2019. His portfolio includes strategic direction of several OECD policies. Until 2018, he was Permanent Secretary of State at the Danish Foreign Ministry. Prior to this, he served as Chief Diplomatic Adviser to two prime ministers and as Ambassador to the OECD and UNESCO. In 2013 he was Group Director for International Policy in Vodafone, London.



Tim Yeend

Principal Adviser and Chef de Cabinet to the Director-General of the WTO since 2013; serves as WTO’s Sherpa to the G20. He previously occupied senior positions with the Australian Government in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – Ambassador to the WTO and other IGOs in Geneva 2010–2013; First Assistant Secretary, Office of Trade Negotiations.



Guy De Launey

Balkans Correspondent for BBC News since 2012. He was previously BBC correspondent in Southeast Asia, based in Phnom Penh, for 8 years. He is also a correspondent for Monocle magazine and presents The Globalist and Daily programmes on Monocle 24. He has lived and worked in Japan, reported from dozens of countries around the world and interviewed everyone from Ban Ki-Moon to Jackie Chan.

Tax Them If You Can: Fiscal (Re)sources in a Globalised World



Marko Mršnik

Senior Director in the European Sovereign Ratings Group at S&P Global Ratings, focusing on the eurozone sovereigns, the ECB and the EFSF. Before joining S&P Global Ratings, he was an economist in the European Commission specialising in the euro area macro-economics and a consultant for the EIB. He is the author of S&P reports on the impact of demographic and climate changes on sovereign ratings.



Sarah Perret

An Economist and Deputy Head of Unit at the OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration. Her unit is responsible for following global tax reform trends and for conducting assessments of countries’ tax systems. She is also the author of a number of studies on wealth taxation and on tax design for inclusive growth.



Frank-Jürgen Richter

Chairman of Horasis, a global visions community dedicated to inspiring our future. Horasis hosts the annual Horasis Global Meeting as well as regional summits focusing on China, India, and South East Asia. Richter has gained extensive experience and knowledge of the world’s economic, business and political scene and of its key players.



Karl Soukup

Since 2013, he heads the directorate in charge of state aid control in fiscal aid, research, development and innovation aid, as well as regional development aid at the European Commission’s DG Competition. This includes work on aggressive tax planning, in particular investigating selective fiscal schemes and individual tax rulings.



Paul Tang

Dutch MEP for the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament since 2014, a member of the parliamentary Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs. In the European Parliament, he battles for more jobs, a healthy financial sector at the service of society and more legitimacy for Europe.

Martin Sandbu

N/A

Rules-Based International Order or the Return of Geopolitics?



Seyed Abbas Araghchi

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs and a main negotiator in nuclear negotiations. He started his diplomatic career in 1988 and held numerous important positions in the Foreign Ministry, including Deputy for Legal and International Affairs, Deputy for Asia-Pacific and the CIS, Speaker, Dean of Faculty of International Relations, and Ambassador to Tokyo and Helsinki. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Kent.



Babafemi Badejo

An Attorney by profession, CEO of Yintab Strategy Consults. He retired from different roles at UN peace operations: Deputy Special Representative of UN Secretary-General; Chief of Staff and Political Affairs. Recently, he has consulted at the African Union on the implementation of the African Humanitarian Agency roadmap. He is Senior Adviser to former presidents and President, Court of the Prime Minister, Bahrain.



Jean-Christophe Belliard

Currently the EEAS Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs. As a career diplomat he previously served as French Ambassador to Madagascar to Ethiopia and to the African Union, as well as Director for Africa and the Indian Ocean at the French Foreign Ministry and as Special Envoy for Africa of former EU High Representative Javier Solana.



Chang Jae-bok

Ambassador for Public Diplomacy at the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Having joined the Ministry in 1988, he was appointed Chief of Protocol (Deputy Minister) in 2018. Prior to that, he served as Consul-General in Milan from 2014 to 2018 and Minister Counsellor in the Korean Permanent Delegation to UNESCO from 2009 to 2012.



Theresa Fallon

Founder and director of Centre for Russia Europe Asia Studies in Brussels. She is concurrently a member of Council for Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific and Nonresident Senior Fellow of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Previously she was a member of the Strategic Advisors Group for NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and worked in both Russia and China.



Walter Kemp

Head of the Strategic Policy Support Unit in the OSCE Secretariat. His previous positions include spokesman and speechwriter at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Vice President of the International Peace Institute, and a senior adviser to both the OSCE Secretary General and the OSCE High Commissioner on national minorities.

Iztok Mirošič

(See Presentation of the Bled Strategic Forum Distinguished Partner 2019 Award.)



Richard Moore CMG

Currently Director General for Political Affairs at the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Previously served as Deputy National Security Adviser; British Ambassador to Turkey; Director for Europe, Latin America and Globalisation; Director for Programmes and Change; and at

posts in Vietnam, Turkey, Pakistan and Malaysia. He read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University, followed by a post-graduate study at Harvard University and the Stanford Executive Programme.



Tobias Flessenkemper
Head of the Office of the Council of Europe in Belgrade. His previous postings include the EEAS in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Council of the EU in Brussels, Skopje and Sarajevo, the OSCE and ZIF-Berlin. In 2012-13 he was visiting fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). In 2013 he co-founded elbarlament.org. From 1998 to 2001 he was Secretary General of the European Youth Forum in Brussels.

State of Human Rights: A Conversation with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights



Michelle Bachelet Jeria
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (since September 2018); two-time president of Chile (2006–2010, 2014–2018), Defence Minister, Health Minister. First Executive Director of UN Women. She has chaired the ILO/WHO Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and co-chaired the High-Level Steering Group for Every Woman Every Child.



Dan Damon
He has presented the daily BBC World Update radio programme since 2003. Earlier, with his wife Sian, he set up a news agency in Budapest covering the collapse of Communism across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Reporting the war in Yugoslavia, they adopted their daughter Lejla as a baby in Sarajevo in 1992. Lejla now campaigns against sexual violence in war.

Climate Change – Saving the Planet by Going Circular



Pekka Haavisto
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland. During his career, he has held several high-level positions both within the UN system and in the EU with a focus on conflict-affected settings. He served twice as Minister in the fields of environment and international development prior to his current appointment, and has been a Member of Parliament of the Finnish Green Party for over 24 years.



Alejandro Adler
Director of Well-being Science and Policy at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Associate Editor for two of SDSN’s annual publications: the World Happiness Report and the Global Happiness Policy Report. He is also Deputy Director of the Global Happiness and Well-being Council and an Associate Research Scientist at the Center for Sustainable Development in the Earth Institute at Columbia University.



Cathrine Barth
Co-founde of Circular Norway, an business NGO with purpose to accelerate the transition to circular economy in Norway and drive global and local collaboration. She beholds an Executive Master of Management in Green Growth and Sustainable Business modelling from Oslo Business School. She is a former journalist, has extensive corporate background and years of experience as an innovation advisor.



Freek van Eijk
CEO of Holland Circular Hotspot, a public-private initiative that wants to make Circular Economy happen by sharing knowledge and innovation, and stimulate inter-

national partnerships by connecting governments, knowledge institutions and businesses. For over a decade he was Director of Strategy & PA at SUEZ and served on the board of the Dutch Waste Management Association.



Bernard Fautrier
He served as Minister for Public Works and Social Affairs of Monaco (1984–1995) and Minister for International Cooperation (1995–2003). Until 2003, he chaired the Barcelona Convention. He presently chairs the Monaco Committee of the World Energy Council, the Med Fund, the Be Med NGO (on plastic in the Mediterranean) and co-chairs the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI).



Kari Herlevi
A versatile multi-talent in the field of the circular economy. He is currently leading the circular economy area at Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund. Previously, he was responsible for the Resource-efficient economy area at Tekes, the Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation. He also worked in the Tekes Silicon Valley office for a few years.



Marjeta Jager
Deputy Director-General in the European Commission’s DG DEVCO. She started as Director for Security in 2005, later becoming Director for International Energy Affairs, and Head of Cabinet of the Transport Commissioner. Before joining the Commission she worked for the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1991 and was the first Deputy Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the EU.



Ben Macpherson
Minister for Europe, Migration and International Development in the Scottish Government from 2018. His previous employment also includes working in the renewable energy sector, in a school, for an NGO and in financial services. He studied at University of Edinburgh and University of York. He was elected MSP in May 2016.



Jack Pineda Dale
Microsoft’s Legal Director for Baltics, Slovenia and Serbia based in Helsinki. He specialises in AI, technologies and legal issues arising from those. Prior to his role as Legal Director, he was an Attorney Lead in Microsoft’s Digital Crimes Unit specialising in Cybersecurity and Cybercrime. He holds a Master’s in International Business Law from the University of Helsinki.

Ladeja Godina Košir
(See Let’s Talk About Sustainability.)

What Lies Ahead for the New European Commission?



Pierre Heilbronn
Member of the EBRD Executive Committee responsible for the Bank’s economic, policy and reform agenda, coordination within country strategies and European member states and institutions, managing bilateral and multilateral donor partnerships and ensuring the inclusive engagement of civil society. Before joining the EBRD in 2016, he was deputy chief of staff for the French Minister of Economy and Finance.

Guillaume Klossa
N/A

Enrico Letta
(See Presentation of the Bled Strategic Forum Distinguished Partner 2019 Award.)



Igor Mally
State Secretary at the Office of the Prime Minister. He was involved in negotiations on Slovenia’s accession to the EU and

served as Head of the Office of the State Secretary for European Affairs. In 2013 he became Head Adviser to the Prime Minister on EU affairs. In 2018, he was appointed Head of the Slovenian EU Presidency 2021 preparations.



Andreas Peschke
Since July 2018 he has been Director-General for European Affairs at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. His previous positions include German Embassies in Nigeria and Russia, and the Minister’s Office. He was Deputy Spokesperson as well as Spokesperson of the Federal Foreign Office. He served as Ambassador to Kenya and Director for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, Berlin.

Dimitrij Rupel
(See NATO: What’s Next?)

Young BSF Representative
(TBA)



Alojz Peterle
Cofounder and former President of Slovenian Christian Democratic Party, former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Slovenia, MEP 2004 - 2015, representative of the than candidate countries in the Praesidium of the European Convention, former Special Envoy of OSCE for Central Asia, Chief Observer of EU Election Observation Missions in Nigeria, Kenya and Kosovo.



Charles Powell
Director of the Elcano Royal Institute and Professor of Contemporary History at CEU San Pablo University. He holds a BA in History and Modern Languages from Oxford University, where he also obtained his D. Phil for a thesis on Spain’s transition to democracy. He has published six books and dozens of articles on Spanish history, politics and foreign policy.

Data – (Re)source of the Future



Julian King
EU Commissioner for the Security Union. He joined the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1985 and held various positions, including UK Ambassador to France (2016); Director General Economic & Consular (2014); DG of the Northern Ireland Office London and Belfast (2011); UK Ambassador to Ireland (2009); Chef de Cabinet to EU Commissioner for Trade (2008); UK Representative on EU Political and Security Committee, (2004). A graduate of Oxford University and the Ecole Nationale d’Administration, Paris.



Levente Juhasz
A public policy manager at Google for Central and Eastern Europe. He leads on the topics of digital transformation, economic contribution and sustainability in the region. Prior to joining Google, he spent five years in the energy sector working in EU affairs, strategy and business development, and innovation management.



Claudia Olsson
Founder of Stellar Capacity, a global education company specialised in providing strategic advice, analysis and professional development related to digital transformation. She is a member of the High Level Industrial Roundtable Industry 2030 at the European Commission, a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum and has served on the Faculty of Singularity University.



Gregor Pilgram
Supervisor of the financial performance and strategic development of ten CEE countries out of the Generali CEE Holding. He was CEO of Generali Slovenia and President of the Supervisory Board of Generali Croatia. Recently he has become President of the Supervisory Board of Adriatic Slovenica insurance com-

pany. He graduated from Vienna Economic University with a Master’s degree in Business Administration in 2001.



Samir Sharma
CEO of datazuum, a data strategy and analytics consultancy. As a thought leader, he works with private and public sectors creating and delivering sustainable data strategies for growth and efficiency. He has been elected the Faculty Lead for Data Strategy at the PWC Leadership Academy.



Jolene Creighton
Editorial Director of Boma Global. Prior to this, she was the founding Editor-in-Chief of Futurism, recently acquired by Singularity University. Over the course of her career, she has taught over a dozen university courses on digital publishing and provided strategic consultancy to governments, non-profits, and start-ups with a wide variety of communications needs.

(Re)sources in Women’s Hands: Tapping the Potential



Lady Barbara Judge CBE
A trained commercial lawyer with a successful international career as a senior executive, chairman and non-executive director. She was Chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority and UK Pension Protection Fund. Currently she holds the chairmanship of the Astana Financial Services Authority and the UK fraud prevention agency. In 2010 she was awarded Commander of the British Empire.



Nasser Kamel
Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean. He served as Ambassador to the UK and France and was Assistant Minister for Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs and Director of Egypt’s Public Information Service. He took part in the drafting of the Joint Declaration of the 2008 Paris Summit that marked the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen
(See Protectionism as a Source of Global Instability.)



Monica McWilliams
Chairperson of Interpeace and Emeritus Professor at Ulster University. She was signatory of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; co-founded the Women’s Coalition and represented South Belfast on the Legislative Assembly. She was Oversight Commissioner for prison reform and serves on the Independent Reporting Commission for Disbandment of Paramilitary Organisations.



Melanie Seier Larsen
A Managing Director and Partner at the Boston Consulting Group. She is the first and only female CEE partner at BCG. With 15 years’ experience in management consulting, her primary focus is on consumer products, retail, people and organisation functionality topics. Since 2014, she is President of Women Managers at the Managers’ Association of Slovenia.



Aleksander Zalaznik
President of the Managers’ Association of Slovenia, the chairman of the Management Board 2017-2020 and Senior Vice President Commercial Controls at Danfoss Heating Segment and General Manager of Danfoss Trata. Amongst the awards he received for his economic achievements are the awards for extraordinary achievement in economy in 2012 and for exemplary business and entrepreneurial achievements in 2007. He is also a long-time member of the Managers’ Association of Slovenia and from 2008 onwards a member of its Management Board.



Simona Leskovar

State Secretary at the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A career diplomat, she served as Ambassador to Japan and the Republic of Korea. In 2013, the Government appointed her R2P National Focal Point. Prior to that she was Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in New York and the Foreign Minister’s adviser in his Cabinet during Slovenia’s first EU Council Presidency in 2008. Between 2001 and 2004 she served at the Slovenian Embassy in Washington.

Disinformation Campaigns – A Source of Instability in Eastern Partnership Countries

Angelina Gros-Tchorbadjiyska

N/A

Elina Lange-Ionatamishvili

N/A



Vakhtang Makharoblishvili

He has worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia since graduation and has held increasingly important positions within its structure, including Director of the Department for International Organisations, Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.



Alexandr Roitman

Spokesperson, Head of the Public Diplomacy, Strategic Communication and Interaction with the Press Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova. Previously held different positions at the MFAEI and the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova to Moscow accredited concurrently in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.



Veronika Vichová

Co-author of a study on how Kremlin propaganda portrays European leaders published by The Atlantic Council and the annual Kremlin Watch Ranking, she compiles the Kremlin Watch Briefing, a newsletter on influence operations for more than 7,000 European experts, journalists and officials. She participated in the Transatlantic Fellowship Program in Washington at the office of Senator Rob Portman.

Mark V. Vlašič

N/A



Oana Popescu

Former Romanian State Secretary for EU Affairs and currently Director of GlobalFocus Center, an independent foreign policy think-tank. She is an international consultant, media commentator, writer and lecturer specialised in geopolitics and security in the EU/ NATO neighbourhood, political risk and strategic analysis, EU policies, democratic transformation, asymmetric threats and shifting models of governance.

Western Balkans - Europeisation, Democratisation, Shared Responsibility

Pekka Haavisto

(See Climate Change – Saving the Planet by Going Circular.)

Majlinda Bregu

(See Connecting Youth.)



Igor Crnadak

Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH. Former member of the European Integration Committee of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska. Served as Deputy Minister of Defence of BiH and Chairman of the BiH NATO Coordination Team. Between May and November 2015, he was Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of Council of Europe.



Ivica Dačić

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia since 2014. He was Delegate in the Chamber of Citizens of the Federal Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2004), Minister of Information (2000–2001) and Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia (2008–2014), and was appointed Prime Minister in the 2012–2014 period. He became the leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia in 2006.



Srdjan Darmanović

Montenegrin Foreign Minister, Professor at the University of Montenegro, and a member of the Venice Commission and the European Council on Foreign Relations. His previous positions include Ambassador to the US, founding father and the first dean of the Faculty of Political Science, founder and President of the Podgorica-based think-tank CEDEM and a founding member of the Diplomatic Academy.



Nikola Dimitrov

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia. His past engagements include Deputy Foreign Minister, as well as Ambassador to the US and the Netherlands. He was a national coordinator for NATO integration. Between 2014 and 2017, he was a distinguished fellow at The Hague Institute for Global Justice. He holds a LL.B (Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje) and LL.M (Cambridge University).



Vedran Džihić

Senior Researcher at oiip – Austrian Institute for International Affairs, Co-Director of Center for Advanced Studies, South East Europe (CAS SEE) and Senior Lecturer at the University of Vienna. He is a member of BIEPAG and an advisory board member of the European Forum Alpbach. He is the author of four monographs and editor/co-editor of further 17 edited volumes/books.



Behgjet Pacolli

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo. He started his political career as a Member of the Parliament in 2007 and was re-elected in 2011. The same year he served for a short period of time as President of Kosovo. From 2010 until 2014 he was First Deputy Prime Minister.



Matthew Palmer

Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs at the US Department of State with responsibility for the Western Balkans and the Aegean. His earlier tours included Belgrade, Nicosia, the US Mission to the United Nations, and various positions in Washington, including on the Secretary’s Policy Planning staff and at the National Security Council. He is a distinguished graduate of the National War College.



Péter Szijjártó

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. He has been a Member of Parliament for Fidesz since 2002, and in 2018 began his fifth term in Parliament. From 2006 to 2010 he was Fidesz Communications Director, the Prime Minister’s Spokesperson from 2010 to 2012 and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and External Economic Relations from 2012 to 2014.

Young BSF Representative



John O'Brennan

Holder of the Jean Monnet Chair in European Integration and Director of the Maynooth Centre for European and Eurasian Studies at Maynooth University, he specialises in the politics of the EU’s enlargement policy and has published widely on this topic in academic journals. He is also a regular contributor to media discussions of the European Union.



Goran Svilanović

Served as Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council (2013–2018) and was Co-ordinator of the OSCE’s economic and environmental activities (2008–2012). Between 2004 and 2007, he chaired the working table for democratisation and human rights of the Stability Pact for SEE. From 2000 to 2004 he was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/Serbia and Montenegro.

Closing of the 2019 BSF

MFA Slovenia Representative

N/A

Brexit: Where Next?



Stefaan De Rynck

Senior Adviser to Michel Barnier, Chief EU Negotiator for Brexit, in charge of strategy, relations with think tanks and public engagement. Previously, he was Head of Unit in the department for the single market and financial regulation. He has worked on various other EU policies, including transport, labour markets, the environment, and regional development.



Thomas Raines

Head of the Europe Programme at Chatham House. Previously, he was manager and research fellow with the programme. Prior to joining Chatham House, he worked as an analyst in the Strategy Unit of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. His research interests lie in British foreign policy, EU politics, and public attitudes to international affairs.

Ivan Rogers

N/A



Gisela Stuart

Chair of Change Britain, successor organisation to the official Leave campaign in 2016. She was a Labour MP from 1997 to 2017 and a minister in the Blair government. Focused on foreign affairs and security. Since 2018 she is Chair of Wilton Park, an executive agency of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

Side-events

Resources of Modern Diplomacy: Honorary Consuls and Their Renewed Role



Marko Smole

Holder of a PhD in non-career diplomacy. An honorary consul, founder and two-time President of Slovenian Consular Corps. Between 2004 and 2012 he was Vice President of the European Federation of Consular Corps. In 2016 he was elected Director of FICAC, the World Federation of Consuls. He is the Founder and Director of the AC Investment company.



Klemen Jaklič

Judge of the Constitutional Court of Slovenia and Full Professor of Constitutional Law at the Faculty of Law and Business Studies, Ljubljana. Former Lecturer on Law at Harvard Law School, Harvard University, and full member of the European Commission for Democracy through Law. Author of Constitutional Pluralism in the EU, Oxford University Press 2014.



Nikolaos K. Margaropoulos

Secretary General of the International Federation of Consular Corps and Associations. Managing Partner of Scientia Legis Law Firm in Thessaloniki and Athens. Honorary Consul of the Philippines in Thessaloniki since 1995. He has been bestowed the title of cavaliere by the Italian President. Member of boards

of directors of bilateral chambers, various private sector companies and non-profit institutions.



Ernest Petrič

Former diplomat, Ambassador to the UN, Judge, past President of the Constitutional Court, a member and President of the International Law Commission, past President of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.



Leif-Kristian Sverstad

Honorary Consul of Yemen in Norway, Chairman and President of Corps Consulaire de Norvège, FICAC Director and Chairman of the Trade & Economic Development Committee, FICAC delegate to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. He is the owner and Managing Director of Falk Maritime, a shipbroking and investment company, and holds several national and international board and counsellor positions.

Katja Geršak

(See Opening of the Young BSF 2019.)

Start:up Slovenia Meet-up with Yossi Vardi



Yossi Vardi

One of Israel’s early entrepreneurs with an extensive Government career, including the post of Director General at the ministries of development and of energy. Chairman of the Israel National Oil Company and of Israel Chemicals, with 86 high tech investments. Exits to AOL, Cisco, Microsoft, Ebay, Yahoo, IAC; instant messaging pioneer. Co-chairman of the DLD conference. Participated in Israeli peace talks with the Palestinians, Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

Business Bled Strategic Forum

AmCham Reinvention Breakfast – Predicting the Unpredictable: How to Win in the Flow of Constant Change?



Ina Kukovič Borovnik

Having started out as a lawyer, she went to live and work in China as a sustainability consultant, came back to Slovenia to be the Prime Minister’s Spokesperson, later finished her MBA, and became a professional yoga instructor. She is a business owner, facilitator, speaker, chief reinvention officer. She works in, for and with Nature.



Niko Slavnič

An MBA Professor, CEO, serial entrepreneur, angel investor, author and most of all, a creative soul always open to new challenges. As the founder of IQbator, he has supported more than 1000 startups since 2001. CEO of global InYourPocket Guides, founder of The Slovenia Institute, creator of The Slovenia Restaurant Awards. Lecturer at ESSCA and IEDC - Bled School of Management.



Joseph Dumoulin

Professional programmer since 1985. For the last 15+ years, most of his work centres around machine learning and natural language processing, and managing a research team at Verint, the Customer Engagement Company. He has helped create some of the earliest and most widely-used commercial automated conversational applications and a number of early commercial prototypes in the conversational AI space.



Josko Mrndze

Country manager at Google Adriatic, helping businesses in the region be successful online. His previous positions include Board Member at InBev Croatia, Managing Director of Blitz Film and Video distribution, Managing Director of McCann Erickson Croatia, and Member of Supervisory Board of InBev Croatia.

Gregor Potočar
N/A



Matthias Sachs
Director of Corporate Affairs and Government Affairs Lead for Microsoft in Central & Eastern Europe since 2015. Before joining Microsoft as Government Affairs Manager for Germany in 2012, he worked as a business and public affairs consultant and as political adviser to a MP of the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia.



Uroš Majcen
Head of the Security Operation Center Department, dealing with ever-increasing cyber security threats and response to them at the local and regional levels. His responsibilities include consulting, building up capabilities and services to prevent, control and respond to cyber security disruptions for organisations and institutions. Member of a number of industry-related organisations.



Ajša Vodnik
CEO of the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia – AmCham Slovenia and Vice Chair of AmChams in Europe. Previously she worked in the media, first as a journalist, then as editor-at-large and TV host, and went on to launch TV Paprika television station at the early age of 29.

Tourism for All Destinations: Dispersal over Place and Time



Zdravko Počivalšek
In 2014, and again in 2018, he was appointed Minister of Economic Development and Technology. He has a degree in Agricultural Engineering. For 15 years, he managed the Terme Olimia spa resort. He won the Chamber of Commerce and Industry award for outstanding economic and entrepreneurial achievements in 2004 and was declared Manager of the Year 2010.



Maja Pak
For over 20 years she has worked for the Slovenian Tourist Board and led the transformation of Slovenia into the world's first green destination and a leader in sustainability in tourism. Her vision of Slovenia as a green boutique destination for 5-star experiences has gained unanimous support among stakeholders in Slovenian tourism.



Daniela Wagner
Regional Director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at PATA, responsible for driving strategic relationships with international institutions and private companies. She is also responsible for coordinating European PATA chapters, recruiting and retaining members, coordinating key events (including the PATA Advocacy dinner), and securing sponsorship.



Eva Štravs Podlogar
She holds a university degree in Economics. Owing to her wide experience in tourism, in September 2016, the Government appointed her State Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology; following the inauguration of the new Government, she was in October 2018 again appointed State Secretary.



Andrew Agius Muscat
Entrepreneur, currently Secretary General of Mediterranean Tourism Foundation and CEO of Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association. His previous positions included consultant within the Office of the Prime Minister of Malta and Chairman at the Public Broadcasting Services Ltd, policy consultant to various Ministries and adviser to the World Bank and the European Parliament.



Valeria Dufлот
Co-founder of Venezia Autentica and Overtourism Solution, whose goals are to make tourism a driver of sustainable development by leveraging digital technologies and collaborating with governments. She is an advocate of the use of tech and innovation to create impact and has been leading projects empowering communities for the past ten years.



Tanja Mihalič
As Professor at the University of Ljubljana, she leads two world's top ranked tourism management master programs. Her current positions include board member of Tourism Ljubljana, member of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics at the UN World Tourism Organisation and expert research evaluator for the Research Executive Agency of the European Commission.



Jaka Repanšek
Jaka Repansek LL.B, MBA, is the founder and managing partner of RePublis Consulting. He has been working for various TIME (Telecom, Internet, Media, Entertainment) companies. He obtained his graduate degree from Cambridge University and Faculty of Law in Ljubljana (European Community Law) and completed two-year MBA graduate studies at the University of Kansas.

The Three Dimensions of Artificial Intelligence: Science, Business & People

Yossi Vardi

(See Start:up Slovenia Meet-up with Yossi Vardi.)

Joseph Dumoulin

(See AmCham Reinvention Breakfast.)

Julian King

(See Data – (Re)source of the Future.)

Levente Juhasz

(See Data – (Re)source of the Future.)



Michael May
Heads the Company Core Technology Data Analytics & AI at Siemens. In Siemens Corporate Technology, Munich, he is responsible for fourteen research groups in Europe, the US, and Asia. He drives in AI & data analytics research at Siemens. Before joining the company in 2013, he was Head of the Knowledge Discovery Department at Fraunhofer IAIS in Bonn, Germany.

Jernej Pikalo

(See Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education – Policy Recommendations.)

Emilija Stojmenova Duh

(See Digitalization for boosting youth sector and education – Policy Recommendations.)

Yossi Vardi

(See Start:up Slovenia Meet-up with Yossi Vardi.)



Pika Šarf
She graduated from the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana and is a junior research fellow at the Institute of Criminology at her alma mater, interested in questions of law and technology; her research focuses on human rights implications of artificial intelligence and big data.

Invest Talk Slovenia 3.0: Trends and Challenges of Global FDI: A Threat or an Opportunity?

Zdravko Počivalšek

(See Tourism for All Destinations: Dispersal over Place and Time.)

James Zhan
N/A



Aleš Cantarutti
He has a degree in Sociology. In 2008, he took employment at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia and was made the director of the Centre for International Relations at the Chamber in 2009. The Slovenian Government appointed him State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology in December 2014, where he was reappointed in September 2018.



Rastislav Chovanec
After obtaining his PhD from the University of Economics in Bratislava in 2006, he was Adviser to the Prime Minister for FDIs. In 2012, he became State Secretary responsible for the business environment, investments, trade and innovation. He is also Chairman of the Supervisory Board of SPP – Distribúcia, the largest Slovak distributor of natural gas.



Valerio De Luca
Founder and Executive Chairman of the International Academy for Social and Economic Development and Executive Director of the Global Sustainability Forum. Executive President of Global Investors Alliance and President of the Strategic Council, Universal Trust Global Advisory. He is Pro-Chancellor and Visiting Professor at the University of Kigali, Rwanda. Formerly, he was legal adviser at CONSOB, the public authority responsible for regulating the Italian financial markets.



Miha Polak
Principal Banker, Acting Head of Slovenia, EBRD. Before joining the EBRD in 2014, he was Director of Corporate Banking at SID Bank. Previously he held various positions in New York, Ljubljana and London with LBS Bank, Deloitte, and Erste Bank. He holds a MIEM degree from SDA Bocconi, an MBA from American University and BA from Florida Southern College.

Boštjan Skalar

CEO of the WAIPA, the umbrella organisation of IPAs established in 1995 under the auspices of UNCTAD. Previously he served as Director of SPIRIT Slovenia – Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology as well as Slovenian Consul for Economic Affairs in Istanbul.



Luka Vesnaver
A Financial Advisory Services Partner at Deloitte with more than 18 years of experience in providing services to clients across the Central European region. During his career he has managed and successfully closed a number of complex corporate restructuring transactions involving multiple stakeholders and some of the largest M&A transactions and privatisations in the region.



Sebastian Shehadi
Global markets reporter for fDi Magazine, a specialist publication from the Financial Times that focuses on global foreign investment. Prior to joining fDi, he was a political risk analyst at Citibank, London. He grew up in London and Beirut, where he learnt French and Arabic. He earned his MSc at the London School of Economics, reading History of International Relations.

A Climate-Neutral Smart Economy – GreentechO



Saša Bavec
Group Marketing Director and Member of the Executive Management Committee of Knauf Insulation. He also manages the Systems Division, the business unit selling insulation to industrial customers. Previously he was Marketing Director EUMEA in the pharmaceutical company Sandoz and Assistant Professor of Intellectual Property at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana.



Gregor Benčina
CEO of the EBS Group since 2002. Manager of the Year of St. & C. Europe (2010), Young Manager of the Year in Slovenia (2006). Member of the Olympic Committee of Slovenia and of the Governing Board of the European Athletic Association. Partner at the Athletic Diamond League in Monaco. Since 2015, he has been Honorary Consul of Finland in Slovenia.

Bernard Fautrier

(See Climate Change – Saving the Planet by Going Circular.)



Tom Fux
The Slovenian Tom Fux is CEO of Toyota Fleet Mobility Europe and has more than 20 years' experience in the company. His previous positions include President of Toyota Germany, Director of sales operations of Toyota Motor Europe, and Managing Director of Toyota Adria.

Janez Potočnik

(See Let's Talk About Sustainability.)



Ana Roš
A self-taught chef, she has been named the world's best female chef in 2017 by the Restaurant magazine. She and her life partner Valter Kramar own Hiša Franko (Kobarid, Slovenia), one of the leading restaurants in Europe which in June 2019 was ranked 38th on the 50 World's Best Restaurants list.



Rok Vodnik
Member of the Management Board of the Petrol Group, holds a Master's degree in management and organisation. He started his business career at Avtotehna-Canon and later joined Kolektor. In 1999, he moved to the US to manage the founding of Comtrade USA. His areas of expertise and responsibility include sales, trading, energy, and the environment.



Martin Porter
He joined the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership as Executive Chair of CISL Brussels from the European Climate Foundation, where he was Europe Group Co-ordinator, having been an EU Public Affairs consultant on industry, environment and sustainability issues since 1996. He is a representative on the Consultative Commission on Industrial Change of the European Economic and Social Committee, a member of UCL's European Institute Advisory Board and on Board of the Sustainable Biomass Programme.

Pitch your Green Idea!



Jernej Hočevar
Member of the Mebius team since its founding in 2008. Has worked on many facets of a start-up company from a business side, such as general administration, business communication and representation, pitching, as well as website design and deployment. On the technical side, my knowledge includes catalyst ink formulation, gas-diffusion electrode preparation and manufacture, MEA assembly, and industrial ink-jet printer operation.



Jaromir Dzialo
IT Architect. Winner of Founder Showcase, Seedcamp, covered by TechCrunch, Mashable, attracted funding from e.g. Aaron Patzer, was acquired by social network in US: Tagged. com (330+ mln of users). In the IT since 1994: founder of 3 successful startups, IT for Swiss banking domain, content distribution for 95% cinemas in Switzerland, 100+ web services. UI/UX evangelist with passion for ergonomics, usability and communication. Co-author of a semantic analysis patent and an open-source committer. Seasoned CTO, Product Manager, Software Engineering Manager, IT consultant.

BSF STRATEGIC PARTNERS



BSF MAJOR PARTNERS



BSF PARTNERS



BSF SPONSORS



BSF CONTRIBUTORS



INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



OFFICIAL AIRLINE CARRIER



ORGANIZERS



YOUNG BSF SPONSORS



YOUNG BSF PARTNERS





Bled
Strategic
Forum

SAVE THE DATE

31 August – 1 September 2020

www.bledstrategicforum.org