



The Western Balkans at a crossroads

Rome, December 6th-7th 2017



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The Western Balkans at a crossroads

*Conference organised by
the **NATO Defense College Foundation**
with the support of the **US Embassy in Rome***

ROME, 6th – 7th December 2017

Venue: *Centro Congressi Roma Eventi -Piazza di Spagna, Via Alibert, 5/a, Rome*

Draft Agenda

WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER 2017

14,00-15,00 Arrival of participants - Registration

15,00 Welcome remarks

- **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo**, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome*
- **Chris Whitecross**, Commandant, NATO Defense College*

Initial remarks

Paolo Alli, President, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Brussels

15,30 -17,00

SESSION 1

MOVING FORWARD: GOOD REASONS FOR GOOD REFORMS

Since 1991, year of the Yugoslav dissolution, distances between the Western Balkans and the European institutions have been covered, however much still needs to be done. The Balkans are at an historical crossroad. They should move towards a future of social integration, economic development and political stability and the rule of law.

Chair: **Dimitrij Rupel**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Ljubljana*

- **Miro Kovač**, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, Zagreb*
- **Yannis-Alexis Zepos**, Ambassador former Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens*
- **Lyubomir Kyuchukov**, Director, Economics and International Relations Institute, Sofia*
- **Jelena Milic**, Director, Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies, Belgrade*

General Discussion

17,00-17,30 Coffee break

SESSION 2

OLD AND NEW ROADBLOCKS: HOW TO REMOVE THEM?

The Balkan region is known for producing more history than they can digest. In addition to the heritage of fragmentation and hardship, new challenges are emerging, such as criminal networks, small arms proliferation, illegal trafficking and terrorist groups. These challenges are often of a more political nature, including external actors trying to take advantage of the situation to improve their sphere of influence.

Chair: **Giovanni Russo**, Deputy Prosecutor, National Anti-Mafia Directorate, Rome*

- **Peter Neumann**, Director, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, King's College, London*
- **Matenia Sirseldudi**, Researcher, Institute for Police and Security Research, University of Bremen, Bremen*
- **Louise Shelley**, Director, Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center Fairfax, Arlington*
- **Tobias Freeman**, Senior Legal Officer, Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, Siracusa*

General discussion

THURSDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 2017

10,00-11,30

SESSION 3

REGIONAL CO-OPERATION: THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ART

The key priority for the Western Balkans towards the Euro-Atlantic integration is to move from post-war societies to a truly regional co-operation. This means building new infrastructures, passing economic reforms and fostering a renewed dialogue on security within the countries in the region. Nowadays, it is important to avoid the rebound to nationalism and protectionism. In this context, the European Union and NATO must be vectors able to foster a genuine conversation among the stakeholders of the area.

Chair: **Richard Hooker**, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for NATO and Europe, National Security Council, Washington D.C.*

- **Haakon Blankenborg**, Director Of Western Balkans / South East Europe Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Oslo*
- **Gordana Delic**, Director, Balkan Trust for Democracy, Belgrade*
- **Michel Soula**, Head of the Operations Section in the Operations Division, NATO HQ, Brussels*
- **Martinusz Zoltan**, Director, Enlargement, Security, Foreign Affairs Council Support, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Brussels*

General discussion

11,30-12,00

Coffee break

12,00-12,15

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Benedetto Della Vedova, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy*

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SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

A strong focus on strategic outlook in complex issues. High level contacts and negotiations. Special attention on countries of strategic relevance i.e. the Gulf region. Frequent Public Diplomacy activities to discuss policies and open issues. He held the position of Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance, between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic- political-industrial area, in relations with sensitive countries such as those in the Gulf and the Southern Mediterranean. He is the author of the books: “The road to Kabul”, publisher Il Mulino-Arel (2009) and “A political journey without maps, diversity and future in the Greater Middle East”. (Rubbettino 2013).

Chris Whitecross

Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome

Lieutenant General Chris Whitecross enrolled in the Canadian Forces in 1982. Successive postings have taken her from Germany to almost every province in Canada, notably at Canadian Air Division. Lieutenant General Whitecross has also performed for the Force Engineers at United Nations Protection Force (Yugoslavia). In February of 2015 she was appointed Commander of the Canadian Forces Strategic Response Team on Sexual Misconduct. In June 2015, Lieutenant General Chris Whitecross was appointed Commander, Military Personnel Command.

Hon. Paolo Alli

President, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Brussels

He has been a member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies for the New Centre Right Party (NCD) since March 2013. He serves on the Foreign Affairs Committee, the European Union Policies Committee and the Joint Committee on the Implementation of Fiscal Federalism. Mr Alli joined the NATO Parliamentary Assembly immediately following his election to the Italian parliament in 2013. He is Vice-Chair of the Italian Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Within the Assembly, Mr Alli is a member of both the Political Committee (PC) and the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM), and has served as Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships and Vice-Chairman of the GSM. He was elected President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly at the Assembly's Annual Session in Istanbul in November 2016.

Dimitrij Rupel

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ljubljana

Founder of the Slovenian Democratic Party, Dimitrij Rupel joined the Government and became first Slovenian Foreign Minister (1990-1993). Then, he served as Mayor of Ljubljana and Ambassador to Washington. He was re-elected Foreign Minister from 2000 till 2008, and was responsible for Slovenian memberships in EU and NATO. In 2005, he was Chairman in office of the OSCE. In 2008 he was in charge of General Affairs and External Relations Council of the EU. Minister Rupel has published several literary and academic books - on literature, politics and foreign relations. He teaches at the European Faculty of Law (Ljubljana, Nova Gorica) and the Faculty of State and European Studies (Kranj).

Miro Kovač

Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia

He is a Croatian historian, diplomat and politician who served as the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs in the Cabinet of Tihomir Orešković from January 22, 2016 until 19 October 2016. In 1995, Mr Kovac became employed in Office of the President of Croatia in the Department of Information in which he worked until 1999 when he was transferred to the position of the assistant adviser for Euro-Atlantic integration. He started his diplomatic career in 2001 as the Counselor at the Croatian Embassy in Brussels. In 2003, Kovac

become Minister Counselor at the Croatian Embassy in Paris. When Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) came to power after 2003 elections, Kovac was named Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in 2005 Head of Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry. In 2006, Kovac was appointed to the position of ambassador. From 2008 until 2013 he served as Croatian Ambassador to Germany.

Yannis Alexis Zepos

Ambassador and Former Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens

Former Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he is currently Chairman of the Board of the "Citizens Movement for an Open Society" and a Special Advisor to the "ELIAMEP" think tank. During his career, he served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Department for Balkan, Central and Eastern European Political Affairs and at the Department for Western European Political Affairs. He also served as Director of the Diplomatic Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2002-2004). Throughout his career, he was appointed for several missions in Cairo, Lisbon, Greece, Madrid, Chicago, Brussels and New Dehli. In 2004 he was appointed Permanent Representative of Greece to the North Atlantic Council.

Lyubomir Kyuchukov

Director, Economics and International Relations Institute, Sofia

Lyubomir Kyuchukov is a career diplomat and politician. He served as Deputy-Minister of foreign affairs of Bulgaria, member of the Council on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration to the President of Bulgaria, Member of the National Security Council, Ambassador to the United Kingdom. Currently Mr. Kyuchukov is Director of the Economics and International Relations Institute (EIRI) and member of the Board of the Bulgarian Diplomatic Society.

Jelena Milic

Director, Chairman of the Governing Board of Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies

Jelena Milic is among the most influential political analysts in Serbia and in the region of the Western Balkans. She worked as a political analyst and researcher for the International Crisis Group and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia. Member of the Forum for International Relations, a think tank set up by the European Movement in Serbia, she maintains, as well, an

OP/ED column in a leading Serbian daily newspaper, and a blog on one of the most frequently visited online portal in Serbia. Her areas of expertise are: Serbian security sector reform; Serbia – EU relations; Serbia - NATO relations; Russian influence in the Western Balkans; Kosovo; links between non-violent regime changes, transitional justice and security sector reforms.

Giovanni Russo

Deputy Prosecutor, National Anti-Mafia Directorate, Rome

From 1994 to 2002 he was a member of the Anti-Mafia District Prosecutor's Office at the Tribunal of Naples. Since September 2002 he has been a consultant to the Parliamentary Commission for Investigation on the Mafia Organized Crime. Mr Russo also took office as Deputy Prosecutor of the National Anti-Mafia Directorate, in 2016 he was promoted to Assistant Prosecutor. He is appointed for the processing of business relating to the Technology and Safety Resources Service; delegated to the exercise of the coordination functions with regard to the subjects "Information Technology", "Telecommunications", "Experts list", "Security" as well as "Collection and analysis of flows" and designated Magistrate in charge of the Service for Technological Resources and Security.

Tobias Freeman

Senior Legal Officer, Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights, Siracusa

Tobias Freeman is an Australian lawyer, international investigator and consultant with professional experience in human rights and international criminal justice, planning and conducting complex, large-scale investigations into the commission of international crimes as well as violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Prior to joining the Siracusa Institute as international research fellow and legal officer, he co-founded the International Crimes Evidence Project (ICEP), a groundbreaking initiative established in 2012 with leading global experts in the investigation and prosecution of atrocity crimes. He was admitted to the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Australia. He is also an alumnus of the University of Sydney Law School, the Siracusa Institute, and the Institute for International Criminal Investigations in The Hague.

Peter Neumann

Director, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation, King's College, London

Peter Neumann is Professor of Security Studies at the Department of War Studies at the King's College of London and has directed the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation. He currently serves as the OSCE Chairman's Special Representative on Countering Violent Radicalisation. He taught courses on terrorism, counterterrorism, intelligence, radicalization and counter-radicalization at King's College of London and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington.

Matenia Sirseloudi

Researcher, Institute for Police and Security Research, University of Bremen, Bremen

Matenia Sirseloudi works as sociologist at the Institute for Police and Security Research (IPoS) at the University of Applied Sciences and Public Administration in Bremen. She conducts researches on political violence, early detection and prevention, terrorism, radicalization, Jihadism and Islamism. Ms Sirseloudi led a research projects on "Radicalization as a Spill Over Effect of Armed Conflicts" and "Dyadic Mobilization and Enemy Constructions between radical movements". She is member of the European Expert Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT) and of the Advisory group of the European Counterterrorism Centre (ECTC) with publications in Defense & Security Analysis and Terrorism and Political Violence.

Louise Shelley

Director, Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center Fairfax, Arlington

Dr. Louise Shelley is the Omer L. and Nancy Hirst Endowed Chair and a University Professor at Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University. She founded and directs the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC). Professor Shelley served for six years on Global Agenda Councils of the World Economic Forum first on the illicit trade council and then as the inaugural co-chair of organized crime. She appears frequently in the media, lectures widely at universities and multinational bodies and has testified repeatedly before Congress and is therefore a life member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Richard D. Hooker, Jr.

Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for NATO and Europe, National Security Council, Washington D.C.

He previously worked as National Defense University Director for Research and Strategic Support and Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) in September 2013. As a member of the Senior Executive Service, he served as Deputy Commandant and Dean of the NATO Defense College in Rome from September 2010 to August 2013. He holds The Theodore Roosevelt Chair in National Security Affairs at NDU and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, and the Foreign Policy Research Institute. A former White House Fellow, Dr. Hooker previously taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point and held the Chief of Staff of the Army Chair at the National War College in Washington, D.C. He also served with the Office of National Service, The White House under President George H.W. Bush, with the Arms Control and Defense Directorate, National Security Council during the Clinton Administration, and with the NSC Office for Iraq and Afghanistan in the administration of George W. Bush.

Haakon Blankenborg

Director of Western Balkans / South East Europe Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Oslo.

Mr. Blankenborg has been director of Western Balkans Section/Section for Southeast Europe in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2011. From 2010 to 2011, he was the senior adviser for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Previously, he served as a member of the Norwegian parliament from 1981 to 2005, and chaired the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Enlarged Committee on Foreign Affairs from 1993 to 2000. In 2005, Blankenborg left the Parliament to become Norwegian ambassador to Serbia (and Montenegro). He holds degrees in history and political science from the University of Oslo.

Gordana Delic

Director, Balkan Trust for Democracy, Belgrade

She is the Director of the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall fund of the United States. Ms Delic has the knowledge of both non-governmental and governmental sectors in the Balkans as well as the knowledge of international donor strategies, programs, procedures and operations in the central, eastern, and southern Europe regions. Prior to her employment at the Balkan Trust for Democracy, Delic worked at Freedom House Serbia. Her international experience includes six years of work on different democracy development programs in Slovakia.

Michel Soula

Head of the Operations Section in the Operations Division, NATO HQ, Brussels

Michel Soula deals with NATO's current Operations at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, namely maritime operations and Kosovo. He also dealt with NATO's operation in Libya. Beforehand, he held the position of Deputy Director in the Private Office of the NATO Secretary General, working with Javier Solana and Lord Robertson. A French civil servant, Michel Soula was seconded to the French Foreign Service where he held various positions, in particular on chemical and biological warfare.

Zoltan Martinusz

Director, Enlargement, Security, Foreign Affairs Council Support, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, Brussels

Before joining the Council of the European Union, Ambassador Zoltan worked for the Hungarian Ministry of Defence first as Attaché to Permanent Mission of Hungary, then as Head of NATO Department and Head of Defence Policy Department. From 2002 to 2005 he took office as Senior Adviser to the Prime Minister. Also Deputy State Secretary for Multilateral Affairs for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Hungary in the North Atlantic Council. Mr Zoltan was therefore member of the Hungarian Atlantic Council, the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Association, the International Institute of Strategic Studies and the Academic Advisory Board of the NATO Defense College (2001-2004).

Benedetto Della Vedova

Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy

Member of the European Parliament from 1999 to 2004 and of the Chamber of Deputies until 2013. From 2014 Mr Della Vedova has been appointed as Under-Secretary at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his career he worked also as researcher for the Centre for Research and Environmental Economics and Policy (IEFE) and as Assistant Professor at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Milan). From July 2005 to May 2006 he was appointed Councilor of CNEL (National Council for Economics and Labour).



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CONCEPT

More than twenty years after the end of the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution, the easy-to-obtain part of the integration process between the Western Balkans and the Euro-Atlantic institutions has been reached, however today we meet the hardship.

The prospect of EU/NATO integration remains the main vehicle towards achieving sustainable regional stability and development. Constant commitment and periodical encouraging signals and incentives are the key elements to support the Western Balkans towards peace, stability and socio-economic progress.

Following this context, the conference is structured in three panels.

The first panel focuses on the good reasons to make the good reforms to guarantee in the Western Balkans a future of social integration, economic development and political stability. The Balkans are at a crossroads and it is essential to prevent their falling into the unsteadiness of the past.

The second panel considers the new threats the Western Balkans are tackling, such as criminal networks, small arms proliferation, illegal trafficking and terrorist groups. Economic inequalities are just the immediate consequences of these problems that, on the long-run, might lead to social disadvantages and risk to enlarge the lines of terrorism.

The third panel highlights that the key priority for the Western Balkans towards the Euro-Atlantic integration is to move from post-war societies to a truly regional co-operation. This means building new infrastructures, passing economic reforms and fostering a renewed dialogue on security within the countries in the region.

The conference aims at a high-quality added-value interaction; contributing to an in depth analysis and also to draw a sense of direction for security providers.

The NATO Foundation

The NATO Defense College Foundation was established in 2011. It grew out from a common intuition of the President Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo and the NATO Defense College top decision makers who understood the value of a non-profit NGO that could work beyond usual and institutional outreach, training, communication and scientific research activities.

While the tradition of stability and well-being is embodied by the principles of the Washington charter, the triple upheavals of the fall of the Soviet Union, the global economic crisis and the Arab Revolutions required a more focussed, agile and innovative approach.

Therefore the NDCF strives at considering relevant issues not just in a descriptive or prescriptive way, but by catching the sense of events and the essential vectors of future developments. In a word: Charting ahead.

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