BLACK SEA AND BALKAN PERSPECTIVES  
A Strategic Region

High-Level Conference
Organized by the NATO Defense College Foundation, under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic

In co-operation with the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, the NATO Public Diplomacy Division and the NATO Defense College

Rome, 28th of July 2021

Venue: Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel & Spa, Via Gerolamo Frescobaldi, 5, 00198 Roma RM

28th of July 2021
15,00 - 15,30 Participants Registration
15,30 - 15,35 WELCOME REMARKS

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

15,35 - 16,30

SESSION 1
COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE AMONG GREAT POWERS

Since a long time, the whole area is evidently the object of strategic competition by powers like Russia, Middle Eastern countries vying for influence and with China that is quietly structuring its multi-bilateral relations with several instruments (FDI, BRI, medical geoeconomics, etc.). At the same time the EU remains the most important economic actor and donor that will carry out its enlargement policy across the next decade.

Chair: Alexandra von Nahmen, Chief, Brussels Bureau, Deutsche Welle, Brussels **

- Helena Legarda, Senior Analyst, China Security Project, Mercator Institute for China Studies, Berlin **
- Dmitri Trenin, Director, Carnegie Moscow Center, Moscow *
- Amer Kapetanovic, Political Director, Regional Cooperation Council, Sarajevo **

Q&A
16,30 – 17,00 Discussion Break
The Balkans and the Black Sea area have some evident concerns, namely the consequences of the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Ukraine, but there is much more than meets the media eye. On the one hand there are several frozen conflicts that affect regional security from the Adriatic to the Black Sea area. On the other existing and future critical infrastructures need to be protected. The Alliance’s versatility and resilience will be essential in preventing future crises.

Chair: Zoran Jolevski, former Minister of Defence, Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, Skopje

- Solomon Passy, President, Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, Sofia
- Alina Bârgăoanu, Member of the High-Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation, European Commission, Bucharest
- Ahmet Evin, Founding Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University, Istanbul
- Oleksiy Melnyk, Co-Director, Foreign Relations and International Security Programme, Razumkov Centre, Kyiv
- Bodo Weber, Senior Associate, Democratization Policy Council (DPC), Berlin

Q&A

18,00 – 18,15 Discussion Break

18,15 – 19,05

If terrorism captures the headlines, reality on the ground shows that trafficking and organised crime are a much more serious and lethal threat, undermining democracy, rule of law, economic development. Moreover, within the grey areas created by frozen conflicts, organised crime tends to network from a safe haven to neighbouring countries. Extending multilateral and regional cooperation, what are the priorities and the most effective choices?

Chair: Fatmir Mediu, former Minister of Defence of the Republic of Albania, Tirana

- Rabié W. Sédrak, Center for Security Research, Skopje
- Snejana Maleeva, Director General, Southeast European Law Enforcement Center, Bucharest
- Walter Kemp, Director, South East Europe Observatory, Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, Geneva

19,05 – 19,15 Concluding Remarks

Piero Fassino, President, Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Rome

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