



High-Level Conference organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation
in co-operation with the NATO Public Diplomacy Division,
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the NATO Defense College







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BALKAN AND BLACK SEA PERSPECTIVES 2022

Supporting the transition

High-Level Conference

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Rome | Wednesday, the 7th of December 2022

Venue: Sala Verdi, Hotel Quirinale, Via Nazionale 7

13,30 – 14,30 Participants Registration

14,30 – 15,00 *Opening Session*

- Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome
- Pasquale Terracciano, Director General, Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome
- Nicola de Santis, Head, Engagements Section, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels

15,00 - 16,10

SESSION I REGIONAL INTEGRATION PERSPECTIVES

Inclusion is an essential component of Euro-Atlantic common security not only for allies and partners, but also in any sustainable security architecture counterparts. It is also very relevant in removing root causes of instability. A considerable array of instabilities requires to be dealt in an appropriate way, also because the current conflict has given new impetus to EU's enlargement agenda. Regional inclusion may have different speeds and constraints, but it is important to stabilise countries exposed to tensions and instabilities.

Chair: **Ivan Vejvoda**, Permanent Fellow and Head of "Europe's Futures", Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

- Solomon Passy, President, Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, Sofia
- Ahmet Evin, Founding Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Professor Emeritus, Sabancı University, Istanbul
- Bruno Lété, Senior Fellow, Security and Defense, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Q&A Session

16,10 – 16,30 *Coffee Break*

16,30 - 17,40

SESSION II ADDRESSING GREY AREAS

In the coming years, international organizations like NATO, the EU, UN and OSCE could play a crucial role in reinforcing their overall projection especially in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Black Sea area. An important objective in order to avoid dangerous lapses, tackle illicit trade and transnational criminal networks. As witnessed during two decades, some countries show a decreasing integrity in governmental structures, influencing in turn political reforms and regional stability.

Chair: Harun Karčić, Journalist and Political Analyst, Al Jazeera Balkans, Sarajevo

- Mădălina Mocan, Fellow, Aspen Institute Romania, Bucharest
- Sem Fabrizi, former EU Ambassador to Serbia, Rome
- Ana Đurnić, Public Policy Researcher, Institut Alternativa, Podgorica

Q&A Session

17,40 – 18,00 *Coffee Break*

18,00 - 19,10

SESSION III FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES

The current scenario shows a worrying trend of internal crises in established democracies and a retreat of democratic regimes in different regions. Good governance, rule of law, transparent budgets and regulated economies are essential instruments to promote human security, well-being and strategic stability in the region. What policies should be adapted and what resources must be devoted to consolidating fragile democracies and enhancing their resilience?

Chair: Yannis-Alexis Zepos, Former Ambassador and Secretary-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Athens

- Slavica Grkovska, Deputy Prime Minister in charge for Good Governance Policies, Skopje
- Alba Çela, Executive Director, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana
- Francesco Martino, Analyst and Editor, Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa, Sofia

Q&A Session

19,10 – 19,15 *Concluding Remarks*



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Speakers' Biographies

OPENING SESSION

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

After having served at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC and as Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of Italy in Prague, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo worked as Head of the External Relations Office of the EEC from 1981 to 1986. In the following years, his career focused on Europe and Space Policy. In 1997 he was appointed Diplomatic Counsellor of the Minister of Defence Beniamino Andreatta, then of his successors Carlo Scognamiglio and Sergio Mattarella. In 2000, Minuto-Rizzo held the position of Italian Ambassador to the Western European Union and to the Political and Security Committee of the EU, of which he was among the founding members. He was Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic-political industrial area and in the 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" (Il Mulino-Arel, 2009); "A political journey without maps. Diversity and future in the Greater Middle East" (Rubbettino, 2013); and "NATO and the Middle East: The Making of a Partnership" (New Academia Publishing, 2018).

Pasquale Terracciano

Director General, Public and Cultural Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome

Ambassador Pasquale Terracciano is the Director General for Public and Cultural Diplomacy at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA). He entered the diplomatic career in 1981 and in 1982 he was Second Secretary at the Directorate-General for Personnel of the MFA. Later on, in 1985 he was appointed Consul at the Consulate General in Rio de Janeiro, six years later he served as Counsellor at the Permanent Representation to NATO in Brussels, and then as Counsellor at the Directorate of Economic Affairs of the MFA. In 1996 he was Counsellor at the Italian Embassy in London and Deputy Executive Director for Italy at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In 2001 Ambassador Terracciano was appointed Deputy Head of Cabinet of the MFA and in 2006 Italian Ambassador to Spain. In 2011 he served as Diplomatic Advisor to the President of the Council of Ministers and as his Personal Representative/Sherpa for the G8 and G20. In 2013 he served as Italian Ambassador in London and in 2018 in Moscow.

Nicola de Santis

Head, Engagements Section, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels

Head of the Engagements Section of NATO Public Diplomacy Division since 2019, Nicola de Santis was previously Head of the Middle East and North Africa Section of the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO HQ. In this capacity, he was responsible for developing and promoting NATO's policy, political relations, individual practical cooperation programmes and better public understanding in Middle Eastern and North African countries - especially those participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He also ensured the coordination with all the other Divisions of NATO's International Staff, International Military Staff and relevant NATO Military Authorities for all aspects of the Alliance's cooperation with countries in the Middle East and in North Africa. Prior to that, he was the Head of the MD and ICI Countries Section within the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division.

SESSION I REGIONAL INTEGRATION PERSPECTIVES

Ivan Vejvoda

Permanent Fellow and Head of "Europe's Futures", Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

Before joining the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna as Permanent Fellow in 2017, Dr Ivan Vejvoda was Senior Vice President for Programs at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). From 2003 until 2010, he served as Executive Director of GMF's Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions in South-Eastern Europe. Dr Vejvoda joined the GMF in 2003 after distinguished service in the Serbian Government as a Senior Advisor on foreign policy and European integration to Prime Ministers Zoran Djindjic and Zoran Zivkovic. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of the Belgrade-based Fund for an Open Society from 1998 to 2002. Dr Vejvoda was a key figure in the democratic opposition movement in Yugoslavia during the 1990s and has published widely on the subjects of democratic transition, totalitarianism, and post-war reconstruction in the Balkans. Since 2005 Dr Vejvoda is also a member of ERSTE Foundation's Advisory Board; a member of the Serbian PEN Club; and a board member of US social science journals *Constellations* and *Philosophy and Social Criticism*.

Solomon Passy

President, Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, Sofia

Dr Solomon Passy is a Bulgarian scientist, statesman and innovator with a significant career in a variety of fields. As an MP in the Grand National Assembly in 1990, Dr Passy was co-author of the new Bulgarian Constitution of 1991 and a sponsor of the draft bill for abolishing the death penalty. He paved the way for Bulgaria's membership both in NATO and the EU, and, as Foreign Minister, he signed Bulgaria's Accession Treaties to both organisations. He held a number of institutional and international posts: Minister of the Foreign Affairs (2001-2005); Chairman of the UN Security Council (2002-2003); OSCE Chairman in Office (2004); twice Chairman of Parliamentary Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees and a member of the Parliament (1990-1991, 2001-2009). Dr Passy holds a PhD in Mathematical Logic & Computer Sciences with still cited publications in world leading journals. Today

he is a frequent commentator on international affairs, defence and security. He is currently President of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, which he founded in 1991.

Ahmet Evin

Founding Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, and Professor Emeritus, Sabanci University, Istanbul

Dr Ahmet Evin is currently Professor Emeritus at the Sabancı University in Istanbul, where he is also Founding Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, a Jean Monnet Chair, as well as a Senior Scholar and a Board Member of the Istanbul Policy Center. With a PhD from the Columbia University, Dr Evin previously taught at New York University; Harvard University; University of Pennsylvania (where he also served as Director of the Middle East Center); University of Hamburg; Bilkent and Hacettepe Universities in Ankara (being Head of Department of Political Science in the latter). He has authored or edited over 10 volumes on politics, culture, and development, and his research interests include theories of the State and elites; Turkish political development; democracy and civil society. He currently works on foreign policy issues related to the European enlargement, its significance for Turkey and the region as well as its effect on Transatlantic relations.

Bruno Lété

Senior Fellow, Security and Defense, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Bruno Lété currently serves as a Senior Fellow at The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) in Brussels. He provides analysis and advice on trends in geopolitics and on international affairs, focusing primarily on NATO, transatlantic defence cooperation, developments in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, and cybersecurity. In 2010, Mr Lété joined the European Union Delegation to the United States in Washington DC, where he supported the political, security, and development section and focused on US foreign policy and EU–US relations. He started his career in 2007 as a Programme Associate for the GMF, where he developed the institute's signature policy conferences such as the Brussels Forum.

SESSION II ADDRESSING GREY AREAS

Harun Karčić

Journalist and Political Analyst, Al Jazeera Balkans, Sarajevo

Harun Karčić is a journalist and political analyst covering the Balkans, with more than a decade of reporting from the region. Over the past decade, he has authored numerous articles on geopolitics and religion, particularly Islam, in the post-communist Balkans. He also writes about the role played by foreign powers including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey. His scope has more recently expanded to include China and Russia as well. He also regularly reports on Muslim minorities in Europe and rising right-wing nationalism.

Mădălina Mocan

Fellow, Aspen Institute Romania, Bucharest

Mădălina Mocan is currently a Researcher affiliated with the Center for the Study of Democracy, PhD candidate in Political Sciences at Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj, and Associate Teaching Assistant in political theory. She has previously served as Executive Director of the Ratiu Center for Democracy in Romania. Ms Mocan is a graduate of Babes Bolyai University, Faculty of Political Sciences, where she obtained an MA degree in "Management of Political Organizations". She has an academic and civic interest in human rights, applied ethics as well as in political participation, and she consults with several national and international initiatives aiming at understanding and combating human trafficking while also developing an interest for inclusive forms of social innovation. She is an alumna of the Aspen Institute Romania Young Leaders program (2009), German Marshall Transatlantic Fellow (2014) and serves as a board member of Tech Soup Romania.

Sem Fabrizi,

Former Eu Ambassador to Serbia, Rome

Sem Fabrizi is Minister Plenipotentiary at the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MFA). From 2017 to 2021 he was EU Ambassador to Serbia and, from 2013 to 2017, EU Ambassador to Australia. Previously, Minister Fabrizi served in Brussels as international affairs adviser to the President of the European Council, and in Rome in the diplomatic office of the President of the Council of Ministers. In his early career, he worked in Rome at the General Secretariat of the MFA, at the Italian Representations to the EU in Brussels and the UN in Geneva, as well as in Beijing at the Italian Embassy. Minister Fabrizi is an Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic.

Ana Đurnić

Public Policy Researcher, Institut Alternativa, Podgorica

Ana Đurnić is a Public Policy Researcher at Institut Alternativa, a think tank from Podgorica, Montenegro, since the beginning of 2015. She is primarily responsible for project coordination and research in the Public Finance Management – Public Procurement, as well as for accountability and prevention in the fight against corruption. She is closely monitoring the work of the Montenegrin Agency for Prevention of Corruption and is an author of numerous scientific reports and publications. Ms Đurnić was a member of the WeBER research team (Western Balkans Enabling Project for Civil Society Monitoring of Public Administration Reform 2015-2018) and, since July 2018, is a member of the Government's Working Group for Negotiation Chapter 5 – Public Procurement. She participated in the TRAIN Programme 2017 (Think Tanks Providing Research and Advice through Interaction and Networking), which is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and implemented by the German Council on Foreign Relations.

SESSION III FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES

Yannis-Alexis Zepos

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

Ambassador Yannis-Alexis Zepos entered the Greek Diplomatic Service in 1974. Initially, he served as Attaché of the Embassy at the Western European Political Affairs Directorate. Later, he was posted at the Diplomatic Office of the President of the Republic Konstantinos Tsatsos. During his career, Ambassador Zepos served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the Department for Western European Political Affairs (1980 – 1982) and at the Department for Balkan, Central and Eastern European Political Affairs, including the then U.S.S.R. (1990 - 1992). He also covered the post of Director of the Diplomatic Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs George Papandreou (2002-2004). Abroad, he served in several Diplomatic Missions as Consul General, Counsellor, Minister Counsellor and Ambassador. He was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Permanent Representative, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Greece to NATO. In 2009 he also joined the "Group of Experts" tasked to draft the new Strategic Concept of the Atlantic Alliance. After leaving the Diplomatic Service, he entered the private sector and is currently Vice Chairman and Member of the Board of the Greek company "G.V.C.W. (Hellas)", Chairman of the Board of the NGO "Citizens Movement for an Open Society", and Special Advisor of the "ELIAMEP" think tank.

Slavica Grkovska

Deputy Prime Minister in charge for Good Governance Policies, Skopje

Slavica Grkovska is Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) in charge of Good Governance Policies in the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia since January 2022. From 2002 to 2011, she was Member of the Parliament and, during her term as an MP, she was President of the Commission on Education, Science and Sports; member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; and deputy member of the Committee on European Affairs. She also was Deputy President of the Joint Parliamentary Committee EU-Republic of Macedonia. In 2013 and 2014, she worked as Chief Administrative Director, additionally responsible for human resources and legal affairs, in the company for information technologies "EIN-SOF LLC". As of March 2015, Ms Grkovska worked as Human Resources Manager in the IT company "VOX Teneo Macedonia DOO", where she also served as Head of the Human Resources Department for Belgium, Indonesia and North Macedonia from 2018 to 2021. In the period between May 2021 until her appointment as DPM, she was the Chief Systemic Analyst in the Sector for Information Technology, department of informatics and telecommunications in the Ministry of the Interior.

Alba Çela

Executive Director, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana

Alba Çela's main areas of research are: democratisation, political parties, national identity and European integration. She taught as an Associate Professor of political science and economics at two private universities in Tirana and was a recipient of the prestigious John Gunn scholarship at the University of Washington and Lee in Virginia. Additionally, Ms Çela participates as an independent expert in research, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy projects for several international donors and organisations such as OSFA, FES, BIRN etc. Her latest publication is entitled "Ghost political parties and the deformation of democracy: the case of Albania and the region".

Francesco Martino

Analyst and Editor, Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso Transeuropa, Sofia

Before becoming a journalist and analyst, Francesco Martino worked in the field of international cooperation in Kosovo. He has been living and working in Bulgaria since 2005, where he has collaborated with various Italian and international media providers. Mr Martino holds a degree in Media Studies from the University of Trieste, and speaks Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene and Macedonian. Based in Sofia, he has been working for the Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso since 2006.



BALKAN AND BLACK SEA PERSPECTIVES 2022

Supporting the transition

Background Policy Paper

The Balkan and Black Sea Region (BBS) is a region that already before the war in Ukraine was united by a continuum of internal political, social and economic problems and by its vulnerability to external factors be they connected to the dynamics of an enduring globalisation or to the influence/interference of important regional and global actors.

The ongoing aggression against Ukraine and the attention given to military developments risk to obscure an important positive development by the friends of the region. Namely, the Crimean crisis and the invasion of Ukraine have woken up the transatlantic community from the past *laissez-faire* and spurred it to realise that keeping whole regions in a provisional limbo was a very dangerous practice. This has now come to an end and requires practical solutions in the near and medium term.

Concretely the European Union has recently decided to start membership talks with Albania and North Macedonia in July 2022, while Bosnia and Herzegovina is hoping to obtain EU candidate country status in December. For now, Kosovo is only considered a potential candidate to join the EU. Serbia and Montenegro are already candidate countries, but have to close a number of critical chapters since more than ten years. The possible visa restriction lifting for citizens of the Institutions in Kosovo regarding the Schengen area is also envisaged by January 2023. Sarajevo accession to NATO is still blocked by internal dissension, while Serbia has decided to continue its neutral status in the dealings with the Alliance.

The Black Sea offers apparently a simpler picture: all countries are NATO Partners or Allies, Russia except, but four out of seven are not members of the Alliance. The war has also here been a tragic catalyst for change starting from Kyiv. The end of the hostilities notwithstanding, the whole region needs a multifaceted resilience recovery approach that can be carried out in parallel and independently from the implementation of possible membership promises within NATO or the EU.

The Western Balkans subregion is facing old and new challenges that could potentially exacerbate existing instability. In the past months, no concrete steps towards European Union integration were observed in several key countries in the area, where weak democracies appear to be increasingly vulnerable to external influences. Furthermore, concerns are growing over a looming energy and economic crisis, an indirect consequence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. And a slew of other unresolved issues could also destabilise the region.

The main quarrel remains the Serbia-Kosovo relations, which were rekindled by the latest car-plate dispute between Belgrade and Pristina, triggering one of the worst political crises in years. The dispute over license plates is actually about Kosovo's sovereignty, which the Serbian authorities have never recognised after the 1999 conflict. Even though France and Germany stepped in recently to help resolve the issue through a plan that was not well received in Serbia, there are still scarce hopes. Belgrade and Pristina are becoming increasingly conflictual, and the EU-fostered dialogue, as it seems, is completely stalled at the moment. Nationalism and self-serving myopic policies are unfortunately frequent even among younger and apparently more modern decision makers.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, the second most fragile part of the region, remains divided between a Serb entity and a Muslim-Croat federation, with a weak federal government connecting the two. The most recent elections did not result in dramatic changes, with elites made of the nationalist political leaders – as well as secessionist in the case of the Serb representatives – exploiting, as usual, the current crisis to stay in power. Furthermore, a host of regional countries and external powers, like China and Russia, are harnessing Bosnia's weaknesses to strengthen their influence over the country. Even if the EU grants the country a candidate status, as recommended by the Commission, dysfunction will most probably be a persistent plague.

As mentioned, NATO expansion has been more successful than EU integration. Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro are currently members of the Alliance and Serbia's neutrality poses more problems to Belgrade through its de facto ambiguous and at arms-length relationship, than to the EU or the Alliance.

Meanwhile, the region's demographic collapse continues, and an increasing number of professionals and educated young people is heading towards Western Europe in search for better opportunities. Moreover, although the EU is promising help to cope with the energy crisis, Moscow remains a key supplier for the entire region. Time will tell if the EU and NATO follow up will be kept up and implemented.

The Black Sea subregion has firstly a serious economic sustainability problem, connected to the

upcoming global economic crisis, its own demographic collapse and brain drain, the fragility of emerging

economies, persistent corruption and organised crime infiltrations. Some countries enjoy the advantages

of EU membership, while others have a simply unsustainable debt or are facing fiscal, monetary and

economic crises.

The war of course has seriously exacerbated the problems in the whole BBS region and particularly in

the Black Sea area. It is clearly too early to speak about a "Marshall plan", but in the meantime elements

of comprehensive policies are needed - along with aggressive global cooperation on vaccination, debt,

and climate - to promote in time a green, resilient and inclusive recovery. Clearly debt stock reductions

may ease the output losses associated with debt distress more than debt service relief, but the drawback

is that donors, already stressed by the hard landing and long-term economic crises, will have much less

money to invest in direct reconstruction, especially if corruption is a serious problem.

Evidently, whatever the military outcome of current operations, there is the need to get out of a

dangerous escalation spiral, avoid a further frozen conflict and begin to structure a realistic and open-

ended agreement between the belligerents, safeguarding the tenets of a rule-based continental security

and stability and allowing Ukraine to restore in time all its elements guaranteed by the Budapest Protocol

of 1994.

Deterrence and dialogue, the winning elements of NATO during the long Cold War, will have to be

backed by sustainable defence investments and serious political negotiations, neutralising dangerous

revanchism strains among negotiating parties.

This requires a clear recognition that, in addition to Russia and Ukraine, the EU, NATO, Turkey and the

US have a distinct interest, legitimacy and possibly converging role in shaping a post-war regional order.

Alessandro Politi, Director, NATO Defense College Foundation

Stefano Giantin, Western Balkans Chief Analyst, NATO Defense College Foundation

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THE NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

The NATO Defense College Foundation, the only existing think-tank bearing the name of the Alliance, was established in Rome 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.

The principles stated in the preamble to the Washington Treaty of 1949 are our heritage.

Our mission is to promote the culture of stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area and in NATO Partner nations.

Our aim is to meet the highest standards in contributing to public debate and future deliberations on strategic, security and geopolitical issues.

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 claim: Charting ahead.

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