



BALKAN AND BLACK SEA PERSPECTIVES 2023

Structuring strategic resilience

Thursday, the 7th of December 2023, from 2.15 to 7 PM (CET)
Rome – Hotel Quirinale (via Nazionale 7)

Conference organised by the **NATO Defense College Foundation**
in cooperation with the **NATO Public Diplomacy Division**, the **NATO Defense College**,
Philip Morris Italy, **Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo**, and **MBDA Italy**

Gathering **17 international specialists** and more than **200 attendees** (in-person and online), the event represented the **9th edition** of the conference that the NDCF dedicates to the Western Balkans and South Eastern Europe every year since 2014 (as part of its project [Strategic Balkans](#)). A timely occasion to discuss in-depth a set of challenges and opportunities unfolding in an area of great strategic relevance: **crisis prevention** and **peace consolidation**; the **fight against disinformation and organised crime**; **resilience recovery** and the region's **integration process**.

A selection of quotes from our speakers follows below.

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

«We consider that the Balkan and Black Sea region should become part of the Euro-Atlantic community and the invasion of Ukraine has given a new sense of urgency. NATO is still upholding the “open door” policy and the European Union is active in implementing a policy of inclusion [...]. Today a renewed effort is underway towards full integration».

Tacan Ildem, *Chairman, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM), Istanbul*

«The Alliance should focus on a more holistic approach towards the region: this means looking at the Black Sea in the perspective of its connectivity with Central Asia, the Balkans, the Mediterranean [...]. Closer attention should be given in everything we do as an alliance, creating a sound strategy for the security of the area».

Olav Reinertsen, *Ambassador of Norway to Bosnia and Herzegovina; and NATO Contact Point Embassy in BiH, Sarajevo*

«The political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina has never been as serious as its now. We need a joint and coordinated approach between the EU and NATO [...that] should contribute to strengthening the country's defence and security capabilities through common initiatives, as the *European Union Force (EUFOR) Althea*».

Galina Yanchenko, *Member, Committee on Economic Development, Parliament, Kiev*

«To decrease corruption and improve both cooperation and communication between State and citizens, Ukraine added significant prevention tools including the digitalisation of state services. But economic development can only be achieved through strong cooperation with the private sector, civil society actors and other active groups of society».

Oksana Shvets, *Chief Policy Officer, American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, Kiev*

«In 2019 Ukraine established a solid task force on excisable goods, setting among its priorities the fight against illegal trade. Illicit trade is currently causing huge state budget losses. It is essential for our government to join internal and international efforts and intensify the fight against illegal markets».

Zoran Jolevski, *Vice Rector for International Cooperation, European University; and former Minister of Defence, Republic of North Macedonia, Skopje*

«The Western Balkans' region should implement a threefold strategy: alignment with the EU economic policies; establishment of a secure legal framework in order to attract EU investments; and access to the European single market. It is the only way through which the region can achieve the shared goal to join EU as soon as possible».

Alba Çela, *Executive Director, Albanian Institute for International Studies, Tirana*

«The only antidote to all the recent negative developments is the EU integration. The credibility of such integration process also depends on the EU's effort in trying to solve the internal disputes among the Western Balkan countries. My call is for the EU to be more strategic in thinking about the region and to build much more credibility for this enlargement process».

Giulio Tremonti, *President, Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Rome*

«Today the EU demographic curves are really dramatic. [...] A new political hardware, a new European constitutional architecture is absolutely necessary in this season of new enlargements, from Ukraine to the Balkans to other countries».

The **full recordings** of the event are available on the [NDCF YouTube channel](#).

For any further information, please contact us at: ndcf.pressmediarelations@gmail.com (Sofia Mastrostefano, +393662542029)

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