

WHO WE ARE

Since its establishment in 2024, the NGO Slovakia and Balkans has aimed to connect Slovakia, the European Union, and the Balkan countries through public events, media content, and public awareness initiatives. We organize conferences and discussions while fostering cooperation with partners from diplomatic, academic, and civic backgrounds. Our activities also include documenting the lives of Slovak communities in the Balkan region.

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Annual Slovakia and the Balkans Conference is the flagship event of our organization. It creates a platform for expert discussion and the exchange of views among representatives of diplomacy, politics, academia, and civil society on current issues surrounding Slovak foreign policy, European integration, and developments in the Balkan countries.

Now in its third year, the conference brings together representatives of the diplomatic corps, the expert community, civil society and young people for a day of dialogue on relations between Slovakia, the European Union and the Western Balkans. **The morning sessions will be conducted in the English language, while the afternoon sessions will be conducted in the Slovak language.**

WE INVITE YOU TO THE 3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE SLOVAKIA AND BALKANS

TOPICS, PROGRAMME

- 9:00 Registration
- 9:30 Opening speeches
- 9:35 Eastern influences and their impact on the Western Balkans (EN)
- 11:00 The Western Balkans as a partner for the European market (EN)
- 12:30 EU enlargement to the Western Balkans (SK)
- 14:00 Young people, Erasmus+ and mutual perceptions between Slovakia and the Balkans (SK)
- 14:30 Ending remarks, networking

CONFERENCE PARTNER – European Parliament Liaison Office in Slovakia



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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

DETAILED INFORMATION

- 9:00 Guest registration
- 9:30 - 9:35 Opening remarks

- **9:35 - 10:45 Eastern influences and their impact on the Western Balkans** (EN)

How extensive the influence of Eastern powers is in the Western Balkans, and what does this mean for the region's security and direction? The panel will assess the approach of Slovakia and the European Union to this situation.

Moderator: **Andrej Matišák** - PRAVDA, foreign news editor

Miriam Lexmann - Member of the European Parliament

Vladimir Đorđević - expert on security studies and the Western Balkans

Miroslav Wlachovský - former Slovak Minister of Foreign and European Affairs

- **11:00 - 12:00 The Western Balkans as a partner for the European market** (EN)

What trade and investment opportunities does the Western Balkans offer Slovak and European companies? Our guests will share their experience of doing business in the region and highlight the obstacles that still hold it back.

Moderator: **Eva Frantová** - SME, host of the podcasts Dobré ráno and Index

Silvia Radovanović - Foreign Trade Consultant, SARIO

Ivan Štefanec - former Member of the European Parliament

Martin Beňo - representative of CHSOK and owner of Level UP IT

Roman Meršák - representative of SLO-SLO and representative of KBM Trade

- **12:30 - 13:40 EU enlargement to the Western Balkans** (SK)

Where do the countries of the Western Balkans actually stand on their path to EU membership, and what is still missing? The discussion will also address what enlargement would mean for Slovakia and the rest of the Union.

Moderator: **Juraj Foltín** - co-founder of the Slovakia and Balkans civic association

Mikuláš Dzurinda - former Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, currently Head of the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies

Lucia Mokrá - Dean of the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University; expert in European Law and European Integration

- **14:00 - 14:25 Young people, Erasmus+ and mutual perceptions between Slovakia and the Balkans** (SK)

How do young people from Slovakia and the Balkans perceive exchange programmes such as Erasmus+ ? How student and youth exchanges can build long-term ties between the two regions.

Moderator: **Milica Ćurčić** - Slovakia and Balkans civic association

Vladimír Gabriel Lovás - Student of Lutheran Theology, Slovak from Vojvodina

Tomáš Kabát - Student of International Relations and Security and Strategic Studies

- 14:30 Closing remarks, networking