



Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platforms on **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND CULTURE**

29 September - 1 October 2024
Skopje, North Macedonia



Sunday 29 September 2024

Beyond the Horizon: Joint Foresight Exercise

(Roof Bar No 55 – top floor)

18:00 – 19:30

Interventions

- Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- Sinisa Marcic, Senior Expert on Human Capital Development, Regional Cooperation Council

Moderation

- Julia Schmälder, POLICY ANSWERS Team Member, DLR Projektträger

Welcome Dinner

20:00 – 22:00

The Welcome Dinner is organised at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, in the Platinum Room, floor -1.
Dress code: business attire.

Monday 30 September 2024

Presentation of the COST Western Balkans Study

(Roof Bar No 55 – top floor)

08:45 – 09:15

Interventions

- Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- Salvatore Grimaldi, President, COST Association

Moderation

- Ronald De Bruin, Director, COST Association

Ministerial Meeting of the Steering Platforms on Education and Training, Research and Innovation, and Culture

(Diamond Ballroom, ground floor - Welcome coffee served in the foyer from 9:15)

Moderation: Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission

10:00 – 10:05

Opening of the Event

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

10:05 – 10:15

Welcome Addresses

- Vesna Janevska, Minister of Education and Science, North Macedonia
- Zoran Ljutkov, Minister of Culture and Tourism, North Macedonia
- Balázs Hankó, Minister of Culture and Innovation, Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Ministerial Meeting on Education and Training

Moderation: Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission

10:15 – 10:20

Keynote

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth



DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Bulevar ASNOM 17
Skopje 1000
North Macedonia

10:20 – 11:45 Ministerial Round Table Discussion on Education and Training

“Education and Innovation”

Topics for discussion:

- 1) Synergies between education and innovation
- 2) Teaching and learning in the digital age

11:45 – 12:00 Concluding Remarks

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Vesna Janevska, Minister of Education and Science, North Macedonia
- Balázs Hankó, Minister of Culture and Innovation, Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

12:00 – 12:15 Family Picture

(Within the Diamond Ballroom on the ground floor)

12:15 – 13:45 Lunch Break

(Lunch is served at the Restaurant MONTE on the ground floor)

Ministerial Meeting on Research and Innovation

Moderation: Signe Ratso, Deputy Director-General, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission

13:45 – 13:50 Welcome and Keynote

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

13:50 – 15:15 Ministerial Round Table Discussion on Research and Innovation

“Young Researchers and Innovators: Scaling up the Skills”

Topics for discussion:

- 1) Pooling and building skills required for innovation
- 2) Scaling up skills: market uptake

Interventions

- Besar Durmishi, Minister of Economy and Labour, North Macedonia
- Salvatore Grimaldi, President, COST Association

15:15 – 15:30 Concluding Remarks

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Vesna Janevska, Minister of Education and Science, North Macedonia
- Balázs Hankó, Minister of Culture and Innovation, Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

15:30 – 15:45 Family Picture

(Within the Diamond Ballroom on the ground floor)

15:45 – 16:15 Coffee Break

(Coffee is served in the foyer of the Diamond Ballroom)

Ministerial Meeting on Smart Specialisation Strategies

Moderation: Sabine Henzler, Director, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

16:15 – 16:20 Welcome and Keynote

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

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16:20 – 17:30

Smart Specialisation Strategies

“Best Practice on Smart Specialisation Strategies”

Topics proposed for discussion:

- 1) Moving from development to implementation
- 2) Exchanging best practices

Interventions

- Oliver Röpke, President, European Economic and Social Committee
- Valentina Superti, Director Western Balkans, DG Neighbourhood & Enlargement, Negotiations, European Commission (tbc)
- Vesna Janevska, Minister of Education and Science, North Macedonia

17:30 – 17:45

Concluding Remarks

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Besar Durmishi, Minister of Economy and Labour, North Macedonia
- Balázs Hankó, Minister of Culture and Innovation, Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

17:45 – 18:00

Family Picture

(Within the Diamond Ballroom on the ground floor)

Air Quality in Western Balkans Cities: Sources, Impact on Health and Costs

(Roof Bar No 55 – top floor)

18:00 – 18:30

Interventions

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Izet Mexhiti, First Deputy Prime Minister at Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia (tbc)
- Claudio Belis, Project Leader, Joint Research Centre, European Commission
- Dejan Mirakovski, Rector, University Goce Delcev

Moderation

- Sabine Henzler, Director, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

Gala Dinner

19:30 – 22:00

The Gala dinner is hosted by North Macedonia at the Aleksandar Palace Hotel. Transfer by bus will be provided.
Dress code: business attire.

Tuesday 1 October 2024

Ministerial Meeting on Culture

Moderation: Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission

09:00 – 09:05

Keynote

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

09:05 – 10:30

Ministerial Round Table Discussion on Culture

“Culture”

Topics proposed for discussion:

- 1) The protection and promotion of cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage, as a resource for inclusive and sustainable development
- 2) EU – Western Balkans / regional cooperation and mobility of artists and cultural professionals

10:30 – 10:45

Concluding Remarks

- Iliana Ivanova, European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
- Zoran Ljutkov, Minister of Culture and Tourism, North Macedonia
- Veronika Varga-Bajusz, Minister of State for Higher Education, Vocational Training Adult Learning and Youth Policy, Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platforms on **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND CULTURE**

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- 10:45 – 11:00** **Family Picture**
(Within the Diamond Ballroom on the ground floor)
- 12:00 – 13:30** **Farewell Lunch**
(Lunch is served at the Restaurant MONTE on the ground floor)

In parallel:

Ministerial Exchanges on Digital Education and on Innovation Eco-systems

(This session runs in parallel in the Platinum Room, floor -1 – Welcome coffee served in the foyer from 08:30)

- 09:00 – 09:15** **Welcome and Introductory Addresses**
- Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva, Director for Innovation, Digital Education and International Cooperation, DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission
 - Valentina Superti, Director Western Balkans, DG Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission (tbc)
 - Stefan Andonovski, Minister of Digital Transformation, North Macedonia
- 09:15 – 10:45** **Round Table Discussion on the Multi-stakeholder Approach to Digital Education**
- Topics proposed for discussion:
- 1) The Digital Education Action Plan and fostering high-quality digital education for all: learning from policy and practice.
 - 2) The role of education in addressing pressing societal issues in the digital age, such as disinformation and artificial intelligence.
- Interventions**
- Pilvi Torsti, Director, European Training Foundation
 - Maida Pasic, Regional Education Adviser, Europe and Central Asia, UNICEF
 - Renata Petrevska Nechkoska, Associate Professor University St. Kliment Ohridski, Western Balkans Alumni Association (WBAA)
 - Dejan Dokuzovski, Project Director, USAID's Media Literacy Project YouThink
- Moderation**
- Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva, Director for Innovation, Digital Education and International Cooperation, DG for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission
- 10:45 – 11:15** **Coffee Break**
(Coffee is served in the foyer of the Platinum Room)
- 11:15 – 12:45** **Round Table Discussion on the New European Innovation Agenda and Sharing Best Practices on Local and Regional Innovation Eco-systems**
- Topics proposed for discussion:
- 1) Best practices of local and regional innovation eco-systems and their Innovation Fund schemes
 - 2) Impact of the New European Innovation Agenda
- Interventions**
- Valentina Superti, Director Western Balkans, DG Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission (tbc)
 - Orhan Aydin, President, TÜBITAK
 - Diego De Biasio, President, European Business and Innovation Centre Network
 - Nikola Dodov, Director, Fund for Innovation & Technology Development, North Macedonia
 - Pranvera Kastrati, Acting Head of Programme Department, Regional Cooperation Council
- Moderation**
- Andras Inotai, Head of Unit Innovation Policy & Access to Finance, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission
- 12:45 – 13:00** **Closing**
- Stefan Andonovski, Minister of Digital Transformation, North Macedonia
 - Andras Inotai, Head of Unit Innovation Policy & Access to Finance, DG for Research and Innovation, European Commission
 - Valentina Superti, Director Western Balkans, DG Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission (tbc)
- 13:00 – 14:30** **Farewell Lunch**
(Lunch is served at the Restaurant MONTE on the ground floor)