

## ONLINE EVENT

### Corridor 8 – East Gate: Promoting Flagship 1 “Connecting East to West”

"BETTER AND PROFOUND - CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES AND  
CANDIDATE COUNTRIES AS A BASIC SYSTEMIC FACTOR FOR GROWTH AND  
RESILIENT DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE"

Date: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 | Time: 09:30 – 11:00 CET



## Background

Cooperation and Development Institute is organizing on May 19, 2021 an online event on “**CORRIDOR 8 – EAST GATE: PROMOTING FLAGSHIP 1 “CONNECTING EAST TO WEST”**”. This event will be organized in cooperation with Hanns Seidel Stiftung (Tirana Office) and in partnership with Economic Policy Institute in Sofia.

During this online event, CDI aims to promote regional cooperation as based on multilayered & multi-actor connectivity and provide a technical platform where stakeholders from three countries and EU Commission will set the ground for the: i) next steps in the development for the Flagship 1, and other projects / Flagships, and; ii) its synergies with the Initiative 8.

Before the 2020 Sofia Summit, the European Commission published the “*Economic and Investment plan for the Western Balkans*” (EIP). The plan contains guidelines on good governance as the foundation for sustainable economic growth, and offers an investment package that combines grants up to EUR 9 bn with matching loans up to 20 bn.

The EIP promotes investments in sustainable transport, in clean energy, in the environment and climate, in digital future, in boosting the private sector, and investing in human capital, in the framework of Regional economic integration and integration with EU. The EIP contains a list of 10 investments flagships in the region. The Commission engaged to examine their prioritization, costs, benefits and the impact of selected projects with a view to taking them forward actively and expediently.

In the area of transport, the first one investment flagship considered to be completed or advanced by the end of this Commission’s mandate is “Connecting East to West”, consisting in a portion of Rail Corridor VIII between Skopje and the Bulgarian border.

In the beginning of 2021, North Macedonia Foreign Minister Bujar Osmani addressed a letter to the Foreign Minister of Bulgaria Ekaterina Zaharieva, and Foreign Minister of Albania Olta Xhaçka. He proposed a new multidisciplinary initiative based on an upgrade of Corridor 8. Calling it, Initiative 8, Mr. Osmani proposes to intensify tri-lateral cooperation so as to “...speed up infrastructure, energy, and communication investment projects along the route of Corridor VIII. This would serve as the foundation for a political platform that will provide an additional forum to promote mutual cooperation, the intensification

*of political, economic, security, cultural and social exchange, that will undoubtedly result in increasing trust between the peoples”.*

The event will be free and open to all and will be livestreamed on CDI's social media channels. The final agenda and the registration link will be published soon.

*\*This event is part of the calendar of activities of the annual Tirana Connectivity Forum, which this year, besides the traditional two-day event, the forum will be composed by a series of activities preceding and following TCF21 main event, to be developed in partnership with sister think tanks and taking place in SEE6 and in EU.*