

TIRANA CONNECTIVITY FORUM 2022

Securely Connected

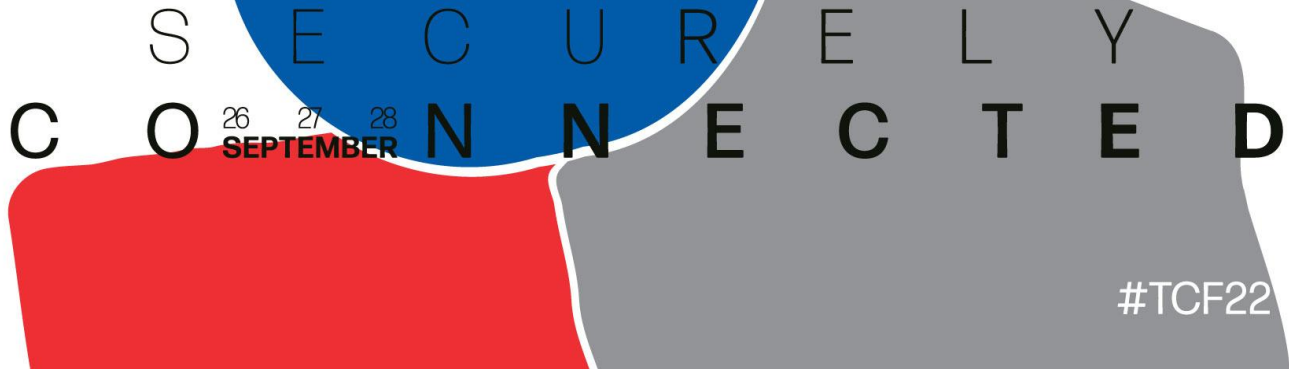
Date: 26-28 September 2022 / **Venue:** Durres & Tirana / **Format:** On-site

BACKGROUND

Being surrounded by EU member states, today the Western Balkan region is an integral part of the EU connectivity networks. Initially qualified as an extension of the EU transport and energy networks, the December 2021 [EU Trans-European Transport Network draft regulation](#) has paved the way for a harmonized planning of transport infrastructure between EU and the Balkans peninsula. The 2020 [Economic and Investment plan](#) provides the platform for integrated policy-making amongst Brussels and South East Europe 6 (SEE6) countries at the service of the well-defined path to growth, institutional reforms and convergence of the region with the EU.

The current war in Ukraine has underlined the security implications of connectivity. SEE6 is in the crossroads of the main European corridors of transport that connect Black Sea with the Adriatic, and of energy that bring the Azeri gas to the South of Europe. In this volatile environment, the technical and market pre-conditions of connectivity investments must also include the security and geopolitical needs of Europe.

But secure infrastructure requires secure institutions; institutions that are protected and resilient from incompetency, capture and corruption. To that effect, the engaged ground-breaking reforms should improve the democratic legitimacy of the SEE6 institutions in charge, the legitimacy of their deliverables and very importantly, the legitimacy of their internal processes and good governance mechanisms. In that effort, the role of SEE6 civil society is systemic, and its contribution to the good governance of the connectivity policies and of structures in charge is irreplaceable.

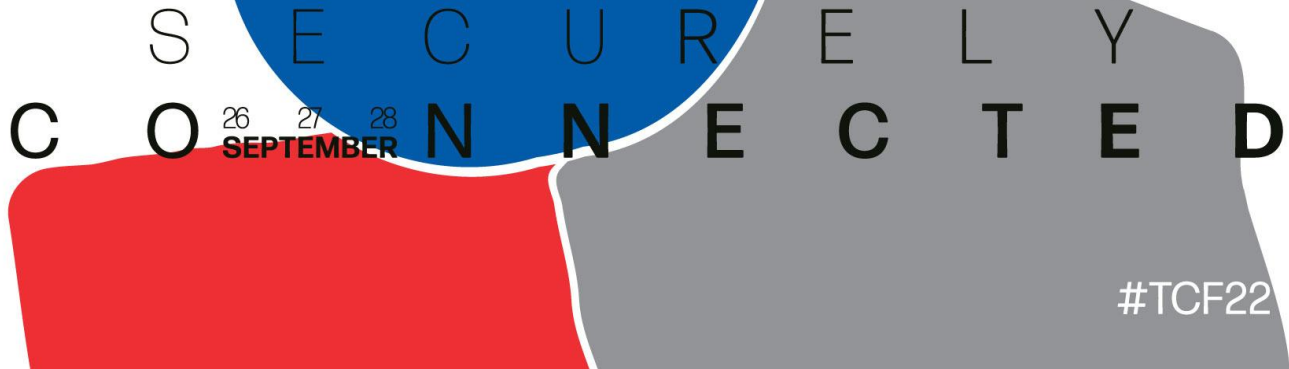


STRUCTURE OF TCF 2022

TCF 2022 will be composed of three main blocks:

1. *Secure and Resilient Infrastructure*, focused on the criticality of the new Western Balkans transport corridor, with focus on waterborne and rail components as reliable, competitive and sustainable transport vectors;
2. *Secure and Well Governed Institutions*, focused on the contribution of civil society actors in keeping the institutions healthy and well governed, and improving the efficiency of policy making;
3. *Secure and Future-proof Enlargement*, will bring SEE6 youth at the center of Enlargement dynamics not only as a beneficiary of EU funds, but also as shaper of EU policies & programs.

TCF2022 partners are Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Hanns Seidel Stiftung, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Regional Cooperation Council, Tirana European Youth Capital and Center of Excellence for Maritime Affairs Its eighth edition is part of the official calendar of activities of the [Czech Presidency](#) of the Council of the European Union and the [European Year of Youth \(EYY\)](#).



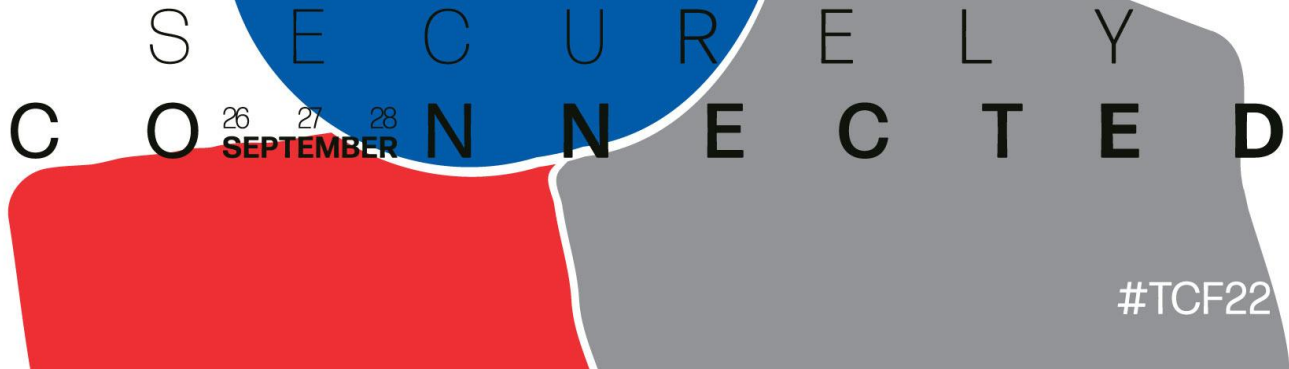
**DAY 1. SECURE AND RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE -
THE NEW WESTERN BALKANS EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR**

Date: Monday 26 September 2022 | **Venue:** [Durrës Port Authority](#) | **Format:** On-site

In December 2021, the EU Commission published a planning methodology for the trans-European transport network (TEN-T), reviewing and updating the 2013 regulation. The most relevant novelty impacting SEE6 is the appearance of a Western Balkans European Transport Corridor (WBETC). Covering the Balkans peninsula, WBETC South-North design is supported by the market, geography and technical parameters, while climate change and security favor its East-West connectivity.

Currently the war in Ukraine has brought the security factor at the center of policy-making in both EU and in SEE6. How the newly proposed Western Balkans corridor responds to those requirements?

The TCF22 first block will focus on the East – West dimension of the WB ETC through the waterborne Rhine – Danube corridor including the Adriatic maritime dimension; and, the Corridor 8 (Italy, Albania, North Macedonia and Bulgaria). A specific panel will cover the impact that resilience and climate change have during infrastructure planning phase, and on its funding.



10:30 – 12:30 **SIDE EVENT. BLUE PENINSULA – WATERBORNE TRANSPORT IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE**

Presentation and discussing of the Paper “Blue Connectivity: Maritime and Inland Waterways in the Balkans Peninsula”

Welcome by Pirro Vengu, CEO of Durres Port Authority and Board Member of Center of Excellence in Maritime Affairs

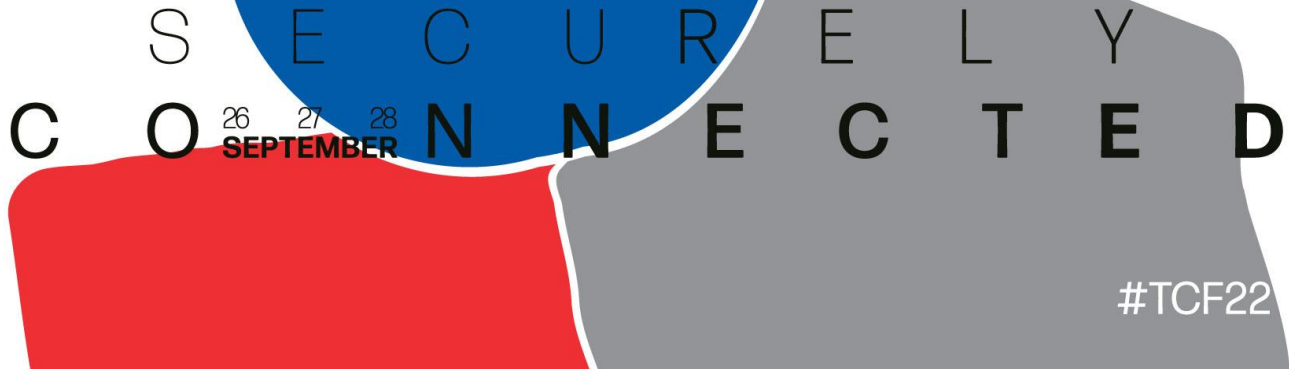
Welcome by Tobias Rüttershoff, Country Director Albania, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Setting the Scene, by Matej Zakonjsek, Director of Transport Permanent Secretariat

Panel. Presentation from selected countries

- Elson Thana, Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, Albania (with a presentation from Eric Smit from Royal Haskoning DHV, Netherlands on the new port of Porto Romano)
- Djordje Otasevic, Advisor, Ministry of Capital Investment, Montenegro
- Dario Buzic, Ministry of Communications and Transport, Bosnia & Herzegovina (online)
- Ana Blazeska, ESTIMA, North Macedonia
- Bozhidar Yankov, Executive Agency Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River, Bulgaria
- Vladislav Maras, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering, Serbia
- George Tzogopoulos, Member of CIFE core faculty (European Institute) and Senior Fellow, Greece

Moderator: Ardian Hackaj, Cooperation & Development Institute, Tirana



OFFICIAL OPENING OF TCF 2022

Date: Monday 26 September 2022 | **Venue:** [Durrës Port Authority](#) | **Format:** On-site

14:45 – 14:55 **WELCOME AND RATIONALE**, by Ardian Hackaj, TCF Coordinator

14:55 - 15:30 **KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**

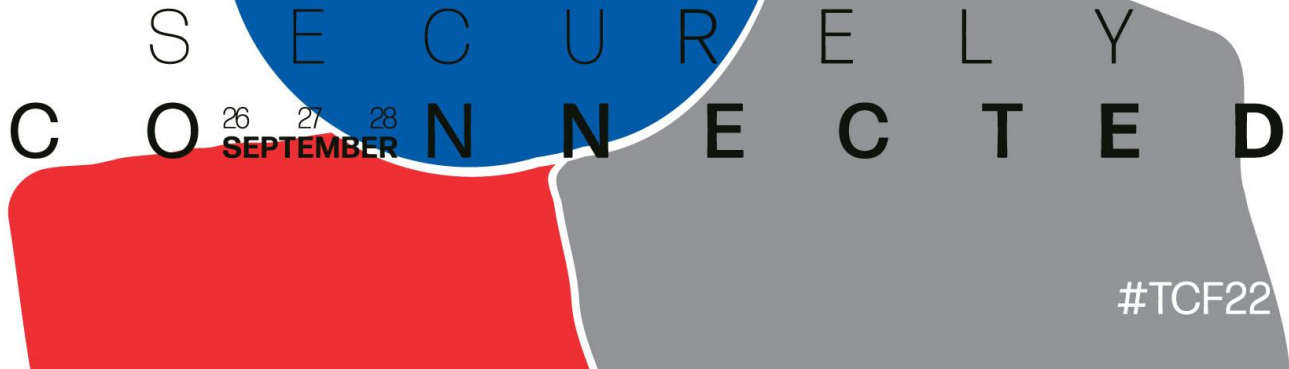
- Karel Urban, Ambassador, Embassy of the Czech Republic in Tirana
- Christiane Hohmann, Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation to Albania

15:30 – 16:45 **PANEL 1. CRITICALITY OF WESTERN BALKANS ETC – THE EAST-WEST DIMENSION**

Main rail infrastructure developments in the East–West axis / Corridor 8

- Marina Boskovic, Director, Railways Infrastructure of Montenegro
- Gentian Liko, Administrator of Albanian Railways (HSH)
- Hari Lokvenec, Director, Public Enterprise for Railway Infrastructure Railways of Republic of North Macedonia
- Dimitar Savov, Director of “National Transport Policy” Directorate, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Bulgaria

Moderator: Dejan Lasica, Rail Coordinator, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat

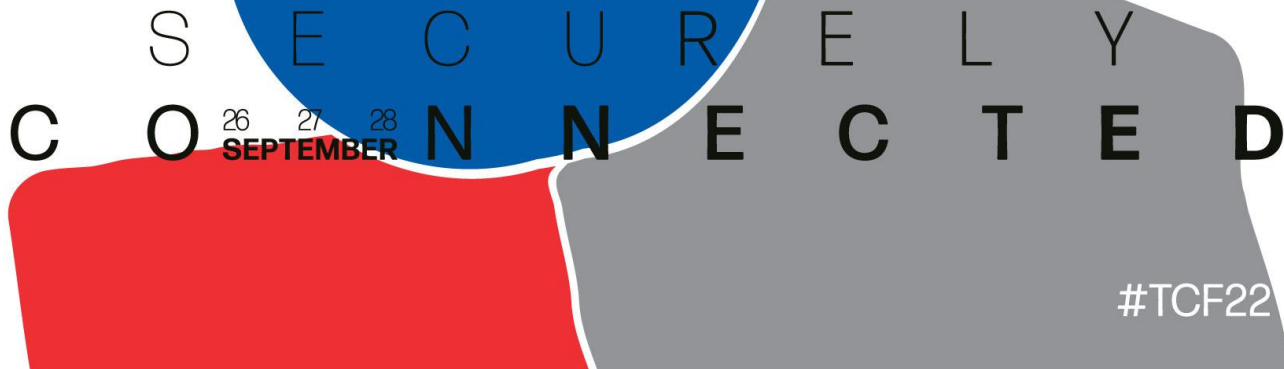


17:00 - 18:15 PANEL 2. PLANNING FOR AND FUNDING A RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Identifying risks and factoring climate-change for a resilient and green SEE6 transport infrastructure

- Jovana Marovic, Deputy Prime Minister and European Affairs Minister, Montenegro
- Bojan Marickij, Deputy Prime Minister and National IPA Coordinator, North Macedonia (online)
- Ilir Beqaj, Director General, State Agency for Strategic Programming and Aid Coordination and National IPA Coordinator, Albania
- Matteo Rivellini, Head of Division Western Balkans & Turkey, European Investment Bank Global

Moderator: Franko Egro, Journalist



DAY 2. SECURE AND WELL-GOVERNED INSTITUTIONS

Date: Tuesday 27 September 2022 | **Venue:** [Rogner Hotel, Tirana](#) | **Format:** On-site

After a debate on the State of Enlargement, this block will focus on how CSO can effectively improve policy-making and infrastructure project implementation and illustrate it with real life examples at national, regional and EU level. Channeling the contribution of the CSO into the Common Regional Market / Green Agenda and in the Berlin Process 2.0 will be discussed in the afternoon, with representatives from RCC and from SOGDE. The 2nd day will conclude with a discussion with EU Member State Special Envoys for Western Balkans.

09:00 – 09:15 REGISTRATION

09:15 – 10:15 **Opening Speech** by Martin Dvorak, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic (online)

Keynote Lecture: “How the War in Ukraine affects EU Enlargement in Western Balkans”, by Prof. Loukas Tsoukalis, President ELIAMEP - Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy, Greece,
Followed by a discussion with the audience

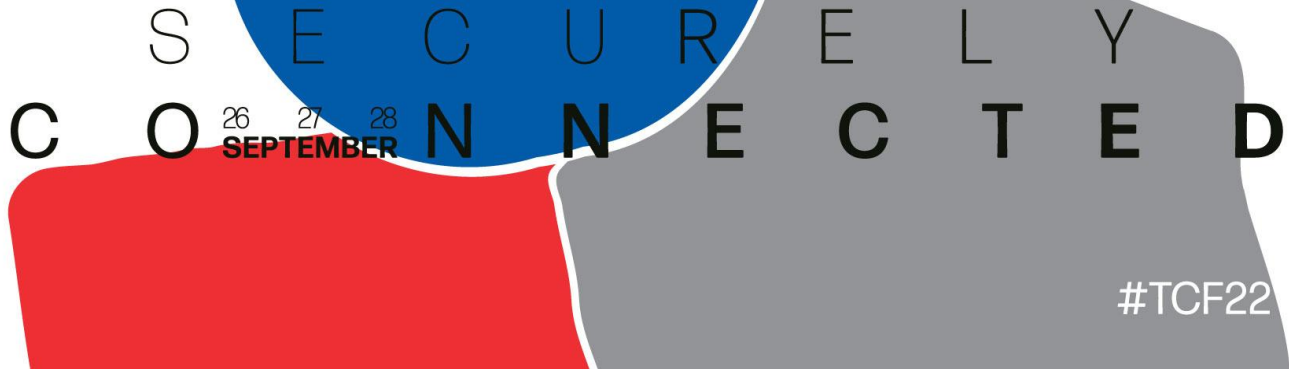
10:20 – 11:40 PANEL 3. FOSTERING INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Building up on best cases of CSO impact in SEE6 policy-making

- Marko Sobic, Policy Analyst, Alternativa, Montenegro
- Natasa Kovacevic, Heating sector decarbonisation campaigner for the Western Balkans, CEE Bankwatch Network
- Olsi Nika, Executive Director ECO Albania, Albania
- Naim Rashiti, Executive Director, Balkans Policy Research Group, Kosovo

Key takeaways: *How the Green Agenda can empower SEE6 CSOs,* by Pranvera Kastrati, Senior Expert on Economic and Digital Connectivity / Coordinator of the Common Regional Market, Regional Cooperation Council

Moderator: Ana Krstinovska, President, Estima, North Macedonia



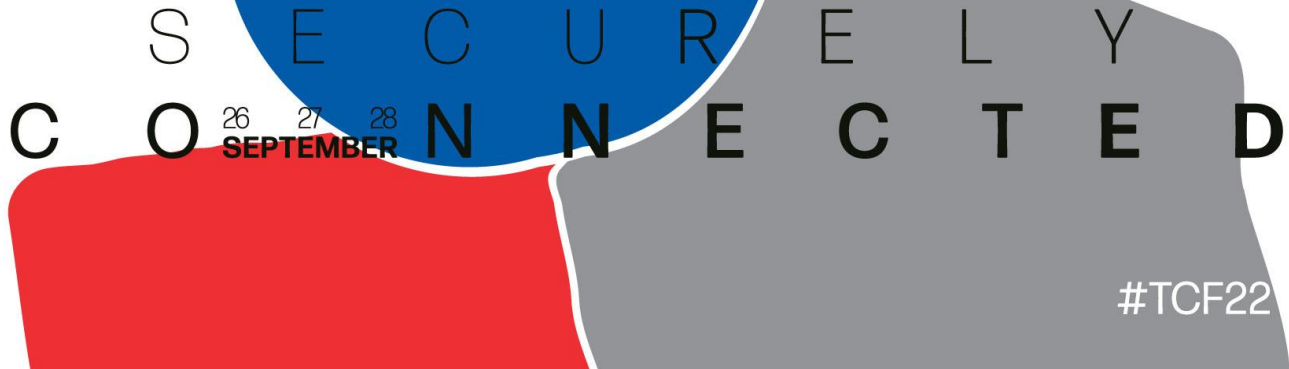
12:00 -13:30 **PANEL 4. CONNECTING WITH EU**

Increasing SEE6 footprint in Brussels policy-making process

- Márton Schőberl, Director General, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade - IFAT, Hungary
- Martin Vokálek, Executive Director, Institute for European Policy - EUROPEUM, Czech Republic (online)
- Marta Szpala, Center for Eastern Studies, OSW, Poland
- Gilles Kittel, Team Leader – IPA, Enlargement Negotiations and EUSAIR, DG REGIO (online)

Key takeaways by Peter Grk, Secretary General of the Bled Strategic Forum, Slovenia

Moderator: Ioannis Armakolas, Senior Research Fellow, ELIAMEP, Greece



15:00 – 17:00 **OPEN DISCUSSION. BUILDING INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFICIENT POLICY-MAKING**

The open discussion will debate on how CSO and Think Tanks acting as citizen representatives' proxy can contribute to improve policy-making in the region. The goal is to promote entry points (such as CRM and BP 2.0) and identify mechanisms and resources to increase citizens' influence.

The debate will be focused on the contribution of CSO, as below:

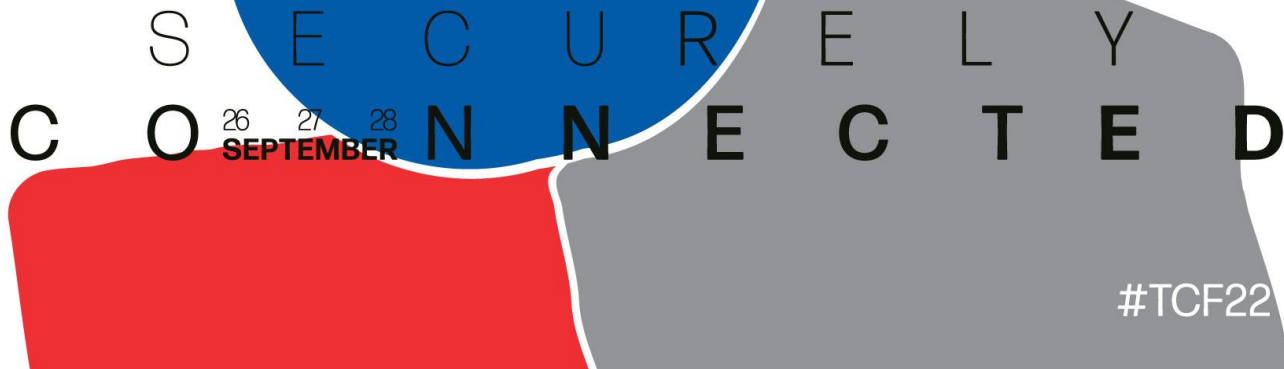
- **role of CSOs in the Common Regional Market (CRM)**, with Pranvera Kastrati, CRM Coordinator at RCC, and Dajana Cvjetkovic, CPCD BiH /Manager of the regional project SMART Balkans; and,
- **role of CSO in Berlin Process 2.0** with Christian Hagemann, Executive Director of Southeast Europe Association and Milica Uvalic, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Perugia, Italy

Moderator: Ardian Hackaj, TCF Coordinator.

19:00 - 20:30 **MS WB6 Special Envoys Panel: Building Europe in the Western Balkans - from Enlargement to Cohesion Policy**

- Sofia Grammata, Greek Special Envoy for Western Balkans
- Manuel Sarrazin, German Special Envoy for Western Balkans
- Johannes Eigner, Austrian Special Envoy for Western Balkans (online)
- Jurriaan Middelhoff, Dutch Regional Envoy for Stability in the Western Balkans

Chair: Dušan Reljić, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Head of Brussels Office



DAY 3. SECURE AND FUTURE-PROOF ENLARGEMENT

Date: Wednesday 28 September 2022 | **Venue:** [Rogner Hotel, Tirana](#) | **Format:** On-site

The 3rd block will focus on the role of youth in sectoral policies applied in SEE6, and how to build up on the legacy of European Year of Youth (EYY) and of Tirana European Youth Capital 2022 (TEYC22). After presenting main achievements of EYY and TEYC22, youth representatives and policymakers will debate on why and how to mainstream youth demands in EU and national sector policies. By involving the youngsters in all the stages, both national and EU policy-makers will ensure youth commitment and engagement, as well as the resilience and sustainability of policy outcomes. The 2nd panel will explore the best and most adapted ways to make it happen.

09:00 – 09:20 **REGISTRATION**

09:20 - 09:25 **OPENING REMARKS**

- Krisela Hackaj, Executive Director of Cooperation and Development Institute
- Aspasjana Kongo, CEO - General Coordinator, Tirana EYC, National Youth Congress

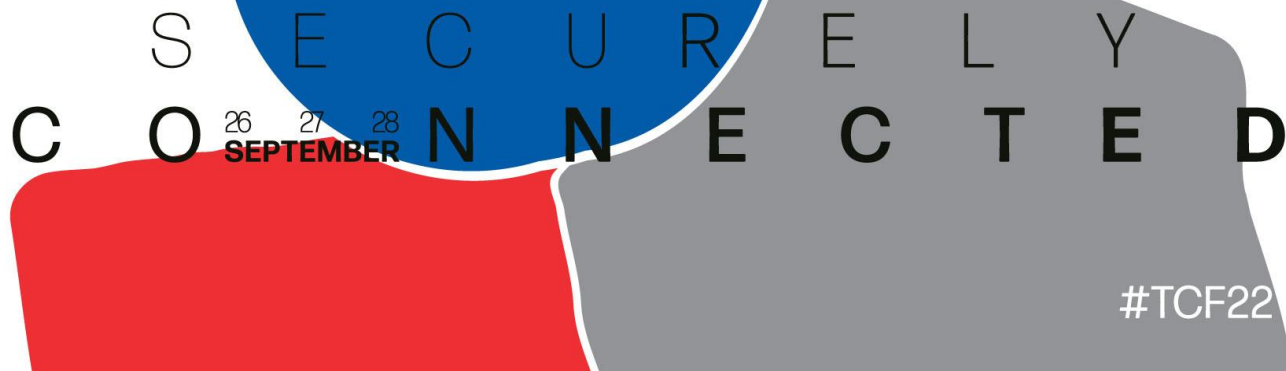
09:25 – 09:35 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

- Keti Luarasi, Deputy Mayor of Tirana Municipality

09:40 – 10:20 **TALK “Beyond 2022: Securing the Legacy of European Year of Youth and of Tirana European Youth Capital 2022”**

Benefits of mainstreaming Youth in all EU and national policies; designing and implementing co-governance as adapted to youth; EU-SEE6 ever-stronger links.

- Dafina Peci, Tirana European Youth Capital 2022 Director
- Tom Matthew, Board Member of European Youth Forum
- Ionuț Sibian, President of the Western Balkans Follow-up Committee, European Economic and Social Committee,



Moderator: Mona Xhexhaj, Executive Director, Academy of European Integration and Negotiations

10:30 – 11:50 PANEL 5. Why Youth in Policy-Making: the Proposal of “Connecting Youth” Platform

Connecting Youth (CY) platform will present the recommendations of “SEE6 Youth Sectoral Employability” policy paper, as basis for a debate on how they can be mainstreamed into policy-making.

- Kleina Kasanai, General Director at the National Youth Agency, Albania
- Tobias Köck, Vicepresident European Movement International (EMI)
- Angela Angjelovska, Vice President of National Youth Council of Macedonia, North-Macedonia
- Tatjana Babrauskienė, member of the European Economic and Social Committee

Moderator: Frank Hantke, Former Director of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Tirana & Pristina

11:50 - 13:00 PANEL 6. How To Mainstream Youth In Sector Policy-Making: TEYC Legacy

CDI and TEYC will present scenarios on eventual co-governance mechanisms that allow youth objectives to be mainstreamed in policy-making.

- Bora Muzhaqi, Minister of Youth and Children, Albania
- Vukašin Grozdanović, OPENS Novisad, Serbia
- Ivan Neirotti, European Youth Forum
- Marco Costantino, Youth Policies Department of Apulia Region, Italy

Moderator: Dafina Peci, Tirana European Youth Capital 2022 Director

13:50 - 13:15 TCF22 CONCLUSIONS and CLOSURE

Conclusion and closure by Ardian Hackaj, TCF Coordinator