

Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) in partnership with Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS) cordially invites you to an online discussion on the topic:

COVID-19 AND SEE6 REFORMS

how COVID-19 pandemic has tested the resilience of SEE6 institutions and the progress of reforms

Date: Friday, 12 June 2020

Time: 10:30 – 11:45

Venue: Zoom link will be sent to the invited participants

The EU Council decided to open the negotiation talks with Albania and North Macedonia on 25th March, 2020. This is by far the most significant development related to the SEE region in the last years.

Despite the usual rhetoric of "The future of the Balkans is within the EU" and the commitment for the "European perspective" of the SEE6, nothing concrete was mentioned in the Zagreb Summit declaration regarding the membership process such as any date or deadline for advancing the processes in the future of each country in the region.

Furthermore, as the New Enlargement Methodology (NEM) adds more challenges to the whole process itself, its approach still lacks a unique mechanism monitoring and supporting all democratic governance stages. There are no benchmarks yet regarding the Fundamentals. Moreover, we observe that NEM continues to be based on problem-solving approach and does not use the "leveraging of local structures core strengths". Neither local assets, nor local limiting factors are sufficiently addressed, while the long term needs and availability of local resources are missing as well. Surprisingly, SEE6 elites unwavering commitment to EU continues to be estimated as an unchanged constant. Finally the latest developments point towards a larger role of the EU Member States in the Enlargement process as compared with the EU Commission.

Meanwhile the COVID-19 pandemic has produced direct consequences on the economy, social context and overall situation of SEE6 citizen. The SEE region is projected to enter a recession in 2020, whose magnitude depends on the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe. The main risk for the SEE6 is that a prolonged pandemic, as well as a deeper recession in the EU, could make the unfolding economic crisis difficult to handle. As a consequence, SEE6 countries are experiencing delays in the implementation pace of engaged reforms, and in some cases a worsening of the internal political situation and democratic legitimacy.

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Welcome

Klaus Fiesinger, Regional Director for Southeast Europe of Hanns-Seidel-Foundation

Setting the Scene: State of Affairs in SEE6 in June 2020

Steven Blockmans, Director ad interim, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels

Re-setting Enlargement: for a more resilient, connected, greener and fairer region

Maja Kocijančič, Member of Cabinet of Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi

Impact on Reforms and Resilience of Local Institutions ...

...in Albania, by Ardian Hackaj, Director of Research, Cooperation and Development Institute, Tirana

...in Kosovo, by Donika Emini, Executive Director of the Civikos Platform, Prishtina

...in North Macedonia, by Simonida Kacarska, Director of the European Policy Institute in Skopje

...in Serbia, by Srđan Majstorović, Chairman of the Governing Board of the European Policy Centre, Belgrade

Discussion / Q&A

The webinar will be moderated by **Dušan Reljić**, Head of Office at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Brussels Office.

Wrap up