

DRAFT AGENDA¹



DUBROVNIK FORUM 2022

Resilient Firms: Thriving in Uncertainty

Launch of the SME Policy Index - Western Balkans and Turkey 2022

7.00-8.00pm, 8 July 2022

Hotel Dubrovnik Palace,
Dubrovnik, Croatia

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Context *The effects of the large-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine are echoing across the Western Balkans, which was on the path of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. With fewer resources to weather these impacts, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been particularly vulnerable to the repercussions of the crises. In only two years, they have found themselves fighting for survival, hit by reduced demand, lockdowns and supply chain disruptions, as well as, more recently, soaring operational costs.*

The side-event aims to set the scene for the Dubrovnik Forum “A Quest for Balance in a World Disrupted”, focusing on supporting the private sector development in the Western Balkans and Turkey amid the economic uncertainty.

19:00-19:05 WELCOME REMARKS

- **Mr Gordan Grlić Radman**, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia

19:05-19:15 KEY NOTE SPEECHES

- **Mr Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen**, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD
- **Mr Olivér Várhelyi**, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, European Commission (video message)

19:15-19:30 PRESENTATION OF THE OECD PUBLICATION *SME POLICY INDEX: WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY 2022*

Presentation of the key findings and ways forward by the OECD South East Europe Division

Drawing on the key findings of the *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2022*, the session will shed light on what kind of measures the region's governments have taken to help SMEs weather the COVID-19 crisis. It will also highlight the outstanding challenges faced by SMEs, and provide policy suggestions with a view to enhancing their resilience to external shocks.

The OECD SME Policy Index is a flagship publication for the EU enlargement region, providing a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the ten principles of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA). It monitors progress in the SME policy convergence, benchmarks against EU and OECD best practices and provides targeted recommendations to remove barriers to SME development.

19:30-19:40 QUESTION AND ANSWER (Q&A) SESSION

The OECD team will open the floor to participants to discuss how to translate SME Policy Index recommendations into effective support for SMEs, especially considering the recent external shocks (COVID-19, Russian invasion of Ukraine). Views from the audience will be sought.

19:40-20:00 POST-LAUNCH NETWORKING

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