



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH EAST EUROPE¹

Human Capital Flight – Shaping the Future Together

Agenda

Event web page: <https://bit.ly/3u3n7iv>



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@OECDglobal



17 May 2022
OECD Conference Centre, CC 1
2 rue André Pascal
75016 Paris
France

OECD Global Relations
South East Europe

¹ This conference is not a meeting of an official OECD body.

The [OECD](#) is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

Since 2000, the [OECD South East Europe Regional Programme](#) has been closely collaborating with economies of the region to foster growth, investment and employment through reforms that support competitiveness and private sector development. The programme addresses regional and national needs, capacities and reform priorities while translating OECD standards and best practices into actionable advice for South East European (SEE) economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia).

WHAT IS THE CONFERENCE ABOUT?

In the aftermath of COVID, and in an increasingly interconnected world where competition for markets is more intense than ever before, countries around the globe need to address structural reform challenges in order to heighten their economic competitiveness. In South East Europe, an important driver of reform is the prospect of accession to the European Union, and implementing OECD standards can be a key support for economic efficiency, sustainable growth and financial stability.

By designing, adopting and implementing the right economic reforms, governments can improve the lives of their citizens by boosting productivity, prosperity and resilience. Human capital is playing a vital role in strengthening competitiveness in South East Europe, as underlined in the OECD's [South East Europe Competitiveness Outlook 2021](#). The High-Level Conference will examine the different ways that the region can leverage its human capital for sustainable and inclusive growth in a post-COVID world, drawing on the OECD's latest analytical insights and policy recommendations and offering participants the opportunity to exchange good practices.

HOW IS THE EVENT STRUCTURED?

The conference's scene will open with the presentation of the new OECD report, *Labour Migration in The Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits*, which sheds light on the region's labour migration, with policy recommendations for tackling its root causes, managing migration effectively and linking with the diaspora. This report, conducted under the auspices of the OECD SEE Regional Programme, was prepared in co-operation with the OECD International Migration Division and co-funded by Austria (ADA) and Switzerland (SDC).

After the launch of the report, two Ministerial Panels will provide the opportunity to discuss pathways to support the SEE region in attracting know-how and better address challenges that might arise in the upcoming decade regarding human capital development.

WHO WILL BE THERE?

The conference will bring together Ministers in charge of economic affairs and high-level representatives from South East Europe and OECD and EU member countries, the European Commission, international partner organisations, non-governmental organisations and further regional stakeholders.

Contacts

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*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence

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HUMAN CAPITAL FLIGHT – SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

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- 09:00-10:00** **REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE**
- 10:00-10:05** **WELCOME**
- **Mr Karim Dahou**, Deputy Director, Global Relations and Cooperation, **OECD**
- 10:05-10:45** **OPENING SESSION**
- **Mr Mathias Cormann**, Secretary-General, **OECD**
 - **Mr Olivér Várhelyi**, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, **European Commission**
 - **Ms Régine Vandriessche**, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of **Belgium** to the OECD, Chair of the External Relations Committee
- 10:45-11:15** **LAUNCH OF THE OECD REPORT**
“Labour Migration in the Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits”
- Presentation of the report by the OECD South East Europe Division and OECD International Migration Division**
- More than 20% of the Western Balkans population was living abroad in 2020, predominantly in OECD countries. Continued high levels of emigration especially that of young talents, can pose a severe developmental challenge for the region, as potential investors experience increasing difficulties in finding adequate skills on the local labour markets. Conversely, the large and growing diasporas also provide opportunities. Living, studying, or working abroad, individuals have acquired and cultivated new skills and resources. By strengthening the linkages with their diasporas and fostering return or circular migration, the Western Balkans can tap into this talent pool, leveraging its resources for their socio-economic development.
- This session will present the main findings and recommendations of the report, which analyses labour migration patterns of the Western Balkans and explores policy approaches for maximising the benefits from migration while mitigating its negative societal consequences.
- 11:15-12:30** **FIRST MINISTERIAL PANEL**
Human Capital Flight: How to Reverse the Tendency in South East Europe
- In a competitive hiring environment, domestic firms in South East Europe face difficulties to attract the know-how to compete on global markets. Building the right conditions to attract investments and create new jobs with

stimulating career prospects are a must to build a resilient economy and retain the skills that might be lost through flight. Those skills that have already left, and are now part of the region's large diaspora, can also contribute to this endeavour.

This panel will discuss potentials to enhance the quantity and quality of employment and promote skills development, while leveraging the large inflows of remittances to the region more strategically while channelling diaspora know-how and investment towards productive activities.

CHAIR:

- **Ms Patricia Danzi**, Secretary of State, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, **Switzerland**

PANELISTS:

- **Mr Fatmir Bytyqi**, Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs, Coordination of Economic Sectors and Investments, **North Macedonia**
- **Mr Stanislav Raščan**, Acting Minister for Development Cooperation, **Slovenia**
- **Ms Rozeta Hajdari**, Minister of Industry, Entrepreneurship and Trade, **Kosovo**
- **Mr Zdenko Lucić**, Secretary of State for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, **Croatia**

Questions and answers

12:30-12:45 **FAMILY PHOTO**

12:45-14:00 **LUNCH** – OECD Château de la Muette – Salle Roger Ockrent

14:00-15:30 **SECOND MINISTERIAL PANEL**
Talent Transformation in South East Europe: Develop Today's Human for Tomorrow's Capital

Technologies are changing the way our economies work, the activities we perform, and the skills we need in order to succeed. Catching this rapid transformation is of the highest importance to prepare people for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we cannot yet imagine such as the COVID pandemic. Successfully navigating this uncertainty while boosting economies' resilience, sustainability and inclusiveness requires the trust of citizens and businesses in public institutions as well as in economic and social actors.

This session will explore how the South East European economies can overcome the challenges rising from technological change to increase their competitiveness by creating opportunities to develop citizens' skills and trust in institutions needed for a sustainable development and social cohesion.

CHAIR:

- **Ms Désirée Schweitzer**, Vice Minister and Director General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance, Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, **Austria**

PANELISTS:

- **Mr Goran Đurović**, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, **Montenegro**
- **Mr Dragan Stevanović**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy, **Serbia**
- **Ms Velislava Petrova**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Bulgaria**
- **Ms Delina Ibrahimaj**, Minister of Finance and Economy, **Albania**
- **Mr Cornel Feruță**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Romania**

*Questions and answers***15:30-15:45****CLOSING REMARKS**

- **Mr Didier Lenoir**, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of the **European Union** to the OECD
- **Mr László Turóczy**, Ambassador, Permanent Delegation of **Hungary** to the OECD and UNESCO, Chair of the OECD Friends of South East Europe
- **Mr Karim Dahou**, Deputy Director, Global Relations and Cooperation, **OECD**

15:45-17:30**COCKTAIL RECEPTION** – OECD Château de la Muette – Salle Roger Ockrent



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