

WB-EDIF SME FORUM & LAUNCH OF THE SME POLICY INDEX

TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2019

SARAJEVO - MAIN HALL, HOTEL HOLIDAY

13:30-14:00

REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE

14:00-14:05

WELCOME REMARKS

- **Mr Mirko Šarović**, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina

14:05-14:30

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING SESSION

- **Ms Katarína Mathernová**, Deputy Director-General, DG NEAR, European Commission
- **Mr Pierre Heilbronn**, Vice President, Policy & Partnerships, EBRD
- **Mr Andreas Schaal**, Director, OECD Global Relations
- **Mr Cesare Onestini**, Director, European Training Foundation

14:30-16:15

LAUNCH OF THE SME POLICY INDEX: WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY 2019¹

The *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019* (SME Policy Index 2019) is a flagship publication funded by the EU, providing a comprehensive overview of the implementation of the ten principles of the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) in the seven EU pre-accession economies between 2016 and 2019. It follows a holistic approach that seeks to support the economies with a single window through which to support the development of a robust private sector, in particular SMEs, in the region, while also fostering convergence towards OECD and EU policy standards. It further monitors progress against similar assessments performed over the past decade, and provides guidance to help them prepare for negotiating their accession to the EU.

The SME Policy Index 2019, the fifth report of its kind for the Western Balkans and Turkey, is the outcome of work conducted by the OECD and over 600 government officials and other stakeholders in seven pre-EU accession economies, in co-operation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

This session will present key findings of the *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey 2019* publication and open into a discussion with key public and private sector stakeholders to explore ways of unlocking the full potential of SMEs in the region.

PRESENTATION OF THE SME POLICY INDEX: WESTERN BALKANS AND TURKEY 2019

MODERATOR: Mr Andreas Schaal, Director, OECD Global Relations

PANELLISTS:

- **Ms Marzena Kisielewska**, Head, South East Europe Division, OECD
- **Mr Umur Gökçe**, Project Manager, South East Europe Division, OECD
- **Mr Anthony Gribben**, Senior Specialist, ETF

¹ Prepared by the OECD-ETF-EBRD and funded by the European Union.

- **Ms Svenja Petersen**, Principal Economist, EBRD

TOUR DE TABLE:

Heads of the Western Balkans and Turkey delegations and selected EU/OECD member states’ high-level representatives will share their good practices and lessons learnt across nine policy areas covered by the SME Policy Index. Each delegation will intervene only in one of the nine policy areas. The delegations’ interventions have been divided as follows:

Policy areas:	Delegations:
Entrepreneurial learning	Bosnia and Herzegovina
Institutional and regulatory framework for SME policy making	Montenegro
Operational environment for SMEs	Albania
Public procurement	North Macedonia
Access to finance	Kosovo*
Enterprise skills	Germany
Innovation policy for SMEs	Serbia
Greening of SMEs	Turkey
Internationalisation of SMEs	Poland

OPEN DISCUSSION:

This part will open the floor to participants to discuss, among other things, how to translate SME Policy Index recommendations into effective support programmes for SMEs. Views from the audience, in particular from private sector representatives, will be sought.

16:15-16:30

FAMILY PHOTO AND COFFEE BREAK

16:30-18:00

SUPPORTING SMEs FOR THE ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE WESTERN BALKANS: IMPROVING ACCESS TO FINANCE AND BEYOND

Several factors are associated with SME growth and competitiveness. An important external factor is access to finance which is crucial to facilitate the creation, expansion and survival of firms. But internal factors matter, too. SMEs with above-average growth rely on adequate management structures, business planning, and HR policies that support their vision and look beyond border to seek new opportunities.

When it comes to accessing finance, SMEs tend to be particularly exposed to downturns in the supply of finance due to their higher risk profile and more limited collateral options; this is especially true for younger and fast-growing SMEs. But even in less troubled times, SME lending can be subdued, as is the case in the Western Balkans at the moment.

Lack of finance prevents SMEs from investing in innovative projects, improving their productivity and seizing opportunities in expanding or accessing new markets. But these endeavours also require planning and need to be underpinned by appropriate management structures and human resource policies that go beyond the owner-manager model.

In this context, the session will discuss the challenges to competitiveness that SMEs face and give an overview of the ongoing initiatives in the region that complement governments’

* 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.

efforts to support SME growth. In particular, the session will describe the financing opportunities made available in the Western Balkans by the Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF), funded by the EU to improve access to finance for SMEs in the region. It will also explore concrete solutions to help SMEs develop and provide an opportunity to the audience to share their views on the environment for successful entrepreneurship.

MODERATOR: Mr. Claudio Viezzoli, Managing Director SME Finance & Development, EBRD

PANELLISTS:

- **Mr Marko Čadež**, Chairman of the WB6 Chamber Investment Forum
- **Mr Altin Fuga**, General Manager, APM
- **Mr Marco Marrone**, Department Director - Head of Mandate Management Debt, European Investment Fund (EIF)
- **Ms Biljana Šćekić**, Associate Director, ASB Regional Head, EBRD
- **Mr Amir Softić**, Executive Manager, CRO and CFO of Sparkasse Bank Bosnia and Herzegovina

OPEN DISCUSSION

18:00-18:15

OFFICIAL CLOSING

Mr Claudio Viezzoli, Managing Director, SME Finance & Development, EBRD

18:15-20:30

NETWORKING COCKTAIL

Pivnica HS Restaurant

Franjevačka 15, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Please join us for a reception at an iconic brewery in the heart of Sarajevo. A selection of canapés and beverages will be offered.

Coaches will transport guests to the venue immediately after the SME Forum and will be available for return journeys to the Hotel Holiday at 20:30. More details will be provided on the day.