



## The Western Balkans – Europe's (un-)wanted challenge?

OpenForum Budapest (May 8 - 10, 2009)

### What is the OpenForum Budapest about?

The European Union proved to be really effective in using its soft power in Central-Eastern Europe. The enlargement process that was based on strict conditionality made it transparent what the EU wants, offers and demands in return. The candidate countries there in principle needed to reform their countries themselves in order to join the Union as equal members. European integration has been a voluntary project for everybody involved since its very beginnings; it has been designed even as counter model to imperial (national) politics.

The European Union has accepted an even stronger role of a "civilizational" power in the Western Balkans. It has been a long-standing supporter (witness the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe), it took a strong role in overcoming national problems like in Macedonia, and growing international opposition notwithstanding it has become a guarantor of state-building, economic development and civil reconciliation in the region in Bosnia, Kosovo and beyond.

However, the concern with institutional reforms in the EU throughout the last years has diminished prospects of further enlargement. Moreover, European public attention for the developments in the Western Balkans is by far lower than the EU's role and responsibility would suggest. Only urgent crises or fundamental decisions bring this part of Europe into the news in most of the EU member states and usually countries like Montenegro or even Serbia are getting out of the general horizon quite quickly afterwards.

During OpenForum Budapest we will –among others – focus on the following questions: What can the European Union do in the fields of efficient institutions and sustainable economy in order to support the process of accession? Does the Union really have the means to succeed? Is the role of the European Union in the Western Balkans in accordance with its own interests, fundamentals and aims? What does the lack of public attention mean? Could more attention be gained – and if so, how? What about citizens' opinions on the matter? What can be done to bring this vital decisions closer to them? On what fields is civil engagement and cooperation between activists from different Western Balkan countries or (minority) groups possible, and how can it be intensified?



## The Western Balkans – Europe’s (un-)wanted challenge?

OpenForum Budapest (May 8 - 10, 2009)

### Friday, 8 May 2009

- 17:00 Latest Arrival of Participants at Hunor Hotel  
(3rd District, Pünkösdfürdő utca 40)
- 17:30-18:15 Welcome and Introduction at Hunor Hotel
- 18:15-19:25 Film presentation: Adela Peeva - Whose is This Song? (2003, Documentary)
- 19:30-20:15 Dinner at Hunor Hotel
- 20:15-21:45 Round 1: “Impact of EU policy on Balkan societies: comparing the European and Balkan perception”  
*Introduction: Péter Györkös (HES, Ambassador of Hungary to Croatia), Tibor Várady (Central European University, University Professor, Chair of the International Business Law Program, Budapest), Moderator: Attila Bartha (HES)*

### Saturday, 9 May 2009

- 09:30 Departure of boat to Szentendre from Batthyany ter
- 09:40-11:00: Round 2: “The role of civil society in the Balkans today”  
*Introduction: Sabina Mujezinović (HES, Tuzla Municipality Board's President Woman, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Moderator: Gert Röhrborn (Citizens)*
- 11:00-11:30 Meeting and discussion with Pero Lastić (Serbian Municipality Szentendre)
- 11:30-12:30 Guided walking tour of Szentendre
- 12:30-13:30: Lunch in Serbian Corner Restaurant in Szentendre
- 14:00 Return to Budapest on the boat or individually
- 19:00-21:00 Panel discussion „Europe in the Balkans – a neverending story?” at Restaurant Köleves (7th District, Dob utca 26.)  
*Participants: Goran Buldžoski (Programme Director, Think Tank Fund, Open Society Institute, Budapest), Adnan Huskić (Project Coordinator, Naumann Foundation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Moderator: Borbála Kriza (HES)*
- 21:30 Dinner in Restaurant Köleves

### Sunday, 10 May 2009

- 10:00-12:00: Round 3: “Promoting reconciliation - How can cross-border cooperation between Balkan activists be fostered?” at Hunor Hotel  
*Introduction: Sabina Mujezinović (HES, Tuzla Municipality Board's President Woman, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Moderator: Frank Burgdörfer (Citizens)*
- 12:00-12:45 Evaluation and Closing of OpenForum
- 12:45-13:30 Administrative Procedure and Departure