

Western Balkans Civil Society Policy Dialogues in Brussels

HOW DO WE GET TO ENLARGEMENT THAT DELIVERS?



- ▶ How to Defend Democracy? Civil Society, Media, and the EU's Response to Rising Pressures
- ▶ The Growth Plan's Reform and Growth Facility: New Instrument to Ignite Transformative Reforms?

25 February 2025
15:30– 17:30 CET

European Policy Center
Rue du Trône 14–16, Brussels

Opening Keynote:

| 15:30 – 15:40 |

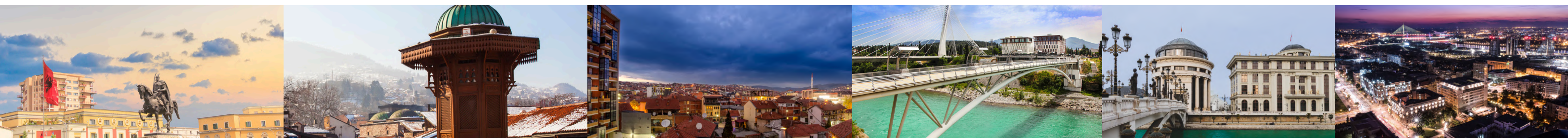
SESSION 1:

| 15:40 – 16:35 |

Valentina Superti

Director for Western Balkans, European Commission

How to Defend Democracy? Civil Society, Media, and the EU's Response to Rising Pressures



Gordan Bosanac,
Member of European
Parliament

Taulant Hoxha,
Kosovar Civil Society
Foundation (KCSF),
Executive Director,
BCSDN Chair of Board

Biljana Spasovska,
Balkan Civil Society
Development Network,
Executive Director

Nikola Burazer,
European Western
Balkans, Executive Editor

Moderator:
Berta López Domènech
European Policy Center

High-level intervention

How can civil society and EU institutions work together to defend democratic values amid geopolitical shifts?

How can civil society effectively safeguard democracy and rule of law in an era of rising global pressures?

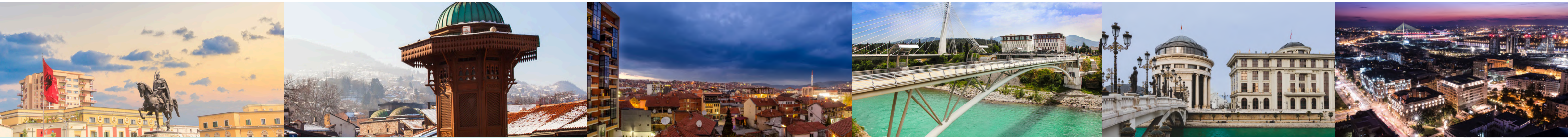
What role should the EU play in protecting civil society from political and financial constraints?

How can independent media counter misinformation and strengthen democratic accountability?

**Discussion with civil society
representatives from WBT**

SESSION 2: | 16:35 – 17:30 |

The Growth Plan's Reform and Growth Facility: New Instrument to Ignite Transformative Reforms?



Andi Dobrushki,
Open Society Foundations
Western Balkans Director

Valbona Zeneli,
Nonresident Senior Fellow,
Europe Center Atlantic
Council

**Milena Mihajlovic
Denic,**
European Policy Centre,
Belgrade, Programme
Director, Think for Europe
Network

Stefan Ristovski,
European Policy Institute,
Skopje, Senior Researcher,
Think for Europe Network

Moderator:
Corina Stratulat,
European Policy Center

High-level intervention

What is the added value of the Growth Facility for the Western Balkans? What are the opportunities and risks?

*Regional overview of the reform steps in the Reform Agendas policy areas
What are the enabling factors and challenges in implementation of the Reform and Growth Facility?*

*What are the existing and upcoming venues and challenges for stakeholder participation in the Reform Agenda implementation?
How can the EU support the involvement of non-state actors in the implementation and monitoring of the Reform Agenda?*

Discussion