



REGIONAL CONFERENCE

#OneRegionOneMarket – EU Growth Plan for WB, A Step towards integration of WB
Common Market into the EU Single Market
April 15, 2024; Novi Sad, Serbia

Theme:

Local, Regional and European GROWTH 2024!

Background

There are 3 important policies for the Western Balkans launched in the last few years, namely **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**, **Common Regional Market** and the 6 billion EUR worth **EU Growth Plan and Reform Agenda for the Western Balkans**.

GREEN AGENDA FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS¹

Objectives

- Cleaning energy sources & protecting the climate
- Moving to a circular economy
- Depolluting air, water, and soil
- Building sustainable agriculture & food systems
- Protecting biodiversity and ecosystems

THE COMMON REGIONAL MARKET ACTION PLAN is made up of targeted actions in four key areas:

- **Regional trade area: free movement of goods, services, capital and people**, including crosscutting measures, such as the Green Lanes, to align with EU-compliant rules and standards and provide opportunities for companies and citizens;
- **Regional investment area**, to align investment policies with the EU standards and best international practices and promote the region to foreign investors;

¹ A New Growth Strategy for the Western Balkans, leaping from a traditional economic model to a sustainable economy, in line with the European Green Deal.

The main goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and align with the European Green Deal's key elements.

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- **Regional digital area**, to integrate the Western Balkans into the pan-European digital market; and
- **Regional industrial and innovation area**, to transform the industrial sectors, shape value chains they belong to, and prepare them for the realities of today and challenges of tomorrow.

EU GROWTH PLAN AND REFORM AGENDA FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS² based on four pillars:

- Enhancing economic integration of the region into the EU single market
- Boosting economic integration within the Western Balkans through the Common Regional Market
- Speeding up fundamental reforms
- Increasing financial assistance to support the reforms.

Why another Regional Conference?

“Center for regional economic research and analyses was established in order to monitor, analyze and implement the European integrative processes and build and strengthen the institutional capacities, aiming at faster integration of WB6 Region into EU, as well as to establish economic, scientific, educational and cultural cooperation within Balkans and with European cities and regions.”

Together with all partners in this part of the South East Europe, Center for regional economic research and analyses is organizing Regional Conference promoting regional economic cooperation, focusing on practical, business oriented, monitoring of Regional Economic cooperation in Western Balkans, under the title *GROWTH 2024-2025*.

Regional Conference is aiming at bringing together up to 200 business leaders from the region, entrepreneurs, investors, owners, and CEOs of the leading regional companies, as well as heads of the most successful SMSs operating region wide.

We want to make sure that leaders in business have been heard by policy makers and decision makers, as they, the entrepreneurs and business leaders are the once who are dealing with the effects of these

² Western Balkan partners will have to deliver on key reforms to receive the allocated funds. They will be invited to prepare a reform agenda based on existing recommendations from the enlargement reports as well as the Economic reform programmes. These agendas will be assessed and adopted by the Commission.

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policies. For us, being heard is not good enough, we want to make sure that these messages are well discussed, appreciated and transformed into policies!

We want to hear from regional business leaders what do they think of these policies. Are they happy how Green Lanes operate in practice? How to extend these Green Lanes and link them efficiently with the EU corridors? What are the practical consequences of integration of border crossings? What else can we do to support all these policies to make sure that there is practical benefit for all? What are the goods listed for these corridors and can they be extended and enriched? How to create new opportunities for stronger networking of business communities within the region by removing the remaining obstacles to deeper regional economic integration and creation of a regional common market. Economies of the Western Balkan are already closely linked to each other but also to the European Single Market. This has been made intensively clear in the recent years.

There are different regional initiatives, we support them all and do not want them confronted!

Agenda

April 15, 2024

09.00 – 09.30

Venue: Congress Center „Master“ - Novi Sad Fair

Introduction:

Mr. Goran Svilanović, Conference Programmer 2024
Mr. Vladislav Cvetković, Conference Programmer 2024

Opening remarks:

Mr. Aleksandar Simurdić, Conference Chairman
Mr. Jakov Devčić, KAS Foundation, Director for Serbia and Montenegro
Mr. Milan Đurić, Mayor of City of Novi Sad
Mr. Slobodan Cvetković, Minister of Economy, Government of the Republic of Serbia

09.30 – 13.30 (with coffee brakes) Chatam House rules

PLENUM 1: Business Leaders Have a Say!

What do I think about, when I think about regional economic cooperation and business?

Venue: Congress Center „Master“ - Novi Sad Fair

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What is business community expecting from the governments and regional organizations to benefit from different initiatives? What immediate short-term measures are needed and what are the long-term policies needed if we want to provide for economic convergence of our region with the EU?

What are the obstacles? Border regimes? Payment system? Labor? Whatever else that can be done to feel that they are appreciated by their governments and by EU institutions and regional organizations?

The opening remarks are followed by an open discussion of all participants.

Session 1

Opening remarks:

Aleksandar Kostić, MK Group, Vice President (tbc)

Vladan Ostojić, Co-founder, Vega IT

Sasha Cioringa, Continental Automotive Serbia, General Manager

Amel Dizdarević, Apatha Group, Co-owner

Predrag Mihajlović, OTP Bank Serbia, President of the Executive Board and CEO (tbc)

Roman Kratochvil, Beohemija, CEO

JBAS - representative

International Outlook:

HE Mr. Christofer Hill, US Ambassador to Serbia

HE Mr. Edward Ferguson, UK Ambassador to Serbia

HE Mr. Hami Aksoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Serbia

HE Mr. Akira Imamura, Ambassador of Japan to Serbia

HE Mr. Giles Norman, Ambassador of Canada to Serbia, Montenegro and North of Macedonia

Session 2

Opening remarks:

Branko Azeski, President, Economic Chamber of North Macedonia

Vjekoslav Vuković, President, Chamber of Commerce of BiH

Ronald Seeliger, Hemofarm, CEO (tbc)

Nebojša Šaponjić, Co-founder, Nelt Group (tbc)

Romano Rossi, Vice President, Confindustria Serbia; Progetti doo, CEO

Aleksandra Đurđević, Director, DeltaAuto; Vice President Delta Holding

Vlastimir Vuković, President of the Executive Board, Komercijalna banka, NLB Group (tbc)

Dimitrije Knjeginjić, Lafarge Serbia, Director (tbc)

JBAS – representative

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International Outlook:

Mr. Nicola Pontara, The World Bank, Country manager for Serbia, Europe and Central Asia (tbc)

Mr. Duško Krsmanović, UK Export Finance, director for the Western Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe

Mr. Alessandro Bragonzi, European Investment bank, Director of the Regional Representation for the Western Balkans (tbc)

Mr. Bodin Bulatović, International Finance Corporation, The World Bank Group, Country Manager

Mr. Peter Tabak, EBRD, Lead Regional Economist for the Western Balkans

PLENUM 2: COMMON REGIONAL MARKET AND DEMOGRAPHY: Can migration help?

What is happening with the integration of labor market in the region? How far did we go with the recognition of diplomas and recognition of professional certificates? How organized we are to welcome foreign labor? What practical problems business community faces in strengthening labor market?

Opening remarks:

Darija Kisić, Minister for Family Welfare and Demography, Government of the Republic of Serbia

Dragoslav Šćekić, Vice-President of the Government for Demography and Youth in Montenegro

Marija Desivojević, Senior Vice-President, Delta Holding (tbc)

Dejan Ljevnaić, Director, Olympic Center Jahorina

JBAS representative

Am – Cham representative

AHK representative

The opening remarks are followed by an open discussion of all participants.

14:00 Lunch

PLENUM 3: WORKING LUNCH - LEADERS MEETING LEADERS: Regional economic integration as a response to global economic trends

Venue: „Svečani saloni“, Petrovaradin Fortress, Novi Sad, Serbia

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Here we should have business leaders together with representatives of the governments (ministers of finance / ministers of economy / trade) representatives of chambers of commerce from the region, and representatives of the businesses.

We would like to use this lunch for open exchange of views on how to link different policies with the practical aspects of regional economic cooperation. The idea is to agree on realistic achievements in the course of 2024 and 2025.

Opening remarks:

Mr. Tomislav Momirović, Minister of Domestic and Foreign Trade, Government of the Republic of Serbia

Mr. Siniša Mali, Minister of Finance, Government of the Republic of Serbia (tbc)

Mr. Staša Košarac, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Council of Ministers of BiH

Mr. Nik Gjeloshaj, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Policy, Government of Montenegro (tbc)

Representative of the Government of Albania (the invitation has been sent to Minister Ms. Delina Ibrahimaj, Minister Mr. Blendi Gonxhja and Minister Mr. Ervin Mete)

Mr. Fatmir Bytyqi, Deputy Prime Minister, Government of North Macedonia (tbc)

Keynote speeches as an introduction into open exchange of views.

15.30 – 16.00

CLOSING PLENUM: IN A CONVERSATION WITH --

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