

The Strategic Compass and the Western Balkans: Towards a tailor-made and strategic approach to partnerships?



A webinar co-organised by the Slovenian Ministry of Defence and the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), within the context of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

09:00-12:00 CEST, 7 July, 2021

CONCEPT

The Strategic Compass has the ambition of developing a new approach to security and defence partnerships with international organisations and third states. So far, dialogues under the Compass process have reiterated the need to build a flexible and tailor-made partnership framework that considers the specificities of each partner and the importance of its contribution to EU actions. In this context, developing a tailor-made approach to partnerships with the Western Balkans should be a priority. Indeed, the integration of the Western Balkans in the EU remains a key strategic objective and it is in the shared interest of the Union and region to support the region's further Euro-Atlantic integration.

Building on the work of the Sofia Priority Agenda of 2018, and the European External Action Service's 2021 non-paper on the EU's reinforced engagement with the Western Balkans on CSDP and CFSP, the Strategic Compass provides an opportunity to achieve closer engagement and deeper dialogue with the region and EU candidate countries. Therefore, the aim of this webinar is to discuss how the Western Balkans can play a more active role in CSDP initiatives and it aims to make a contribution to the dialogue phase of the Strategic Compass process. In particular, the webinar will be driven by the following questions:

- > How do the EU and Western Balkan partners understand security and defence partnerships and the priorities underpinning them? What are the shared approaches to EU-Western Balkan partnerships and what are the contested areas of cooperation? Are there any red lines?
- > How is the Strategic Compass likely to affect partnerships with the Western Balkans? How can existing partnerships be made more effective and strategic? How can we develop region- or issue-specific strategies for a more tailored approach to the partnership with the region?
- > What should a closer partnership with the Western Balkans in the area of security and defence look like in practice? Where do partnerships with Western Balkans and enlargement policy intersect, if they do at all?

PROGRAMME

09:00-09:10

Welcome remarks

Gustav LINDSTROM

Director, EU Institute for Security Studies

09:10-09:30

Keynote speech

Uroš LAMPRET

State Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Republic of Slovenia

09:30-10:30

Session I – Perspectives on the Western Balkans, enlargement and CSDP

Speakers

Igor BANDOVIĆ

Director, Belgrade Centre for Security Policy

Donika EMINI

Executive Director, CiviKos Platform

Elsa FENET

Head of Division, Western Balkans, European External Action Service

Borut ŠUKLJE

Director, Agency for Strategic Studies, Slovenia

Moderator

Daniel FIOTT

Security and Defence Editor, EU Institute for Security Studies

10:30-10:45

Break

10:45-11:45

Session II – Developing a tailor-made strategic approach for security and defence

Speakers

Srđan MAJSTOROVIĆ

Chairman of the Governing Board, European Policy Centre (CEP) Serbia

Alison WESTON

Head of Division, Partnerships and Agreements, Security and Defence Policy, European External Action Service

Samuel ŽBOGAR

Former EU Special Representative in Kosovo and Head of EU Delegation in North Macedonia

Moderator

Daniel FIOTT

Security and Defence Editor, EU Institute for Security Studies

11:45-12:00

Closing speech

Peter GRK

Secretary-General, Bled Strategic Forum