



Universiteit
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ASSER
INSTITUTE

Centre for International & European Law



Programme

A legal assessment of EU integration in the Western Balkans

**Workshop co-organized by Europa Institute (Leiden University) and
TMC Asser Institute**

Date and location: 31 October 2025, TMC Asser Institute, The Hague

- 9.00-9:30 Registration of participants and welcome with coffee and tea
- 9:30-10:30 **Keynote lecture**
Title TBD, Prof. Adam Łazowski, Professor at the Westminster Law School and European Neighbourhood Chair Coordinator & Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Natolin)
- 10.30-10.45 Coffee/tea break
- 10:45-12:15 **Panel 1: From Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAAs) to the Growth Plan: Is the overall legal and policy framework on enlargement fit for purpose?**
- Between Promise and Progress: Rethinking the SAA in the Western Balkans' Journey, Dr. Aida Gugu Bushati, School of Magistrates of Albania
- Towards Measurable Rule of Law: A Critical Assessment of the EU Enlargement Methodology, Blerta Begisholli, MA, PhD Candidate (EUI)
- Cranking the engine: The New Growth Plan for the Western Balkans and the struggle to restart accession conditionality, Theo Tsomidis, PhD candidate, Leiden
- The transformation of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue from from a CFSP instrument to a legal conditionality criterion, Dr. Dren Doli, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dr. Zamira Xhaferri, University of Amsterdam, Francesco Cortese
- 12:15 -13:30 Lunch/ followed by coffee and tea

13.30- 15:00 Panel 2: Rule of Law Reforms. A view from the Western Balkan countries

Rethinking 'fundamentals' of (EU) integration in the Western Balkans through the Bottom-Up Approach, Dr. Leposava Ognjanoska Stavrovska, International Balkan University, North Macedonia

Strengthening the Rule of Law in preparation for EU integration: The case of anti-corruption measures in Albania, Edlira Osmani, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Albania, Emily van Rheenen, Centre for International Legal Cooperation, The Netherlands

Homegrown or Brussels-born? Rethinking Rule of Law reforms and legal pluralism in Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU integration path, Meris Musanovic, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Constitutional protection of Social Rights of Minorities in the Western Balkans: Between EU Conditionality and Domestic Reform, Dr. Heliona Bellani, Prof. Ass. Dr. Bojana Hajdini, Epoka University, Albania

15:00-15:30 Coffee/tea break

15.30-17.00 Panel 3: Regional Initiatives and Other Reforms

Benefits and Pitfalls of the Open Balkan Initiative, Prof. Julija Brsakoska Bazerkoska, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

Free movement of goods in the Western Balkans: Fragmented regional initiatives towards EU integration, Dr. Fjoralba Caka, University of Tirana

Western Balkans States and their preparation for future civil judicial cooperation in the EU: a cartography of the region concerning reforms in this field, Dr. Carlos Santalo Goris, Postdoctoral researcher at the University of Luxembourg

Critical Raw Materials in Wider Europe, Dr. Nedim Hovic, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Oslo, Benjamin Nurkic, PhD Candidate, University of Tuzla

17.00-18.00 Reception

18:30-21.00 Dinner with paper presenters