



Co-organised by **Europa Institute (Leiden University)**  
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## WORKSHOP

# A Legal Assessment of EU integration in the Western Balkans

31 October  
2025

# PROGRAMME

9.00-9.30 Registration & Welcome

9.30-10.30 Keynote Lecture

**Balancing on a Tightrope: Pre-accession Policy and Pursuit of EU Values**

*Prof. Adam Łazowski, Professor at the Westminster Law School and European Neighbourhood Chair Coordinator and Visiting Professor at the College of Europe (Natolin)*

10.30-10.45 Coffee/Tea

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 (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 University*

**The Transformation of the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue 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, Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo to the Kingdom of the Netherlands*

12.15 -13.30 Lunch, followed by Coffee/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, Expert on Rule of Law*

*Emily van Rhee, 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*

15.30-17.00

**Panel 3: Regional Initiatives and Other Reforms**

**Benefits and Pitfalls of the Open Balkan Initiative**

*Prof. Julija Brsakovska 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*

**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

**Closing Reception**

18:30-21.00

**Presenters Closing Dinner**

*Restaurant Dok28*

 [Dr. Lelykade 28b, 2583 CM Den Haag](#)

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