



Co-organised by **Europa Institute (Leiden University)**
&
T.M.C. Asser Instituut



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? (Moderator: Dr Darinka Piqani, Leiden University)**

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 (Moderator: Dr Narin Idriz, T.M.C. Asser Instituut)

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 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, Epoka University, Albania

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 (Moderator: Dr Darinka Piqani, Leiden University)

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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