



# MIND the GAP:

Bridging Research and Policy Development  
in European Integration of the Balkans

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## REGIONAL OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS ALUMNI CONFERENCE 2015

*#osfalumni2015*

Hotel Palace,  
Toplicin Venac 23,  
Belgrade, Serbia

**November 19-20, 2015**

### **Aim of the event:**

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To contribute to regional Western Balkan cooperation and to improve the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Scholarship Programs alumni role in policy dialogue on regional social, political and educational issues.

### **Objectives:**

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- Strengthen the Alumni Network of OSF among scholars and alumni from Western Balkans focusing on Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup>
- Raise capacities of selected alumni for participation in policy development and advocacy;
- Enhance cooperation between OSF educational advising centres in the Western Balkans.

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<sup>1</sup> \* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

# Agenda

## Day 1 – Conference Day

### Thursday, Nov 19th

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**10.00 – 10.45** Welcome and session opening - Conference room: Panorama

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#### Speakers:

**Audrone Uzieliene**

Deputy Director, Scholarships : Open Society Foundations, United Kingdom

**Srdjan Djurovic**

Programme Coordinator, Open Society Foundations Serbia

**Milorad Bjeletic**

Executive Director, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

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**10.45 – 12.00** Session 1: Bridging Research and Policy Development in European Integration of the Balkans - Conference room: Panorama

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#### Speakers:

**Gazela Pudar Drasko**

Researcher, Center for Ethics, Law and Applied Philosophy (CELAP), Serbia

**Vlado Dedovic**

Director, Centre for Monitoring and Research CeMI, Montenegro

**Damjan Zdravev**

President, Reactor - Research in Action, Macedonia

**Albana Rexha**

Research Fellow, Group for Legal and Political Studies, Kosovo

#### Moderator:

**Vladimir Pavlovic**

Policy Coordinator, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

#### Session focus

What are the main reasons for the gap which can emerge between researchers and decision makers when it comes to feeding policy making with evidence based policy options? How to engage policy makers and opinion leaders into a meaningful discussion with research community? Can researchers be influential policy advisors? Evidence-informed policy making in Western Balkans countries should represent a basis for successful transposition of EU Acquis and achieving of goals of EU policies in the Western Balkans countries. Yet, policy making process based on sound policy research in the European integration of the region still faces different challenges. This session will address some of those challenges.

**12.00 – 12.30 Coffee Break**

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**12.30 – 14.30** Session 2: Policy briefs presentations - Conference room: Panorama

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Moderator:

**Vladimir Pavlovic**

Policy Coordinator, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

**Presentations of policy brief papers prepared by OSF alumni researchers. Groups of researchers will deliver presentations on the following policies:**

**(De)centralisation of the Labour Market in Serbia - Risks and Opportunities for the Youth**

Authors: **Aleksandra Simic** and **Dragan Stanojevic**/Serbia

**The Hurdles for the University Autonomy in Macedonia - The Case of Law on High Education**

Author: **Ana Pavlovska Daneva**/Macedonia

**Towards EU 2020 Goals in Education: Improving Policy Framework and Practices in Kosovo**

Author: **Armend Muja**/Kosovo

**Challenges to Parliamentary Oversight and Accountability of Independent Agencies in Kosovo**

Author: **Blerim Vela**/Kosovo

**From Wrong Transposition to False Implementation - the Case of Waste Management Regulation in Macedonia**

Authors: **Dragan Milkovski** and **Tijana Angjelkovska**/Macedonia

**Fighting Discrimination in Serbia: Role of the Media**

Author: **Dejan Mavrovic**/Serbia

**Protection in Practice: Aligning Environmental and Consumer Law and Policy in Serbia with EU Acquis**

Authors: **Mihajlo Vucic** and **Mateja Djurovic**/Serbia

**Great Expectations - Grounding EU Gender Equality Principles into Serbian Policy**

Author: **Milana Lazic**/Serbia

**Mass influx of Syrian asylum Seekers and European Asylum Crisis: Dealing with the Emerging Challenges in Serbia**

Author: **Olga Mitrovic**/Serbia

**Macedonia's Prospects on Reaching the 2020 Energy Policy Targets**

Author: **Dragana Nikodinovska**/Macedonia

Session focus

Brief presentations of policy briefs developed for the Regional Open Society Foundations Alumni Conference. The Policy briefs will address particular policy issues relevant for the European integration process of the countries from the Western Balkans region. The focus of the session will be on the policy recommendations proposed within developed briefs as concrete contributions made by the authors (OSF Alumni members) for resolving targeted problems.

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**14.30 – 15.30 Lunch Break, Restaurant, Ground floor**

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**15.30 – 17.00** Session 3: Open Discussion Session - Conference room: Panorama

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Session focus

The presentations from the previous discussion will transform into mini discussions facilitated by the authors of each policy briefs. Participants in the conference will have the opportunity to engage themselves in more in-depth discussions, share experiences and ideas on the topics presented in the policy brief and network with their fellow Alumni.

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# Agenda

## Day 2 – Conference Day

### Friday, Nov 20th

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**10.00 – 11.30** Training: From Research to Advocacy - Understanding the Importance of Evidence Based Policy Making in European Integration Process Session - Conference room: Panorama

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#### Trainers:

**Stevan Vujasinovic**

Communication Policy Researcher, United Nations Development Programme, Serbia

**Vladimir Pavlovic**

Policy Coordinator, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

**Mirko Popovic**

Coordinator of the Centre for European Integration, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

#### Session focus

Good communication framework for interacting with decision makers within the frameworks of policy advocacy campaigns is a precondition for successful advocating recommendations streaming from the research. Policy papers are not the products which mark the end of research, but rather tools which initiate discussion on the possible solutions for the policy problem in question. This is why policy researchers should be good communicators of their researches as well. An overview of tools used in this process will be presented and their applicability in Western Balkan region will be also discussed.

### 11.30 – 12.00 Coffee Break

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**12.00 – 13.30** **Training:** From Research to Advocacy - Understanding the Importance of Evidence Based Policy Making in European Integration Process - Conference room: Panorama

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#### Trainers:

**Stevan Vujasinovic**

Communication Policy Researcher, United Nations Development Programme

**Vladimir Pavlovic**

Policy Coordinator, Belgrade Open School

**Mirko Popovic**

Coordinator of the Centre for European Integration, Belgrade Open School

#### Session focus

Successful European Integration of the countries of the region will depend on the capacities of the countries to successfully meet the goals of EU policies, transpose and implement the challenging Acquis into national policy and legislative frameworks. Sound policy solutions grounded in research which fits to national contexts can provide basis for successful reply of of the region to this challenge. Policy briefs presented in the first day of the conference will be used as baseline for discussion why it is important to have evidence based policy making, how to establish evidence based decision making on the agenda of decision makers and finally, how does the role of policy researchers fits in this context.

**13.30 – 14.00** Closing remarks

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#### Speakers:

**Audrone Uzieliene**

Deputy Director, Scholarships : Open Society Foundations, United Kingdom

**Ana Stevanovic**

Coordinator of the Educational Advising Centre, Belgrade Open School, Serbia

**14.00 – 15.00 Lunch, Restaurant, Ground floor**