

**INVITATION  
EXPERT ROUNDTABLE**

**THE FUTURE OF THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE ROLE OF THE  
EU –  
HOW TO PREVENT A NEW WAVE OF REGIONAL  
DESTABILISATION?**

<b>Date</b>	Tuesday, 24 March 2020
<b>Time</b>	12:00 – 14:00
<b>Venue</b>	Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung European Union Rue du Luxembourg 47-51, 1050 Brussels

**Context**

The failure of the European Council to agree on opening accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia triggered lasting shockwaves in the Western Balkans. The Commission's communication on a changed methodology for the accession negotiations and a possible correction of the European Council's decision could not eliminate the immense damage caused by this failure.

At the same time, there are indications of an authoritarian consolidation in Serbia prior to the parliamentary elections in spring 2020. The main opposition parties have announced to boycott the elections. Furthermore, the policy of the Serbian government towards its neighbours (Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina) has tightened considerably in recent months, which apparently has led to a destabilisation in the region.

The EU has to respond to these alarming developments in its neighbourhood.

During the roundtable discussion members of the Heinrich Böll Foundation's Western Balkan Strategy Group from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro will present their perspectives on current trends in the region.

Are there conditions for free and fair elections in Serbia prior to the parliamentary and local elections? What are lessons learned concerning the EU's efforts to overcome polarisation and a boycott of democratic procedures and institutions in the Western Balkans? How are dynamics in the whole Southeast-European region interlinked? How does the EU see its responsibility for the current peace order in the region?

**The „Strategy Group for a political, societal and economic European integration of the Western Balkans“ is an initiative of experts from academia and civil society from the six Western Balkan non-EU countries supported by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The aim of the group is to constructively criticise the current EU policy towards the Western Balkans and to formulate recommendations for future EU-Western Balkans relations.**

## Programme

- 12:00 – 12:30** Light lunch
- 12:30 – 12:40** Welcome  
**Walter Kaufmann**, Head of East and South East Europe Division,  
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin
- 12:40 – 13:10** **Topic I**  
Serbia prior to the parliamentary elections: How the EU should  
react to growing threats of domestic polarisation and authoritarian  
consolidation  
**Raša Nedeljkov**, Center for Research,  
Transparency and Accountability, Belgrade
- 13:10 – 13:40** **Topic II**  
A new level of regional destabilisation in the Western Balkans?  
Observations from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina  
**Lejla Gačanica**, Independent Analyst, Sarajevo  
**Izabella Kisic**, Helsinki committee for human rights, Belgrade  
**Daliborka Uljarevic**, Centre for Civic Education, Podgorica  
Moderation: **Walter Kaufmann**, Head of East and South East Europe  
Division, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin
- 13:40 – 14:00** Conclusions

Working language: English

Please register by **20 March** using the following [link](#).

We are looking forward to your participation.

### Note:

The event is subject to photo and video documentation and might be covered on social media. With your attendance you agree that you have no objections should you appear on audio-visual or written content. By submitting your data for registration you agree that it is used to the sole purpose of documentation in the context of this event.