



Young BSF

“Will the last person to leave, turn out the lights?” Tackling demographic challenges in the Western Balkans

You are cordially invited to a policy discussion organized by Centre for European Perspective, under its flagship youth project, Young Bled Strategic Forum and in cooperation with Central European Initiative, that will be held on 4th March 2020 at Jable Castle, Grajska cesta 1, Mengeš.

The Western Balkan (WB) region is facing mass exodus of its population, with Eurostat reporting that only in 2019, 230,000 people left the region, most of them coming from BiH. According to the Balkan Barometer, conducted by Regional Cooperation Council, 2 out of 5 people from WB are considering leaving and working abroad. World Bank is predicting that by 2050 BiH will lose 30 percent of its population, Serbia 24 percent and Albania 19 percent, while Slovenia for example will gain 3 percent. Amongst the countries with the highest population change are also two EU countries, Romania and Bulgaria. As a result of migration and falling birth rates, there are shortages in workforce, especially medical personnel and construction workers are lacking, while schools are closing for lack of pupils in countries with the highest rates of migration.

This policy discussion will seek to open up questions on democratic challenges that European countries are facing, shed a light on the brain drain, as well as identify good practices and policies. Are there ways to stop the brain drain? Is it productive to think of ways to stop it? How can we transform brain drain into brain circulation? What good practices could the EU countries offer?

AGENDA

9.00 – 10.30 Closed Policy Discussion (Invitation Only)

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 – 13.00 Public Discussion

Opening

Nina Kodelja, Deputy Secretary General, Central European Initiative, Italy

Katja Geršak, Executive Director, Centre for European Perspective, Slovenia

Andor Dávid, Executive Director, International Visegrad Fund

Discussants

Dafina Peci, Secretary General at National Youth Congress of Albania; Albania

Adi Čerimagić, Analyst, ESI, Germany

Jernej Štromajer, State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Slovenia

Anja Fortuna, President, Youth Council of Slovenia

Concluding remarks

Mr Peter Grk, Secretary General, Bled Strategic Forum and National Coordinator for Western Balkans, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia

