

Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence
The Challenges of the Enlargement
Policy: EU versus China's diplomacy
in Western Balkans 2020-23



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Faculty of Economics is implementing a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence project, which has been awarded for the first time to a Montenegrin university by the European Commission. The project, called "The Challenges of the Enlargement Policy – EU vs. China's Diplomacy in the Western Balkans 2020-23" will run for the next three years. It will position the University of Montenegro and this Faculty as institutions capable of excellence in teaching and research in the fields of international relations, EU integration and other related issues, at the European and the global level.

The English language will be introduced into teaching practice in Montenegro, by the interaction of local and EU-based professors in every proposed course within the project. The Centre activities will provide synergy, trans-institutional and transnational expertise in research, that aim to provide strategic responses elevating regional views, for policy makers to have a strategic response to current issues. The high level of expertise of both the local and the EU experts will contribute to making their voice heard in credible ways.

Based on the created synergy, the strategy for future integration will be developed.

ROUND TABLE EVENT: ACADEMIC DEBATE IN THE PRESENCE OF AMBASSADORS, MINISTERS, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS

A round table on the Global Competition Challenges facing Single market and its implications for the Western Balkan was held on **June 3, 2022**, at the Faculty of Economics, as part of the Erasmus + project Jean Monnet Center of Excellence (CEP). The event was attended by high representatives of the diplomatic corps and the highest officials of the Government of Montenegro, as well as university professors and students.

The Dean of the Faculty of Economics, **Prof. Dr. Mijat Jocović**, opened the event. The round table was attended by a number of high-ranking officials who, during two thematic sessions, presented their views on the current topic.



The moderator of the first session entitled Possibility of economic criteria as an integral part of the "fundamental cluster" to speed up negotiations on the region's accession to the European Union, was **Prof. Dr. Nikola Milović** from the Faculty of Economics, who in his introductory speech said: "Economic criteria set through the new methodology of EU enlargement for the Western Balkans, in the first place, can lead to faster integration of the entire region into the EU. Competitiveness of the economy is put in the focus of economic policy makers, with the aim of increasing the strength of economic potential."

Professor of the University of Ljubljana and member of the CEP team, **prof. Dr. Mojmir Mrak**, during his presentation, pointed out, among other things: " By formally integrating economic criteria into the "cluster base" within the EU accession negotiation process, the Copenhagen economic criteria will be among the

highest political priorities that will govern the entire process of upcoming EU accession negotiations. According to this approach to negotiations on "core clusters", the candidate country's progress on the Copenhagen economic criteria will be among the key areas determining the overall pace of negotiations with all the negative and positive drivers of conditionality."

Dr. Jovana Marović, Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Policy, European Integration and Regional Cooperation and Minister of European Affairs, pointed out in the video that, in

accordance with the new methodology, the most serious tasks facing Montenegro are within the first cluster: "What is ahead is to fulfill specific tasks in the field of rule of law and get the final benchmarks by the end of the year. That is the goal of this Government, but along with the rule of law, the economy must be strengthened and the economic criteria must be met. What Montenegro needs to do is strengthen all control mechanisms, improve transparency, strengthen cooperation with civil society, and reduce public debt."



In his presentation, **H.E. Christian Thimonier**, Ambassador of France to Montenegro, pointed out that "Including economic criteria as fundamental is a strong signal from the new methodology to improve EU integration process and to prepare more concretely countries to be part of the common market. In addition, economic development should be a main concern to accelerate national development to ensure a better stability for all Balkans countries and provide better conditions to all citizens. Very useful and desirable regional cooperation in this field should be very carefully coordinated and not create ambiguities or obstacles to future enlargement. This is especially important for Montenegro as "frontrunner". Clear priority in internal organization should be given to the European path."

During the second session entitled Challenges and Opportunities for the Western Balkans that emerged from the last crisis, the introductory speech was given by **prof. Dr. Danijela Jacimovic**, who pointed out: "The pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine may serve as stepping stones for the region to finally adopt a new development model. The Balkans have the potential to lessen the EU's reliance on third-country suppliers and create a reliable supply chain, reducing the negative consequences of any future crises. These would raise European business interest in the region, which is now low, and attract foreign direct investments. Investment inflows to the WBs cannot be emphasized, but however the major FDI flows from the EU are still missing."

H.E. Judy Rising Reinke, Ambassador of the United States of America to Montenegro, told the audience: "The United States' vision for the Western Balkans is a region at peace with itself and its neighbors, and one that is stable, prosperous, and well-integrated into Europe and the Euro-Atlantic framework. Robust and fully inclusive regional initiatives which are consistent with EU rules and shared values – such as the Open Balkan Initiative and Common Regional Market – can help to bring the entire Western Balkan region closer to the EU single market and eventual membership. Their focus on free movement of people, capital, goods, and services is fundamental to the region's efforts to unlock sustainable economic growth, counter malign influence, and staunch the outflow of its citizens seeking better opportunities outside the region. For these initiatives to seize the current moment and be truly transformative, they must be transparent, unified, and demonstrate concrete success."

Goran Đurović, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism in the Government of Montenegro, expressed his belief that a good opportunity for economic recovery: "We as a country are fully prepared to join a new strategic and integrated approach that can enable SMEs to take full advantage of a functioning single market. This is especially important if we keep in mind that most companies in the tourism and hospitality sector are small and medium enterprises."

Aleksandar Damjanović, MSc, Minister of Finance in the Government of Montenegro, pointed out that "The current political context of our country, which is obliged to its citizens to return the road to Europe to the tracks of modern speeds; This Government is committed to this goal, and with the full support of the EC team and teams of other international investors and creditors, I am convinced that this time we will strategically lead Montenegro towards a sustainable, diversified economy and a stable and prosperous community based on trust and responsibility."

Jakov Milatović, MSc, former Minister of Economic Development in the Government of Montenegro, reminded that since the restoration of Montenegro's independence, there have been three crises that have resulted in significant growth of national public debt: "Since 2009, Montenegro's public debt has grown faster than economic growth, which shows that the activities of the state were insufficiently productive. All this requires reforms in the structure of the economy. We need to diversify the economy, invest in innovation and invest more in agriculture."

Participating in the second session of the round table, **Stevan Đurić**, a student of the Faculty of Economics, expressed his views: "After more than two years of going through a huge crisis at all levels the focus will be on unemployment, especially on youth employment and relevant accompanying social policies in the Western Balkans. Improvement must go to three areas: education, digitalisation and government support."

After the time for the discussion in which many students of the Faculty of Economics participated, the honor to give the final word went to one of the best students of the Faculty of Economics, **Dženana Đurković**, added: "Montenegro and the countries of the region expect that from the European Union, we also expect that at the Faculty of Economics, aware of challenges and obstacles, the idea of success is too noble to allow it to fail. We live in uncertain times from the horizon of the future, we notice that the hints are unstable and foggy, in such a world we need institutions on a wider level than national ones, we need radical reforms, and our choice is Europe!"



TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO in winter semester 2022/23

The English language is introduced into teaching practice in Montenegro. At the University of Montenegro, during the winter semester 2022/23, lectures in English are being held in one course at the Faculty of Economics:



International Economics

Study level: Undergraduate, Teacher responsible: Prof. Danijela Jaćimović. Instructor: Sunčica Rogić

TEACHING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DONJA GORICA in winter semester 2022/23

At the partner university on the project – the University of Donja Gorica, lectures are held in English in one course at the Faculty of Humanist Studies, during the winter semester 2022/23:



Public Policy and Decision Making in the EU

Study level: Master program, Teacher responsible: Prof. Tanja Mišćević / Dr Nikoleta Đukanović



ONLINE GUEST LECTURES

May 2022 - Online guest lectures

[Professor Srdjan Redžepagić](#) gave the second online guest lecture on May 17th, 2022. The topic of the lecture was "*The EU Economy under the COVID crisis*".

His fields of interest are European integration and Balkan studies.



[Professor Kong Tianping](#) from the Institute of European Studies, which affiliates to the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Tianping gave the lecture: "*Global Changes and Relations between China and the Western Balkans*" on May 20th, 2022.

His research fields cover CEE studies, Transition economies, Comparative analysis of Economies in Transition and International Politics.



UPCOMING GUEST LECTURES

October 2022 - Guest lectures



[Professor Jaap de Zwaan](#)

Lecture 1: "*The requirements for accession to the European Union: what is meant by the reference to 'the Copenhagen criteria of 1993' and the EU fundamental values?*" at the University Donja Gorica, on October 17, 2022, at 12.30 pm. Students from both University Donja Gorica, Faculty of Humanistic studies, and University of Montenegro, Faculty of Economics will take part in the lecture.

and

Lecture 2: "*Challenges ahead for the European Union: Security, Enlargement and the Future Conference*" to students of International Economics, on October 19, 2022, at 5.30 pm. Students from both Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Law, as well as students from the University Donja Gorica, Faculty of Humanistic studies



UPCOMING EVENT: Lecture 2

NEW ENLARGEMENT POLICY: EU, CHINA AND WESTERN BALKANS

The new Enlargement strategy is being reshaped in 2020. The accession process of the Western Balkan countries has been very slow, long and uncertain in future. On the other hand, the presence of China in the Western Balkan has become increasingly visible. The event will highlight various open issues concerning the New EU Enlargement policy, political and technical novelties of accession methodology, challenges ahead for the European Union and the impact of global challenges on EU Enlargement Policy.

Speakers: Jaap de Zwaan, Tanja Mišćević, Nikola Milović, Nikoleta Đukanović

The event will be organized by the Faculty of Humanic Studies of the University of Donja Gorica, moderated by Nikoleta Đukanović.

Venue: University of Donja Gorica, October 20, at 10 am

Agenda for the event is available [HERE](#).

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