

Reinventing the West through the Balkans: Balkanization, Euro-Atlantic Policies, and the (Western) Balkans

Friday, 20 June 2025 10:45 (1h 30m)

This roundtable explores the complex discourse of 'balkanization' and its profound impact on Euro-Atlantic policies toward the Western Balkans. Based on Liridona Veliu Ashiku's recent book, "Balkanization' and the Euro-Atlantic Processes of the (Western) Balkans: Back to the Future," participants will discuss how the concept of 'balkanization' has been used as a strategic framework by the EU and NATO to assert Western unity and identity. Through a genealogical analysis spanning from the Balkan Wars to North Macedonia's name change in 2018, this work reveals how the EU and NATO have consistently employed 'balkanization' to define the Western Balkans as 'other,' enabling political elites to advance unity within the West.

This roundtable brings together scholars and students of Southeast Europe, International Relations, Political Science, Peace and Conflict Studies, and History, aiming to deepen our understanding of how historical narratives and contemporary policies intertwine. By examining these dynamics, participants will consider the ongoing relevance of 'balkanization' and explore pathways for redefining relationships in the region, especially as global power structures shift in an increasingly multipolar world.

Track Classification: South East Europe Working Group