

Society

## WB2EU discussion on EU enlargement in Vienna on Monday

by EWB 05. 10. 2023.



Vienna; Photo: pixabay

VIENNA – The Western Balkans to EU Network (WB2EU) will organize a new discussion on enlargement politics under the title “Is EU Enlargement back on track? Moving towards a democratic and united Europe.”

At the conclusion of the three-year Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Network project on Europeanization, democratization, and strengthening of civil society in the Western Balkans, the event will discuss current developments, obstacles, and perspectives of EU enlargement and the reform process.

“With Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, EU enlargement policy has taken on a completely new dynamic. Ukraine, Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have been granted candidate status;

Kosovo has applied for membership, and accession negotiations have started with Northern Macedonia and Albania. In addition, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen gave the debate further momentum in her State of the Union address with the prospect of an “EU30+,” organizers stated.

They added that it is not only the candidate countries that must meet the accession criteria, but the EU itself must also implement important reforms to be fit for enlargement.

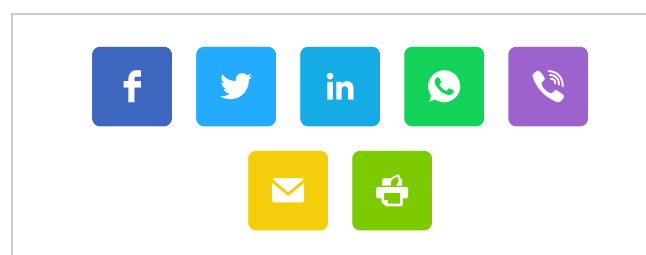
“While EU members are still weighing geopolitical, national, and institutional interests against each other, the Western Balkan countries are in a protracted process of negotiation and reform,” organizers added.

**Paul Schmidt**, Secretary-General at the Austrian Society for European Politics (ÖGfE) and Project leader of the WB2EU project, and **Alma Zadić**, Austrian Minister of Justice will address the beginning of the event.

The panelists of the discussion are **Martin Selmayr**, Head of Representation of the European Commission in Austria, **Jovana Marović**, Former Montenegrin Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of European Affairs and BiEPAG member, **Sofija Todorović**, Programme Director at the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), **Anna Krasteva**, Professor of Political Sciences at the Centre for European Refugees, Migration, and Ethnic Studies (CERMES). The discussion will be moderated by **Vedran Džihić**, Senior Researcher at the Austrian Institute for International Affairs (oiip) and Coordinator of the WB2EU project.

WB2EU project aims at the establishment of a network of renowned think tanks, do-tanks,

universities, higher education institutes and policy centers from the Western Balkans, neighboring countries and EU member states that will be most decisive for the enlargement process and Europeanisation of the region in the upcoming years. The WB2EU project is co-funded by the European Commission under its Erasmus+ Jean Monnet programme.

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