

EU ENLARGEMENT IN THE BALKANS IN 2011 – MAKE NOT BREAK

21ST OCTOBER 2010, BRATISLAVA

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LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

MAIN ORGANIZER:	Slovak Atlantic Commission
CO-ORGANIZER:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
MAIN PARTNER:	European Stability Initiative (ESI)
DATE:	October 21, 2010
CONFERENCE VENUE:	Congress Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic Hlboká cesta 2, 833 36 Bratislava 37
AUSPICES:	H. E. Mikuláš Dzurinda, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic
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WORKING LANGUAGE:	English (with simultaneous translation to Slovak language)

SUMMARY

The **EU Enlargement in the Balkans in 2011 – Make Not Break** is a one day expert international conference organized on the margins of the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad and Western Balkans countries that will take place in Bratislava in October 2010. The intention of the conference is to assess the status of the EU integration, as well as to discuss the perspectives of revitalizing the process of EU enlargement and to exchange information about official development aid projects in the Western Balkan countries.

PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE CONFERENCE

While the European Union has still been struggling with the aftermath of the global financial crisis, the question of its further enlargement towards the Western Balkans seems to fade away from the top-level agenda of the member states, despite EU's strong commitment to integrate this region as one of the last missing part of the comprehensive European integration mosaic. On the other hand, some of the Western Balkan countries have – after years of waiting – formally applied for EU membership, undergone ambitious reforms to prepare for joining the bloc and are now expecting a more decisive response from Brussels that should bring them closer to the “European door”. If the European Union does not want to risk its credibility and unwillingly support radical Balkan politicians at the expense of reformists and regional stability, the EU should set out a modified and reinforced integration programme for Western Balkans, while not abandoning the required accession conditions.

The Slovak V4 presidency, as well as the upcoming Hungarian and Polish EU Presidency, create a unique possibility to reassess and revitalize the process of EU enlargement and to shape the European policies towards this important region from the Central European perspective. The purpose of the project is to utilize the presence of several European top leaders and Foreign Ministers, who will meet in Bratislava and discuss the European perspectives of the Western Balkan Countries.



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The conference aims to create a unique platform for the most-important European and Visegrad experts to kick-off the expert discussion on the perspectives of EU integration in the Western Balkans and to work-out useful recommendations for the Hungarian and Polish EU Presidency on how to revitalize the enlargement process in this region. The outcome of the discussion and the recommendations will be presented in the form of a short focused document to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Visegrad and Balkan countries at their meeting on the day following the conference (preliminary October 22, 2010). These recommendations will serve as expert input to the political debates of the Ministers in Bratislava.

TARGET GROUPS

The primary target group of the conference represents the expert community focusing on the topic of Western Balkans from the Visegrad and Balkan countries. This community includes representatives of non-governmental organisations and think-tanks, diplomats, representatives of decision-making structures from V4 and the Balkans, as well as EU institutions, regional and European media.

We expect the participation of approximately 15 guests from Western Balkan countries, 10 representatives from the Visegrad states, about 10 guests from respected European NGOs and institutions, media and think tanks, as well as about 40 representatives of Slovak foreign policy and security community, including experts, decision-makers, students, academics and media.

PROMOTION

Thanks to our several-year experience with media coverage of high-level international conferences, for example the annual GLOBSEC Bratislava Security Conference, we expect an extensive participation of media from the Visegrad region, the Balkans and broader Europe. Our complex media strategy includes focused daily communication with journalists, background briefings, interview inter-mediation, press releases distribution and complex coverage of the conference topics by the conference's media partners. Moreover, the expected media coverage includes special radio and television debates and presentation on the conference website, website of the Slovak Atlantic Commission, the European Stability Initiative and other partners. Since we believe that the promotion of outcomes should not be limited to the conference day, we will keep on with their distribution through e-mail and subsequent advocacy events, including debriefings for press, discussions with government officials and diplomats.

