

Conference report

The background features a black field with intricate, flowing orange lines that resemble topographic contour lines or organic, wavy patterns. These lines are most prominent on the left and bottom edges, framing a central black square. The square has a thin orange border and contains the main text.

VIS10NS

OF NEW PARTNERSHIPS

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10th Bled Strategic Forum

In 2006, the Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) was launched with a vision to bring together decision-makers from different fields, to encourage open debate on contemporary political, security and development challenges, and to search for new ideas and solutions.

In all the years since, we have had the privilege of meeting many new friends and partners and have built new relationships in many different fields. With this in mind, we dedicated the 10th BSF to partners and partnerships.

The complex and interdisciplinary challenges of today's globalised world require comprehensive solutions, which the BSF and its participants have never been afraid of bringing up and discussing. As such, the BSF gives a voice to differing positions, views and understandings of the topics that require the attention of the wider international community.

This year's debates made it clear that none of the international challenges can be addressed without cooperation, reliable partners and trust. None of them can be solved unilaterally – whether by a single organisation, a single state or a single company. States must work with each other, with other international actors and with civil society to make global security and development possible.

Contributing to the Forum's multifaceted identity are two additional programmes: the Business BSF, offering a platform for cooperation between the public and private sectors, and the Young BSF, voicing the visions of the next generation of leaders. In addition, the BSF has also developed a tradition of discussing less conventional issues – the hidden dimensions of international relations such as science, sports and music.

With the ever-changing global situation, the BSF remains determined to strive towards innovative thinking and forward-looking visions. It is my hope that the Forum will continue to grow, evolve and influence various policy agendas and solutions of tomorrow.

Karl Erjavec,
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Republic of Slovenia

10 years

sharing visions
building partnerships

2006

Political Reform and Sustainable Development in South Caucasus



2007

European Union
2020: Enlarging and Integrating

2015

Visions of New Partnerships



2014

The Power of Trust



2013

A Changing Europe in a Changing World





2008
Energy and Climate Change:
Si.nergy for the Future



2009
The Politics of Economic
Crisis: Redefining Economic
and Geopolitical Landscapes in
Europe and Eurasia

2010
Global Outlook for
the Next Decade



2011
The Power of the Future



 Young BSF

2012
Europe and the
Reshaped Global Order



 Bled
Strategic
Forum

 Business
BSF

Visions of New Partnerships



Karl Erjavec, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

The modern world is more interconnected than ever. Our jobs, projects and all other relationships we have with others are based on cooperation and connections. Partnerships have thus become an essential tool in our everyday activities and for solving our common issues.

“Contemporary challenges can only be addressed through strong and efficient international cooperation.”

Karl Erjavec

For all that, the emergence of new challenges that are increasingly complex put all of us to the test. With the emergence of new conflicts and against the backdrop of the escalating migrant crisis in Europe, the calls for partnerships resounded as the 10th BSF got under way.

Mr Karl Erjavec, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, noted in his welcome address that the Forum was founded to bring together decision-makers, encourage open debate, and search for new ideas and solutions.

For Minister Erjavec, partnerships are needed for addressing the many challenges to global and regional security, and he noted that the world economy was still recovering from global crisis and that Europe was coping with one of the biggest migration flows in history.



Slovenian Police Orchestra and Darja Švajger performing at the Opening of the 2015 BSF / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Dr Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, continued by saying that it was above all incumbent on leaders to take responsibility and find solutions through new partnerships, while also finding the way to properly explain to



Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

their peoples how the positive effects of cooperation outweigh the negative ones.

“More than ever, partnerships are needed to find compromise and solutions acceptable for all.”

Miro Cerar

The Prime Minister also stressed that hard situations such as the current crisis usually awake in us either the worst or the best. While we might

confront our biggest challenges with negative emotions and reactions, such as fear or hatred, we can also react to them in a positive manner, by manifesting our virtues, such as courage, tol-



Alain Brian Bergant, Secretary General of the Bled Strategic Forum / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Opening of the 2015 Bled Strategic Forum, 31 August, 15:00–16:00

Welcome address:

Karl Erjavec, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

Mayor’s welcome:

Janez Fajfar, Mayor of Bled, Slovenia

Keynote speech:

Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia

Chaired by **Alain Brian Bergant**, Secretary-General of the Bled Strategic Forum

“We need strong political will, courage and wisdom. We have to change the paradigm of distrust and regain mutual trust through partnerships.”

Alain Brian Bergant

erance, empathy and solidarity.

The Secretary-General of the BSF, Ambassador Alain Brian Bergant, highlighted that visions and partnerships, alongside

trust and other positive values, have become increasingly pressing issues in our changing world at the national, regional and global levels. Never before has the world been in a greater need of partnerships aimed at overcoming crises and the obstacles to development.

The 2015 Bled Strategic Forum therefore aimed at exploring the importance of strong partnerships and searching for answers on what happens when visions are scarce.

A New Global Order: Confrontation or Partnerships?

2015 is a year of important anniversaries, including the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the 70th anniversary of the United Nations and the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. However, the key international organisations that were established with a view to maintaining and strengthening international peace are having difficulties in managing today's major crises. We are being confronted on the one hand with a mixture of new security challenges and threats, on the other with the erosion of commonly agreed fundamental norms and principles. There is thus a pressing need to find common ground on the way towards finding solutions to pertinent questions related to

“Europe has found a way to substitute violence and conflict by peace, democracy and dialogue.”

Donald Tusk

European and global security and stability. President of the European Council Mr Donald Tusk stressed that the current migration flows are testament to the fact that, for many, Europe is the best place on Earth. In his words, Europeans should not lose sight of this and should stand united, especially in view of the migration crisis unmasking cracks opened in the European architecture by years of financial and economic turmoil.

Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg Mr Xavier Bettel added this would require strong leadership, solidarity and overcoming selfishness, urging that we need to take appropriate actions.

“The easiest way to please everyone is to not take decisions.”

Xavier Bettel

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr Borut Pahor, also stressed the importance of strong leadership, assessing that current challenges required vision and clear solutions. He said that in addition to both EU unity and strength of leadership, the adoption of mandatory quotas for the resettlement of migrants is a solution to the current crisis.



Donald Tusk, President of the European Council / Photo: Daniel Novaković, STA



Panel on A New Global Order / Photo: Daniel Novaković, STA

The key priority for the EU in tackling the crisis should be dealing with the root causes of migration, including the situation in countries of origin, said President of the Republic of Croatia Ms Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. Her view was supported by Mr Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, who meanwhile decried attempts by EU countries to prevent refugees from arriving by building border walls as a solution.

Mr Lamberto Zannier, Secretary-General of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, highlighted that not only conflicts but also climate change impacted on migration flows. Europe in this respect will increasingly be a desired destination, he noted. In this regard, representative of the UN Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Mr Christian Friis Bach raised the importance of broad partnerships for successful solutions in dealing with climate change, arguing that governments alone did not hold the answer.

Leaders' panel

31 August, 16:00–17:30

Keynote address by **Donald Tusk**,
President of the European Council

Speakers:

Christian Friis Bach, Representative of
the UN Secretary-General, Executive
Secretary of the United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe

Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of the Grand
Duchy of Luxembourg

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the
Republic of Croatia

Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of
Slovenia

Aleksandar Vučić, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Serbia

Lamberto Zannier, Secretary-General of the
Organisation for Security and Co-operation
in Europe

Moderated by **Nik Gowing**, International
Broadcaster and Visiting Professor, King's
College, London, United Kingdom

Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict: One Year After the Summit

Acts of sexual violence in conflict constitute both a war crime and a crime against humanity. Intended as a method of war, they harm civilians and compromise the personal dignity of victims and their families. Moreover, conflict-related sexual violence is not only a humanitarian, development and human rights issue, but is also one that pertains to security. And as it is present in almost every conflict situation, it requires a comprehensive approach. Despite the international efforts to put an end to it, the panel agreed that

“We should not treat victims of sexual violence any differently than those who were wounded in other ways.”

Bojan Glavašević

on reparations for survivors of sexual violence in conflict. Mr Bojan Glavašević, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, highlighted as one of the most important elements of the law the separation of the process of granting rights to victims from the prosecution of perpetrators, which did not come naturally.

Mr Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, pointed out the need to eliminate the root causes of the

many issues remain to be tackled and several principles need to be turned into practice.

Substantial progress in this area has already been made in Croatia,

which adopted a law



Panel on Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict /
Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

problem – such as gender-based discrimination and violence, which are present in all societies around the world but are exacerbated in conflict situations – and the importance of the need to fight impunity.

Ambassador Mariët Schuurman, the NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, noted that it is important to be faster in identifying risks and preventing acts of sexual violence in conflict, to lead by example and to move from principles to practice by drawing on practical tools – enhancing education, training and developing codes of conduct. Women's empowerment and equal participation need to be at the core of all strategies in responding to emerging security challenges, she said.

Ms Husić, Director of the Association Medica Zenica, said the main initial challenge was to encourage women to speak out. She also pointed to the need for the authorities to take the challenges seriously and expressed criticism over a lack of response of the government at the

“Thousands and thousands of women could not talk about what happened to them. It is crucial to speak about these experiences.”

Sabiha Husić

by Mr Dolan, Director of the Refugee Law Project. The lack of knowledge and experience to assist and support victim men is a huge challenge, particularly in Africa, he noted. Mr Dolan advocated more balanced funding, arguing that disproportionate funds were spent on prosecuting perpetrators in comparison to compensation for victims. In his view, the problem of accountability also derives from the lack of data collection.

Ms Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, added that the lessons learned by her organisation in the Balkans are now transferring to the other parts of the world, in particular Africa. Ms Beerli also pointed to the urgent challenge of providing speedy medical assistance to victims, where her organisation acts by presuming acts of sexual violence taking place in every conflict.

national level, even 20 years after the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The need to give full attention to all victims of sexual violence – girls, women, boys and men – was voiced

Panel discussion

31 August, 18:00–19:30

Speakers:

Christine Beerli, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Chris Dolan, Director of the Refugee Law Project, Uganda

Bojan Glavašević, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs of the Republic of Croatia

Sabiha Husić, Director of the Association Medica Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Stavros Lambrinidis, European Union Special Representative for Human Rights

Maria Henriette Schuurman, NATO Secretary-General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

Moderated by **Baroness Anelay of St John's**, DBE, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom



Panel on Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict /
Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

Bridges of the Mediterranean: The Power of Intercultural Dialogue

The increasingly loud calls and demands for freedom, dignity and justice have become a new reality in the Mediterranean region, which is still striving to create a common area of peace, stability and prosperity. Intercultural dialogue, based on shared values and mutual respect, as rightly pointed out by the panellists, remains an important tool for bridging the gaps between these countries. It needs to become a complementary element of a comprehensive long-term

“When you look at numerous conflicts, poverty and growing disparity, you do not need to ask yourself why people are migrating.”

William Lacy Swing

described intercultural dialogue as both a platform and a solution for easing the conflicts and tensions in the region. His view was supported by the Minister for Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Maja Makovec Brenčič, who added that it was the responsibility of education systems to foster knowledge about diversity in the world and that through them we need to work towards increasing respect, trust and understanding.

strategy for tackling the root causes of political, ideological and social crises in the region.

Tibor Navracscics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport,



Panel on the Power of Intercultural Dialogue /
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, meanwhile discussed the current refugee crisis, saying that the world was facing an unprecedented humanitarian situation with many simultaneous emergencies.

According to the State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr Mohamed Ezzine Chleyfa, his country is building trust with the EU through numerous cooperation policies and is working with the latter in order to enhance and strengthen institutions dealing with the Mediterranean region.

Parliamentary Secretary for the European Union Presidency 2017 and European Union Funds at the Ministry for European Affairs and Implemen-

tation of the Electoral Manifesto of the Republic of Malta, the Hon. Ian Borg, stressed that while security was a pressing issue, one must also look beyond security and towards addressing issues such as tackling youth unemployment and improving mobility.

The Deputy Secretary-General for Social and Civil Affairs of the Union for the Mediterranean, Ms Delphine Borione, noted the need to bring about a regional response by fostering regional cooperation and enhancing the capacity of all the

“For those who think education is too costly, try ignorance.”

Delphine Borione

institutions involved to act collectively, while focusing on sustainable development. Discussing the contribution of the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, its Chairman, Dr Ibrahim Saleh Khalifa Al Naimi, said that the centre was reaching out to conflict areas and trying to establish dialogue and act as a platform for building peace, while also empowering women and children through education.

The State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr Anton Peršak, focused on cultural exchange, saying that it was the best way to broaden our understanding of each other. Stimulating cultural exchange is the best way of gaining knowledge about others and promoting collaboration, he said. The Secretary-General of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO, Ms Marjutka Hafner, concluded the panel debate by assessing that intercultural dialogue should be translated into practice and political agendas.

Panel discussion

1 September, 9:00–10:30

Speakers:

Ibrahim Saleh Khalifa Al Naimi, Chairman of the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue, Qatar

Ian Borg, Parliamentary Secretary for the European Union Presidency 2017 and European Union Funds in the Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto of the Republic of Malta

Delphine Borione, Deputy Secretary-General for Social and Civil Affairs, Union for the Mediterranean

Mohamed Ezzine Chleyfa, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tunisia

Marjutka Hafner, Secretary-General of the Slovenian National Commission for UNESCO

Maja Makovec Brenčič, Minister for Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia

Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Anton Peršak, State Secretary, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia

William Lacy Swing, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration

Moderated by **Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry**, President of the Euro-Mediterranean University, Slovenia

Development is a Global Partnership

In 2015, as the international community is striving to create a new, post-2015 global development partnership, we are assessing the progress mobilised through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reviewing our positive and negative past actions, and preparing to embark on a new stage of improving the quality of life and environment in the years to come. This year, the EU also proclaimed the first European Year dealing with Europe's role in the world and devoted to raising awareness of, and commitment to, the eradication of poverty. It is together that we must search for joint and sustainable solutions

“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are inclusive, not applying just to the South but also to the North, giving voice to everyone.”

Tamira Gunzburg

though the developed world spends less than one percent of GDP on development assistance, a lot could be achieved even with these funds. Her view was supported by Mr Erik Gudbrand Solheim, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, who noted that while securing funding is essential, it is not

and take responsibility for our own and everyone else's wellbeing, the participants of the panel agreed.

Ms Tamira Gunzburg, Brussels Director of The ONE Campaign, stressed that even



Panel on Development / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

everything, as what also matters is putting all the pieces in place.

Assistant Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Ms Lena Ingelstam, further stressed the need to develop a broader spectrum of partnerships between all stakeholders and new ways of working. We require effective partnerships between actors such as states, private companies, NGOs and media, noted Ambassador Srgjan Kerim, President of the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly.

Mr Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, said that public-private part-



Moderator Lucy Lamble / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

nerships were instrumental in achieving development goals. He also noted that successful stories required foremost a working state, as

“Development should be a comprehensive goal, not a stand-alone agenda.”

Miroslav Lajčák

We have the opportunity to overcome our selfishness and become more aware of the fact that everyone should be allowed to have a decent life, suggested Ms Ivana Djilas, a Slovenian theatre director and columnist. Senior lecturer in strategic communication at Lund University Dr James Pamment also suggested that we need to start thinking about how to activate voters and consumers through corporations, various organisations, government and municipalities in order to raise the profile of the SDGs and actually incentivise them.

Panel discussion

1 September, 11:00–12:30

Speakers:

Ivana Djilas, Theatre director and columnist, Slovenia

Tamira Gunzburg, Brussels Director of The ONE Campaign, Belgium

Lena Helena Ingelstam, Assistant Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sweden

Srgjan Kerim, President of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

James Pamment, Senior Lecturer in Strategic Communication, Lund University, Sweden

Erik Gudbrand Solheim, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Moderated by **Lucy Lamble**, Global Development Editor at The Guardian, United Kingdom

Strengthening the Fight Against Impunity Through Partnerships and Cooperation



Panel on Strengthening the Fight Against Impunity / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Following decades pervaded by a culture of impunity, the past 25 years, in particular, have brought about significant advances in the fight against it. We have witnessed the establishment of new standards, procedures and institutions to ensure the protection of human rights and accountability. We have seen indictments of sitting and former heads of state, along with the creation of ad hoc and hybrid tribunals as well as the International Criminal Court (ICC). Thus, the fight against impunity has become an important aspect of reconciliation, peace-building, development, and ensuring lasting peace and stability.

Despite important advances, however, we continue to face several challenges. President of the ICC Ms Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi noted that cooperation between the states and ICC, as

well as universality of the Rome Statute remain key objectives, highlighting that the ICC needs States' political support and concrete assistance. Understanding what the Court can and cannot do is essential, but it also falls on the Court to improve the efficiency of its proceedings.

“We need to do more on combating impunity and strengthening the rule of law in the post-conflict areas.”

Goran Klemenčič

Mr Goran Klemenčič, Minister of Justice of Slovenia, agreed that it is essential to keep the fight against impunity high on the political agenda, recalling the primary responsibility of states to prosecute such crimes and underlining the need to improve domestic prosecutions. He called on States to join the MLA Initiative led by Slovenia together with Argentina, Belgium and the Netherlands for a treaty on mutual legal assistance and extradition for the domestic prosecution of the atrocity crimes, an initiative welcomed by Ms Gurmendi.

Mr Adama Dieng, Under Secretary-General and special adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, stressed the need for cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the ICC through active dialogue. Referring to the decision of the AU to set up a criminal division at the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, Mr Dieng recognized



Minister Goran Klemenčič and moderator Louisewies van der Laan / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

the importance of bringing justice closer to the victims, but spoke against the idea of granting immunity to senior state officials.

“There is a mismatch between the potential and political will to fight against impunity.”

Christian Karl Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, also noted that the political calculation should be changed through inviting states to commit politically to not use their veto on atrocity crimes in the Security Council.

While Mr Andras Vamos-Goldman, Executive Director of Justice Rapid Response, stressed the concept of credible accountability, which means people need to believe that the person charged is accountable, Dr Abi Williams, President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice strongly underscored the role of prevention. Dr Williams noted the importance of remembering the past and education, but also pointed to civil society, the media and the private sector as all well placed for exerting pressure on politicians.

Panel discussion

1 September, 14:00–15:30

Speakers:

Adama Dieng, Under Secretary-General and special adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide

Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, President of the International Criminal Court

Goran Klemenčič, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Slovenia

Andras Vamos-Goldman, Executive Director of Justice Rapid Response, Switzerland

Christian Karl Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations

Abi Williams, President of The Hague Institute for Global Justice, The Netherlands

Moderated by **Lousewies van der Laan**, Independent advisor on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, Slovenia

The Western Balkans: A Region at the Centre of Geostrategic Deliberations



Panel on Western Balkans / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek,

A natural bridge between East and West, throughout their history the Western Balkans have been at a political, economic, cultural and religious crossroads as well as a geographical one. With the increasing significance of the region, the promise of stability, closer regional cooperation and EU membership offers it an excellent opportunity, though with so many actors involved, conflicts of interest and objectives seem inevitable.

Several of the panellists highlighted the push that the region had received by the Slovenian–Croatian Brdo Process and the Franco–German Berlin Process. Both are seen as crucial not just in terms of offering specific projects, but also more broadly in building trust in the region. Mr Harlem Désir, Minister of State for European Affairs of the French Republic, said that the EU would not be completed without the Western Balkans, but

he also stressed the importance of regional cooperation and strong EU support. We do not need anything but political support, which already exists, and financial support for infrastructure and energy projects. This is of great importance, said

“Two decades after the end of the war, we see momentum in economic and political integration in the region.”

Odeta Barbullushi

Mr Igor Crnadak, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr Crnadak’s words were echoed by Mr Daniel Mitov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, who stated that history had somehow returned and is offering alternatives to the liberal democracy model. With this in mind, it is also the responsibility of the countries in the region, already being members of the EU, to deepen integration in fields of connectivity, transport, energy and migration and include them in the strategies of the EU, he said. The emphasis needs to be put on issues such as economic growth and youth employment, said Ambassador Murat Salim Esenli, Special Representative of the Minister and Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, who also stressed the significance of an inclusive approach towards the Balkans as an entirety.

Despite the insistence on specific projects to benefit the citizens of the region, there is a need

for faster integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures, argued Mr Peter Szijjarto, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. Continuing on the same note, Mr Nikola Poposki, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Macedonia, wondered why his country, whose prosperity and progress are linked to the EU and NATO, is being kept without any progress.

Mr Michael Roth, Minister of State for Europe at the German Federal Foreign Office, noted that the enlargement process ought to be accelerated but also that many EU citizens had reservations about further enlargement. Despite this, it is necessary to support and assist the Western Balkans in the best possible way, he said, including by explaining the benefits of further integration to our own citizens. However, Mr Roth also stressed the requirement to fulfil all preconditions before joining the EU, as it is foremost a union of values such

“Values do matter. We have lost sight of those values and principles to which we have committed.”

Hoyt Yee

as democracy, the rule of law, freedom of the media and independence of the judiciary.

Mr Hoyt Brian Yee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of

European and Eurasian Affairs at the US Department of State, also stressed the need for “getting down to work”. The point of more action is that there should be implementation of what has been agreed over the past years. If these issues are not dealt with now, problems will get more difficult, he stressed. Ms Dragoljuba Benčina, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, also reacted to the notion of decreasing enthusiasm for integration and stressed that enthusiasm will return when people realise that the EU is delivering.

Panel discussion

1 September, 16:00–17:30

Speakers:

Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania

Dragoljuba Benčina, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia

Igor Crnadak, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Harlem Désir, Minister of State for European Affairs of the French Republic

Murat Salim Esenli, Special Representative of the Minister and Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

Daniel Mitov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria

Nikola Poposki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia

Michael Roth MP, Minister of State for Europe, Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany

Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary

Hoyt Brian Yee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, US Department of State

Moderated by **Jacques Rupnik**, Director of Research and professor at the Centre for International Studies, Sciences Po, France

The Ageing Society and Development: Is Progress Without Change Possible?



Panel on Ageing Society / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

The global social structure is rapidly changing. Our populations are ageing, and increased life expectancy imposes a heavy burden on public finances and sustainable health systems. The inequality gap between the rich and poor remains a significant impediment to social progress. This gap is particularly visible in developing countries, where formal structures that would ensure the well-being of the elderly often lack the requisite capacities. Social structures and networks predetermine social interactions, whether along inter- or intra-generational lines.

The panel said that the need for bridging these gaps represents a basis for reforming the social contract and creating a model for long-term demographic stability and a supportive environment. We must strengthen inter-generational links and foster human rights awareness and re-

spect for the human rights of people of any age, potentially enabling greater solidarity between generations and thus an inclusive society.

“There is a need for a new social contract which will outline our way forward, and it is needed now.”

Anja Kopač Mrak

Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia Dr Anja

Kopač Mrak called for a holistic approach in addressing demographic changes, with the inclusion of all stakeholders, especially civil society and NGOs, as a part of this process.

“Young people have the right to work as older people have the right to proper care. These are two similar issues and we need to find a balance between the two.”

Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich

While Ms Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, Chief of Population Unit at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, explained that solutions need to be found in intergenerational cooperation, Mr James Collins, Chair

of the NGO Committee on Ageing, spoke about the need for a legally binding instrument for the protecting rights of older persons.



Professor Elsa Fornero / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Concurring with his view, Dr Alexandre Sidorenko, Global Ambassador for HelpAge International, reminded participants that the existing frameworks in this field, such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, are not being implemented sufficiently due to their non-binding status.

Representative of the European Commission Dr Zoran Stančič, serving as the Deputy Director-General at the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, stressed the Commission's commitment to the rights of older persons. He also condemned ageism and called for inclusive societies which offer the same rights to all generations.

Similarly, Dr Elsa Fornero, Chair of Economics at the School of Economics and Management at the University of Turin, stressed the need to introduce more flexibility in retirement, as old people still have a lot to contribute to society, a view expressed several times during the debate.

Panel discussion

1 September, 16:00–17:30

Speakers:

James Collins, Chair of the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York, United States of America

Elsa Fornero, Chair of Economics at the School of Economics and Management, University of Turin, Italy

Vitalija Gaucaite Wittich, Chief of Population Unit, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Anja Kopač Mrak, Minister of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Slovenia

Alexandre Sidorenko, Global Ambassador for HelpAge International

Zoran Stančič, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission

Moderated by **Dušana Findeisen**, Head of the Institute for Research and Development of Education at the Slovenian Third Age University, Slovenia

Economic Convergence in the Post-Global Financial Crisis Period: The Role of Reforms and Partnerships

In recent years, the global financial crisis has had a negative effect on economic growth and on the pace at which the majority of countries can catch up with the income levels of the most economically advanced ones. At the global level, the economic outlook indicates more modest growth. Furthermore, the pace of global recovery is facing many risks, including increased geopolitical tensions and their repercussions for commodity markets and the real sector. Financial shocks, including those arising from the normalisation

“In today’s world, economic and financial relations are at the centre and more crucial than ever.”

Dušan Mramor

of monetary policy in advanced economies, further add to the uncertainty. Clearly pursuing macroeconomic policies to facilitate post-crisis adjustment and implementing adequate reforms represents a priority, the panel agreed. In this regard, partnerships between countries, including effective coordination of macroeconomic policies, are becoming an important engine of growth.

Ms Yanyi Yang, Ambassador and Head of Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the European Union, argued that the current economic developments in China represented a shift from “quantity to quality in production”. Mr Richard C.

Koo, Chief Economist at the Nomura Research Institute in Japan, agreed that after years of strong growth built on cheap labour, the time has come to increase the productivity of workers. The danger that a Chinese “sneeze” could hurt the recovery of crisis-hit Eurozone states remains, said the Minister for Finance of Ireland, Mr Michael Noonan, but he maintained that signs pointed to the Chinese economy being fundamentally sound.

“China intentionally slowed down after the financial crisis. We had to change towards efficiency, quality...”

Yanyi Yang

The Minister of Finance of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Dušan Mramor, was somewhat more cautious, saying that Slovenia was concerned by events



Minister Noonan and Minister Mramor / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

in China and that these could affect Slovenia's recovery. Focusing on the recovery efforts in the Eurozone, the debate also heard distinct views on the usefulness of policy recommendations by the European Commission to member States. While some countries saw them as a friendly push, Senator Benedetto Della Vedova, State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic, assessed them as a strait-jacket

for countries requiring economic stimulus.

“In the EU we cannot create ‘one size fits all’ policies – Ireland is not same as Greece or Italy.”

Benedetto Della Vedova

Moreover, the Vice-Governor of the Croatian National Bank, Mr Vedran Sošić, pointed to the importance of

countries themselves taking ownership of reforms. To make easier the task of implementing difficult reforms, governments need to act at the beginning of their term, said Ms Isabel Grilo, Head of Unit for Structural Reforms, Competitiveness and Innovation at the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission.

For Chairman of the Management Board of the Slovenian bank NLB Mr Janko Medja, continual efforts to bolster competitiveness need to focus on transcending the four-year government cycle. Non-governmental entities, including businesses, can play a vital role in this, he assessed.

Business BSF

Panel discussion

1 September, 9:30–11:00

Speakers:

Benedetto Della Vedova, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic

Isabel Grilo, Head of Unit for Structural Reforms, Competitiveness and Innovation, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission

Richard C. Koo, Chief Economist, Nomura Research Institute, Japan

Janko Medja, President of the NLB Management Board, Slovenia

Dušan Mramor, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Slovenia

Michael Noonan, Minister for Finance of Ireland

Vedran Šošić, Vice-Governor of the Croatian National Bank

Yanyi Yang, Ambassador and Head of Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union

Moderated by **Lionel Barber**, Editor of the Financial Times, United Kingdom

Building New Partnerships for a Strong Tourism Industry



Panel on Tourism / Photo: Stanko Gruden, STA

Tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, and in 2015 the world seems smaller and more accessible. Because of the maturity of traditional markets and the search for prospective business opportunities, countries are opening their doors wide to new markets. As national partnerships do not suffice in the present competitive environment, the panellists from across the world underscored the importance of partnerships on different levels and among different players for sustainable growth in the sector.

In his opening address, Minister of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia Mr Zdravko Počivalšek expressed a belief that the CEEC (Central and Eastern Europe) region can become an important global tourist

destination. Mr Marcio Favilla Lucca de Paula, the Executive Director for Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations at the World Tourism Organization, stressed that concerted action was

“International tourism accounts for some 10% of the global economy, 1.5 trillion US dollars of exports, and provides 1 out of 11 jobs and 30% of services exports.”

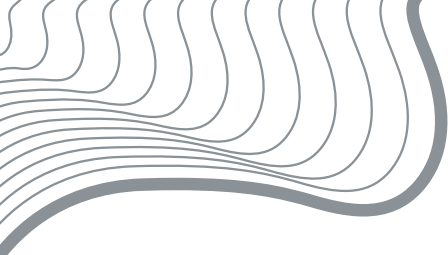
Márcio Favilla Lucca de Paula

was growing exponentially. He added that destinations should not neglect their existing markets, as 80% of tourists come from the same region. Mr Alain Dupeyras, Head of Tourism at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, pointed to some of the biggest challenges, including ways to become more inclusive for local environments and addressing issues such as safety.

Mr Wei Hongtao, Member of the Party Leadership Group at the Chinese National Tourism Administration, presented tourism trends in China, the biggest source country and the fourth biggest inbound destination in the world. He added

needed among governments, civil society and industry, so the BSF could not have come at a better time.

Mr Favilla also said that while Europe remained the top source market in tourism, the importance of the Asia-Pacific region



that despite the current cooling of the Chinese economy, there were no indicators that this was affecting the travel plans of the Chinese.

Meanwhile, Mr Pedro Ortún Silvan, Principal Adviser for Tourism and Corporate Social Responsibility at the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission, pointed out that the mind-set in the industry was slowly changing and that destinations were becoming more willing to cooperate among each

“Tourism policymakers need to grasp the complexity of tourism development and combine different policies in order to make them efficient and performant.”

Alain Dupeyras

other. In his view, political willingness is the key for boosting the sector.

In this respect, Mr Mihály Varga, Minister for the National Economy of Hungary, stressed the importance of macro-regional cooperation, especially for the CEEC, which alone is unable to attract many overseas tourists, due to the small size of the individual markets. Mr Mario Hardy, the Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Asia Travel Association, said that in order to spread arrivals and revenue to locations around iconic destinations, tourists must be encouraged to explore. He noted that while some of the most popular destinations attract more tourists than they can handle, their surroundings may remain unexplored, failing to benefit from the masses travelling nearby.

Business BSF

Panel discussion

1 September, 10:00–12:30

Speakers:

Alain Dupeyras, Head of Tourism, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Márcio Favilla Lucca de Paula, Executive Director for Operational Programmes and Institutional Relations, World Tourism Organization

Mario Hardy, Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Asia Travel Association, Thailand

Wei Hongtao, Member of the Party Leadership Group, China National Tourism Administration, China

Pedro Ortún Silvan, Principal Adviser for Tourism and Corporate Social Responsibility, DG GROW, European Commission

Zdravko Počivalšek, Minister of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia

Mihály Varga, Minister for the National Economy of Hungary

Moderated by **Igor Evgen Bergant**, Anchor at Television Slovenia

The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Atlantic Value Chain



Panel on TTIP / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is not the first attempt to establish an integrated market between the EU and the US, but after more than two years and ten rounds of negotiations, the two sides have never before come closer to the goal of concluding an ambitious and comprehensive agreement that would allow transatlantic trade and investment to expand even further.

In his contribution, Mr Aleš Cantarutti, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia, pointed to a study which showed that the TTIP would have no effect on his country unless Slovenia went that extra mile. He noted that the analysis of a similar agreement with South Korea showed that while trade between the EU and the

latter grew in the three years after it was signed by more than 30 percent, in the same period Slovenian trade with South Korea grew only by a couple of percent. At the same time however, exports of the Slovenian automotive industry to German automotive industry grew rapidly.

This was echoed by Vice-President of Governmental and External Affairs at the BMW Group Dr Thomas Becker, who noted that all car manufacturers from both sides of the ocean want the agreement to succeed, as it will not only benefit companies but will trickle down and will cascade

into the entire value chain in the automotive industry.

“The TTIP might be the most important agreement in my lifetime.”

Morten Løkkegaard

Mr Morten Løkkegaard, member of the Danish Parliament, also

pointed to the geopolitical aspects of the TTIP, which are as important as the economic ones. Senior Trade Representative at the US Mission to the EU Ms Elena Bryan also welcomed the agreement, saying that the TTIP represents a tremendous opportunity for the US to forge an even more enhanced relationship with its natural partner, while noting that this was never going to be an easy or rapid negotiation.



Mr Lutz Guellner, Head of Unit for Information, Communication and Civil Society at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Trade, welcomed the vibrant debate surrounding the

"This agreement will only work if it is comprehensive. We need to achieve a balanced agreement... and we do not just want to do a trade agreement... we want to be at the forefront."

Lutz Guellner

how the agreement would affect small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are a major contributor to the European economy, noting that the distortion of trade could seriously damage their business. Several concerns were also voiced by Mr Andrej Gnezda, Project Manager at the Slovenian NGO Umanotera, pointing to the trade negotiation process and the exclusion of some opinions of experts and member states.

"Transparency remains a problem – and there is a problem of inclusiveness in the process."

Andrej Gnezda

TTIP, stressing that while people should not expect a miracle, they should certainly not expect Armageddon!

On the other hand, Mr Richard Jean Elsner, founder of the MORE project GmbH, voiced some concerns about

Business BSF

Panel discussion

1 September, 11:30–13:00

Speakers:

Thomas Becker, Vice President of Governmental and External Affairs, BMW Group, Germany

Elena Bryan, Senior trade representative, US Mission to the European Union

Aleš Cantarutti, State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia

Richard Jean Elsner, Founder of MORE Project GmbH, Germany

Andrej Gnezda, Project Manager, Umanotera, Slovenia

Lutz Guellner, Head of Unit for Information, Communication and Civil Society, Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission

Morten Løkkegaard, Member of the Danish Parliament, Denmark

Moderated by **Anže Burger**, Assistant Professor of International Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

A New Perspective on Transport: Investing to Connect Europe

To bring the European transport system into the 21st century, considerable investments are needed. Connecting Europe through a more unified and efficient transport system will require building missing links and eliminating bottlenecks. To make the best use of the existing and future infrastructure, and to develop a transport system that is at the service of passengers and companies alike, intelligent systems and cleaner modes of transport will need to be deployed at the European level. Only a connected EU transport system without barriers will boost job cre-

“We want to connect industrial hubs in such a way they will be ready for facilitating growth without damaging the environment.”

Violeta Bulc

Bulc, opened the debate by pointing out that the EU was facing a great challenge in how to create infrastructure for people to move, collaborate, produce and distribute goods and services.

Dr Peter Gašperšič, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Slovenia, is looking forward to changes and challenges in the field; Slovenia's focus was making sure that all sectors of trans-

ation and growth in Europe and strengthen our international competitiveness, the panel agreed.

The European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Violeta



Panel on Transport / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

port were covered, making transport greener and placing public transport as a priority, he said.

Mr Dragomir Matić, President of the Management Board of Slovenian port operator Luka Koper, noted that Slovenia's sole maritime port connected partners and customers in the region. He noted that two-thirds of the goods from Luka Koper were destined for neighbouring countries. This route is competitive with ports in northern Europe as it is faster for ships coming from the Far East, he added.

Mr Michael Müller, member of the executive board of airport operator Fraport AG, believes that aviation and transport infrastructure in general should get better support, as in Slovenia, like in other countries, infrastructure enterprises are understood as an engine of the economy.

Mr František Palko, Deputy Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic, said that due to its geographic location, Slovakia represented a very important crossroads in Europe, providing numerous oppor-

“Transport is one of the key areas of EU cooperation.”

František Palko

transport projects which are also important for the single European market, he said, adding that a solution to financing of future transport should be found, including by enhancing public–private partnerships.



Panel on Transport / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

Mr Dan Ťok, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic, noted that his country was still poorly connected with Europe, adding that, for example, in December the country would reopen a railway that was closed as far back as in 1951. Mr Sławomir Żałobka, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry for Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland, stressed that people expect higher mobility, environmental solutions and smartness of systems, in which the EU was relatively successful.

Business BSF

Panel discussion

1 September, 14:00–15:30

Speakers:

Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport

Peter Gašperšič, Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Slovenia

Dragomir Matić, President of the Management Board of Luka Koper d.d., Slovenia

Michael Müller, Member of the executive board of Fraport AG, Germany

František Palko, Deputy Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic

Dan Ťok, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic

Sławomir Żałobka, Undersecretary of State at the Ministry for Infrastructure and Development of the Republic of Poland

Moderated by **Patrick D. Cowden**, Founder of Beyond Leadership, Germany

Looking Around Corners: Why the Future Isn't What it Used to Be

This year's Night-Owl Session provided an opportunity for an informal talk about the changes and challenges of the future. The panellists agreed that we are not going to get ahead of the fast pace of change unless we are willing to

“There are profound changes in everything we do.”

Luciano Cirinà

The audience heard that it was more than worrying to hear some leaders at the BSF claim that we did not need to look at the future or have a grand vision but that instead we just needed to fix short-term issues. Stressing the importance of forward-looking approaches to challenges, Mr Luciano Cirinà, CEO at Generali CEE Holding B.V., noted that we now live in a multi-scenario world.

Mr Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Non-proliferation at the US Department of State, spoke about the Iran nuclear deal as a major breakthrough. He also noted its potential for European business and asked whether it might lead to a gradual internal change in the direction of greater democracy and respect for human rights.

One of the participants also touched upon a remark by President of the European Council

take more risks and be more innovative in our thinking.



Nigh Owl-Session / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

Mr Donald Tusk that “a boring Europe is a good Europe”, stressing that while there may have been a period when a boring Europe worked, this period was now over.

“Learn from our (Japanese) experience – fix the Maastricht Treaty.”

Richard C. Koo

Discussing the global economic and financial crisis, an idea was raised that we ought to allow governments to borrow more in order to stabilise the economy and balance the balance sheets of the private sector before fixing the government balance sheets themselves. Mr Richard C. Koo, Chief Economist at the Nomura Research Institute, warned that the European financial framework had not anticipated such a crisis and pointed to the fact that we need to



Luciano Cirinà, CEO at Generali CEE Holding B.V. / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

think “out of the box” when designing approaches to these kinds of challenges.

Mr Primož Pucar, partner and CEO of Pristop, pointed to the issue of “big data” and its impact on businesses, noting its huge potential, as nowadays more and more things in our lives are being shaped by it; indeed, he argued, almost everything we do is already being affected and influenced by big data.

Ms Alenka Smerkolj, minister without portfolio responsible for development, strategic projects and cohesion of the Republic of Slovenia, spoke about today’s changes being coupled with new phenomena, such as digitalisation, which are also changing the nature of our businesses and pointed to the fact that businesses will have to adapt to the new digital age or face becoming obsolete.

“The future is like an ocean: it provides boundless opportunities but also many threats.”

Alenka Smerkolj

Panel discussion

Night-Owl Session

31 August, 22:00

Speakers:

Luciano Cirinà, CEO at Generali CEE Holding B.V., Czech Republic

Thomas M. Countryman, Assistant Secretary for International Security and Non-Proliferation, US Department of State

Richard C. Koo, Chief Economist of Nomura Research Institute, Japan

Primož Pucar, Partner and CEO of Pristop, Slovenia

Alenka Smerkolj, Minister without portfolio responsible for development, strategic projects and cohesion of the Republic of Slovenia

Moderated by **Angela Wilkinson**, Strategic Foresight Counsellor at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Resounding Diplomacy: Music in International Relations

Music is a powerful sonic medium, with recent findings implying an incredibly strong connection between the human brain and musical impulses. It is thus unsurprising that for over a century, music has been employed as a tool for influencing others and achieving objectives. The panel proved an interesting topic for debate on less conventional issues of international relations, showing how music and cultural exchange have helped bridge major divisions, for instance

“Music can sometimes accomplish more than words, since it addresses emotions that are universally understood.”

Chris Walden

composer, arranger and conductor Mr Chris Walden, who pointed to the fact that the gap between the mind-sets of the two sides disappeared at concerts and that music and cultural exchange had a lot to do with what in the end led to the fall of the Wall. He also highlighted to how US jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong surpassed the expectations of the US government when they were sent abroad to spread the idea of “freedom” by in fact not following the script set for them.

during the Cold War in Germany and between the US and the East.

One such example was Germany during the Cold War, argued six-time Grammy-nominated com-



Panel on Hidden Dimensions of International Relations /
Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

This idea was picked up on by Mr Ivan Novak, member of the internationally acclaimed Slovenian music and cross-media group Laibach, who noted that Armstrong’s concert in Slovenia was one of the first major music events in the country following the Tito–Stalin split. Mr Novak also spoke about Laibach’s recent experience in North Korea and about how the Korean organisers were putting their necks on the line by bringing the group to a country that is trying to open up. He illustrated how the group tried to bridge the gap to the Korean audience by playing covers from *The Sound of Music*, a film that is actually allowed in the country and is used by many people to learn English.



Ivan Novak, Laibach / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

The debate also revolved around the Eurovision Song Contest and its political implications, with Ms Darja Švajger, former Slovenian Eurovision representative, arguing that this is a festival of music where there should be no room for booing because of politics. Mr Novak begged to differ, noting how Eurovision is the one place where artists represent their country and how it is hard to separate any public and artistic performance from politics.

Touching on the ethical issues surrounding Laibach's trip to North Korea, Mr Novak said Laibach would probably have to play on the Moon if the above said should be understood as a criterion, since no country really has a clean moral record. Ms Švajger meanwhile felt that musicians are in a way also diplomats for their countries, providing an insight for outsiders into their cultures. As a member of the first official Slovenian Band Aid group, she also believes in the capacity of music to help people in distress and in conflict resolution.

Panel discussion

Hidden Dimensions of International Relations

1 September, 9:30–10:30

Speakers:

Ivan Novak, Member of internationally acclaimed music and cross-media group Laibach

Darja Švajger, Performing artist, former Slovenian Eurovision representative, assistant professor at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Chris Walden, Six-time Grammy-nominated composer, arranger and conductor, United States of America

Moderated by **Žiga Pirnat**, Bled Strategic Forum Creative Director, Slovenia

Partnerships as a Cornerstone of ITF's Efforts

BSF side event

1 September, 11:00–12:00

A presentation of ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) by Mr Damjan Bergant, ITF Director, and Ms Sabina Beber Boštjančič, ITF Deputy Director, took place on the sides of this year's BSF. Established by the Slovenian Government in March 1998, ITF is as a non-profit and humanitarian organisation. Ever since its establishment, it has enjoyed indispensable support from the Slovenian government. Originally the ITF was called the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims' Assistance, focusing its activity on Bosnia and Herzegovina; gradually, following the needs of other governments, the wishes of the donor community and its increasing visibility, ITF has expanded its activities not only to the rest of South-East Europe, but also to other conflict-affected regions and countries: Central Asia, the southern Caucasus, North Africa and the Middle East.

A broadening thematic scope of activities went hand-in-hand with this expanded geographic area: first dealing with demining and mine-victim assistance, ITF now covers the entire spectrum of humanitarian mine action and more:

- Clearance of mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war.
- Mine-victim assistance.
- Destruction of surplus weapons and ammunition.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising.
- Mine-risk education.
- Physical security and stockpile-management activities.
- Emergency response to unplanned explosions at munitions sites.
- Capacity-building.
- Coordination, collaboration and mobilisation of resources in support of mine action and overall development.

As can be inferred from ITF's full name (changed in 2012), the backbone of its work is human security. ITF understands human security as a human-centred, holistic, multi-sector approach supporting the nexus between mine action and broader humanitarian, development and human rights issues. This framework enables humanitarian mine action interventions to be implemented in a people-first manner with the objective of ensuring the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair.



BSF side event – ITF / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA



ITF Director Damjan Bergant and ITF Deputy Director Sabina Beber Boštjančič / Photo: Tamino Petelinšek, STA

ITF's strategic pillars correspond with its activities and mirror the human security approach:

- Strategic Pillar I: Reducing threats from mines, explosive remnants of war and other at-risk weapons and ammunition.
- Strategic Pillar II: Facilitating safe, long-term development and building the resilience of conflict-affected communities.

In order to strategically address disruptive challenges and implement the strategic pillars in practice, the concerted effort of a variety of partners/stakeholders is required. Therefore ITF works with local, national, regional and international partners on a daily basis.

This multifaceted perspective on partnerships has enabled ITF, in its 17 years of activities, to raise USD 389 million of donations and implement over 3,000 humanitarian mine action projects, including:

- Clearing and returning into use over 131.3 million sq. metres of mine-contaminated land.
- More than 430,000 schoolchildren and adults living in mine-polluted areas receiving mine-risk education.
- 1,233 mine/UXO survivors being rehabilitated.
- Over 14,500 mine survivors receiving psychosocial assistance.
- Over 1,000 individuals being trained in the field of mine action (mine-victim assistance, humanitarian demining and management).

Considering the unfolding salient issues in the field of human security, ITF welcomes and looks forward to establishing new partnerships so as to effectively and successfully further its mission. In this regard, ITF is open to new donors or supporting public and private stakeholders and to further broadening the geographic and thematic scope of its activities.

Young BSF: Partnerships of Visions

Young BSF

28 August–1 September

The 2015 Young Bled Strategic Forum (Young BSF), its fifth edition, brought together young professionals and aspiring leaders from around the globe to discuss a number of pressing issues faced by countries and societies worldwide. The event, which has become a traditional event leading up to the BSF, gathered more than 30 participants from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Columbia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Iran, Mexico, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK, and the US.

Three days of debates and workshops dedicated to an innovative entrepreneurial environment, sustainable and green development, and internet security confirmed that partnerships that give birth to visions cannot exist without trust.

First, debate at the “Partnerships of Visions” forum searched for answers on how to foster an innovative entrepreneurial environment. At the panel, moderated by Mr Tilen Travnik, COO of D-Labs, a company helping start-ups enter the market, the participants from a wide array of fields, among them diplomats, entrepreneurs, NGO members, academics and civil-society activists, heard that multinational corporations play a vital role in the start-up environment, as they



2015 Young BSF Opening / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA



Building the Future: Opportunity for Aspiring Young Leaders' /
Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA



Panel on Innovative Entrepreneurial Environment /
Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

provide the bulk of the funding needed. But even multinationals need start-ups in order to help them adapt to the ever-changing market and client demands, according to panellists Ms Anamarija Meglič, Director of the Ypsilon institute, which focuses on inter-generational projects, and Mr Dejan Roljič, Founder & CEO of the ABC Accelerator, one of the top start-up accelerators in the world, based in Ljubljana.

The day continued with a debate about going green, moderated by Mr Miha Pongrac, journalist at Slovenian National Radio. Mr Aidan Cerar, Project Manager at the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region, presented the “Library of Things” (Knjižnica reči), a project that allows the community to borrow items they need only temporarily, just like borrowing a book from a library. In his opinion, a combination of sharing platforms could help us in addressing the most pressing environmental challenges. Meanwhile, Dr Marko Maver, an expert in international environmental law, talked about models of carbon capture and storage, which could contribute to the efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas

emissions. Ms Gaja Brečelj, Managing Director of Slovenian environmental NGO Umanotera, pointed to several burning issues connected to the global economic system and underlined that “the entire world is connected and we are all responsible for the way it is shaped”.

The participants then spent the afternoon in Ljubljana, welcomed by Deputy Mayor Ms Tjaša Ficko. Ms Ficko presented the ways in which



Deputy Mayor of Ljubljana, Ms Tjaša Ficko /
Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA



Participants of the 2015 Young BSF / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

Ljubljana, recently awarded the title European Green Capital 2016, has become a greener city in recent years.

On its second day, the Young BSF participants discussed internet security and privacy issues. The session moderated by Ms Simona Vučak, Public Relations Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, underscored the importance of informing the public about what sort of data is being collected by governments and private companies and for what purposes. “The principle of proportionality must always be observed,” stressed Ms Nataša Pirc Musar, a human rights expert and former Slovenian Information Commissioner. Meanwhile, Mr Drago Kos, Chair of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Working Group on Bribery and Slovenia’s first President of the Commission for the Prevention of Corruption, stressed that not every piece of information was in the public interest and that leaking confidential data did not automatically make you a whistle-blower.

The 2015 Young BSF concluded with a debate on “Building the Future: Opportunity for Aspiring Young Leaders”. Discussing the qualities of good leaders, the panellists, along with other participants, brought to light the importance of knowledge, courage, passion, emotional intelligence and humility. Looking back at how their lives and careers had developed, the panellists shared the view that one needs to leave one’s options open. Dr Danilo Türk, a former president of the Republic of Slovenia, added that it is good to set a course for oneself when one is young and ambitious, while at the same time remaining open to changes later in life. President of the Euro-Mediterranean University Dr Abdelhamid El-Zoheiry stressed that good decisions may come from failure and that Europe should encourage a “culture of failure” similar to that in the US. Dr Danica Purg, President of IEDC – Bled School of Management, underscored that a successful leader is capable of shaping a team of co-workers that complement each other, while Ms Katarina Kresal, founder and President of the European Centre for Dispute Resolution, underscored the



Ms Danica Purg, host of the Young BSF / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA



Panel on Internet Security / Photo: Anže Malovrh, STA

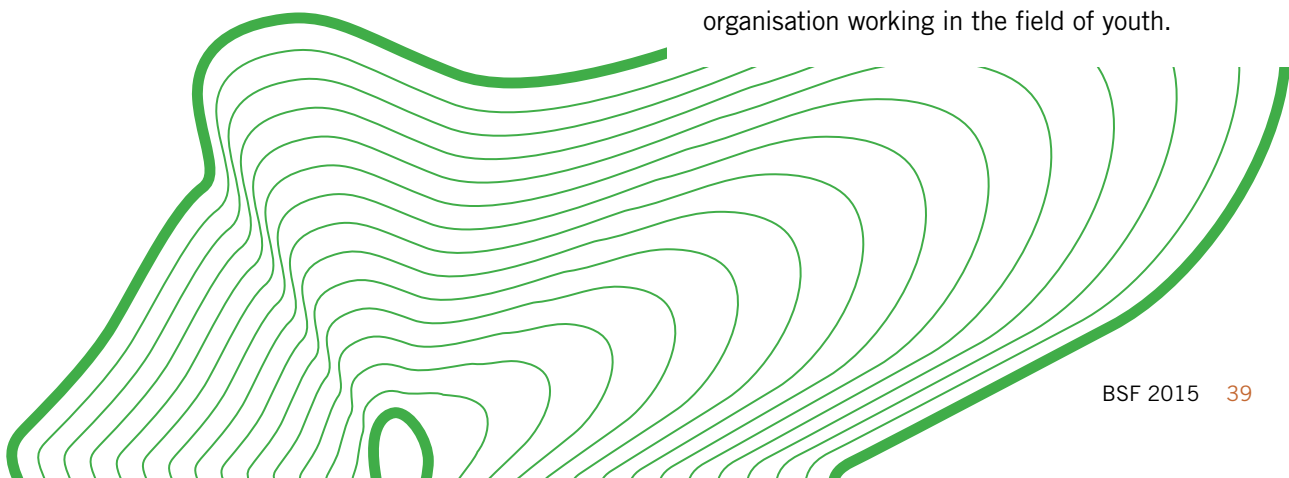
added value of co-workers with diverging views, as this leads to better decisions. The moderator, Ms Ajša Vodnik, Executive Director of AmCham Slovenia, passed on a message from human rights activist Mr Tomo Križnar, who was unable to attend the event, calling on EU to accept refugees and to be compassionate towards people fleeing conflict. Adding to this, Ms Tanja Fajon, Member of the European Parliament, stressed the need for an open debate about refugees and getting to know their culture to prevent prejudice, arguing that the EU should come up with a new asylum policy.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Young BSF was established with the objective of giving young people with visions and ideas an opportunity to be heard and to formulate out-of-the-box solutions to pressing contemporary issues.

The host of Young BSF is IEDC – Bled School of Management, one of the leading management and leadership development institutions in Central and South-East Europe. Visit www.iedc.si to learn more.

In October 2015, the Young BSF was awarded the “Friend of the Year” (PriYatelj leta) title by the Ypsilon Institute, a non-governmental, non-profit organisation working in the field of youth.



2015 BSF Impressions



“The Bled Forum is so much more than ‘Davos in the Balkans’. It is more intimate, more open and more committed to the European dimension. I have learnt a lot, especially regarding international law. And the lake beats the mountains!”

Lionel Barber, Editor of the Financial Times, United Kingdom

“We have been sharing and promoting inspiring and important ideas for future sustainable development around the world with the Bled Strategic Forum. Bled points out what moves the world outside the corporate walls and what we, as a Corporate Citizen, have to consider in our daily business.”

Thomas Becker, Vice-President of Governmental and External Affairs, BMW Group, Germany

“Congratulations, Slovenia! The Bled Strategic Forum has developed into a high-level and meaningful platform for the search for solutions to the most pressing topics on the international agenda.”

Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

“As Bled is one of the symbols of Slovenia, the Bled Strategic Forum is a symbol for communication of the regional agenda and a manifestation of sound partnerships and collaborations”.

Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport

“Bled brings together a unique combination that is truly one-of-a-kind in the world today. In the heart of Europe, close to Africa and right between Asia and America, Bled bridges and deeply connects the world together like no other place on the planet. Truly the ideal location to discuss our most pressing global issues.”

Patrick D. Cowden, Founder of Beyond Leadership, Germany

“The Bled Strategic Forum was a great opportunity for MORE to exchange face-to-face with some key actors in the ongoing saga of TTIP, in the beautiful and rarefied atmosphere of an Alpine lake setting in Slovenia.”

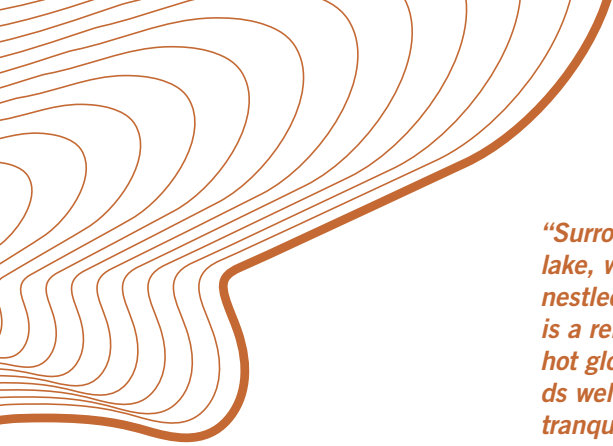
Richard Jean Elsner, Founder of MORE project GmbH, Germany

“There can be no better place for discussions on global challenges than the beautiful shores of Lake Bled. A fantastic atmosphere where insightful people find common ground on the main issues of our time.”

Erik Gudbrand Solheim, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

“The often overwhelming number of pressing global and regional issues demand examination, scrutiny and debate at the highest levels. The Bled Strategic Forum has shown how convening the top levels of political players and experts can swiftly earn a reputation as one of the best in a crowded conference market”.

Nik Gowing, International Broadcaster and Visiting Professor, King's College, London, United Kingdom



“Bled is a unique place to discuss pressing global issues among policymakers, business and civil society, especially with a perspective from the southeast of Europe.”

Lutz Guellner, Head of Unit for Information, Communication and Civil Society, Directorate General for Trade, European Commission

“The Bled Strategic Forum is an impressive gathering of decision-makers and experts, and I truly appreciate the fact that international criminal justice features so strongly on the Forum’s agenda every year.”

Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, President of the International Criminal Court

“Slovenia deftly illustrates how a small country can be big in promoting the rule of law, by consistently having a high-level panel on fighting impunity at the Bled Strategic Forum.”

Lousewies van der Laan, Independent Advisor on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law, Slovenia

“Surrounded by a picturesque lake, with a medieval castle nestled on a cliff above, Bled is a remedy where ‘healing’ hot global issues ble(n) ds well with local calm and tranquillity. This forum simply delivers!”

Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

“Bled, with its special setting and atmosphere, is an inspiring place for open, frank and fruitful discussions which go beyond our everyday business.”

Michael Roth MP, Minister of State for Europe, Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany

“The Bled Strategic Forum is a global event where the key questions are asked and the essential answers from the primary sources are received.”

Alexandre Sidorenko, Global Ambassador for HelpAge International

“Inspirational debate on the current trends in transport infrastructure and the excellent company of leaders from both the public and private sectors: Bled is a unique example that connecting people and places makes great sense.”

Dan Ťok, Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic

“In peaceful, Alpine-blue Bled, I was reminded that if Europe stays true to its values, it will win its future. I will be defending that ideal long after this year’s excellent Strategic Forum.”

Donald Tusk, President of the European Council

“The Bled Strategic Forum is addressing the two really big questions facing all societies: how can we create our future and who is the ‘we’ that will get us there?”

Angela Wilkinson, Strategic Foresight Counsellor at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

“Bled offers a unique setting for strategic discussions on the most urgent global challenges of our times. Over the last ten years, the Bled Strategic Forum has established itself as a leading international event able to inspire high-level decision-making with innovative and forward-looking thinking to understand the present and shape a better future”.

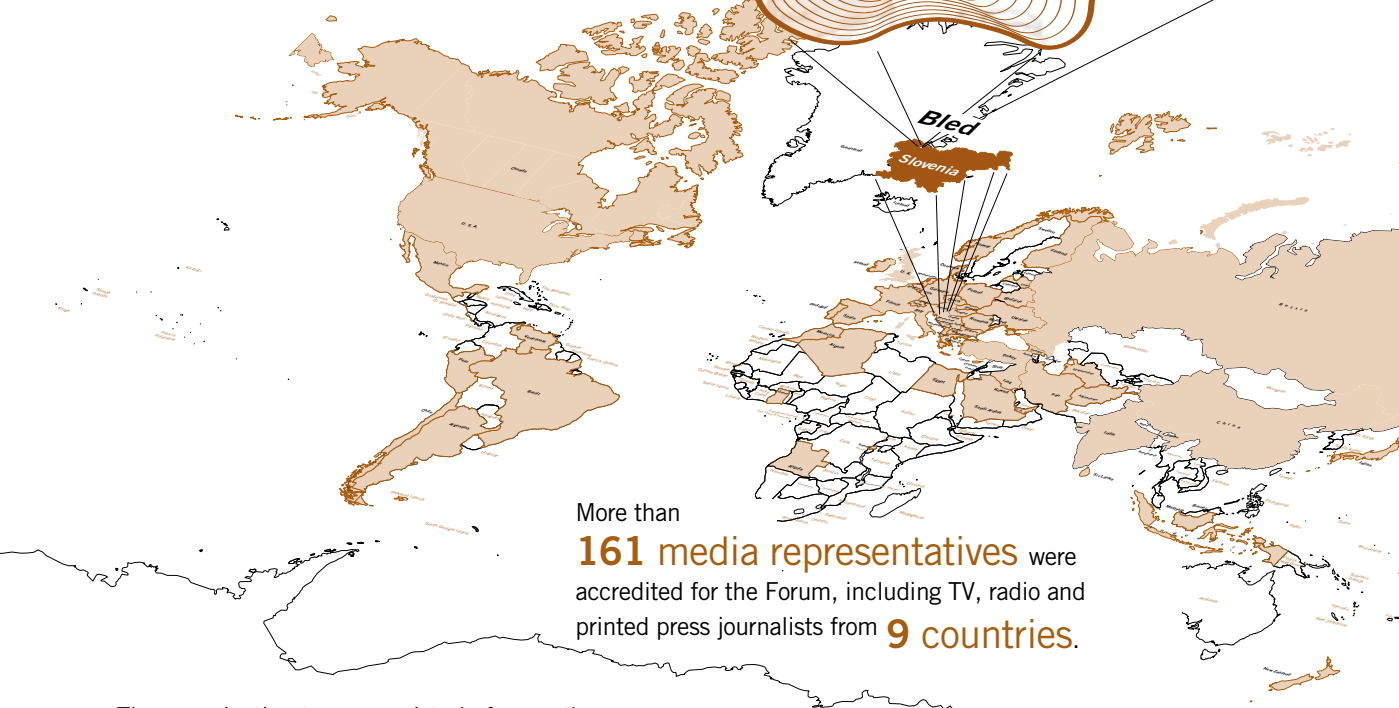
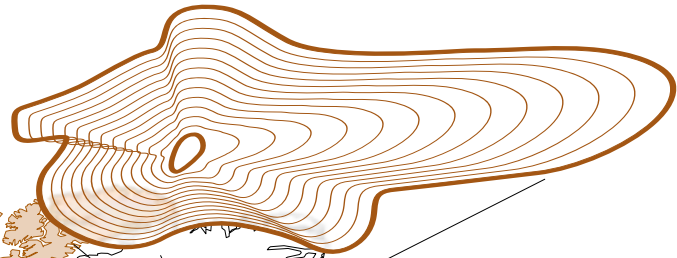
Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

2015 Bled Strategic Forum: Facts and Figures

2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 Bled Strategic Forum was the

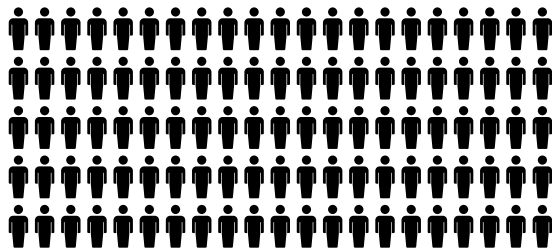
10th in a row.

Altogether, **540** people from
65 countries,
5 continents and
7 international organisations
registered for the forum.

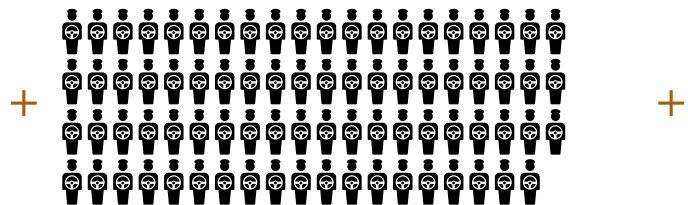


More than
161 media representatives were
accredited for the Forum, including TV, radio and
printed press journalists from **9** countries.

The organisation team consisted of more than
220 people, including

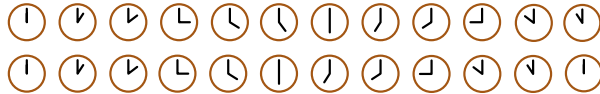


57 drivers



Participants took part in
more than **2,070** minutes or

24 hours of sessions

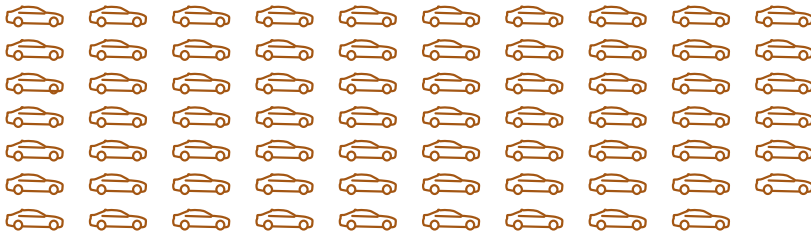


and discussions, totalling

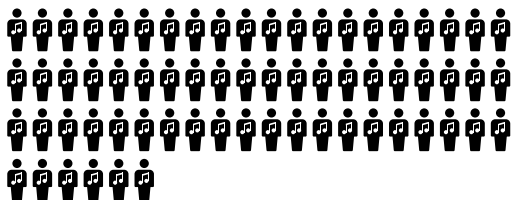
25 separate events.



BMW provided **69** vehicles
for the transportation of participants.



36 musicians



19 volunteers



+

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125 kW

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*Zero-carbon operation, encompassing everything from power generation to use on the road, requires energy sourced entirely from renewable resources. BMW i new car products are available in licensed markets. In Slovenia exclusively at BMW i showroom, 8 Ameriška street, Ljubljana (Crystal Palace). **Monthly lease payment is 399 EUR including VAT on the assumption that the retail price of the vehicle is 36,550 EUR; the first increased lease payment amounts to 5 % of the retail price or 1,827.50 EUR including VAT, the duration of lease is 48 months; 48 lease payments of 399 EUR; the maximum mileage is 20,000 kilometres annually. The amount of monthly lease payments is subject to obtaining the Eco Fund (Slo., Eko sklad) grant. At the conclusion of the Leasing Agreement, the Lessee shall pay the security in the amount of 5,000 EUR. The Summit Leasing Slovenia d.o.o., the financial partner of BMW Financial Services, reserves the right to change the amount of monthly lease payments in the event that the grant by the Eco Fund (Slo., Eko sklad) is not granted for any reason. Monthly lease payment does not include the costs of insurance and vehicle registration. The offer is valid until September 30, 2015.

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And it is your choice.



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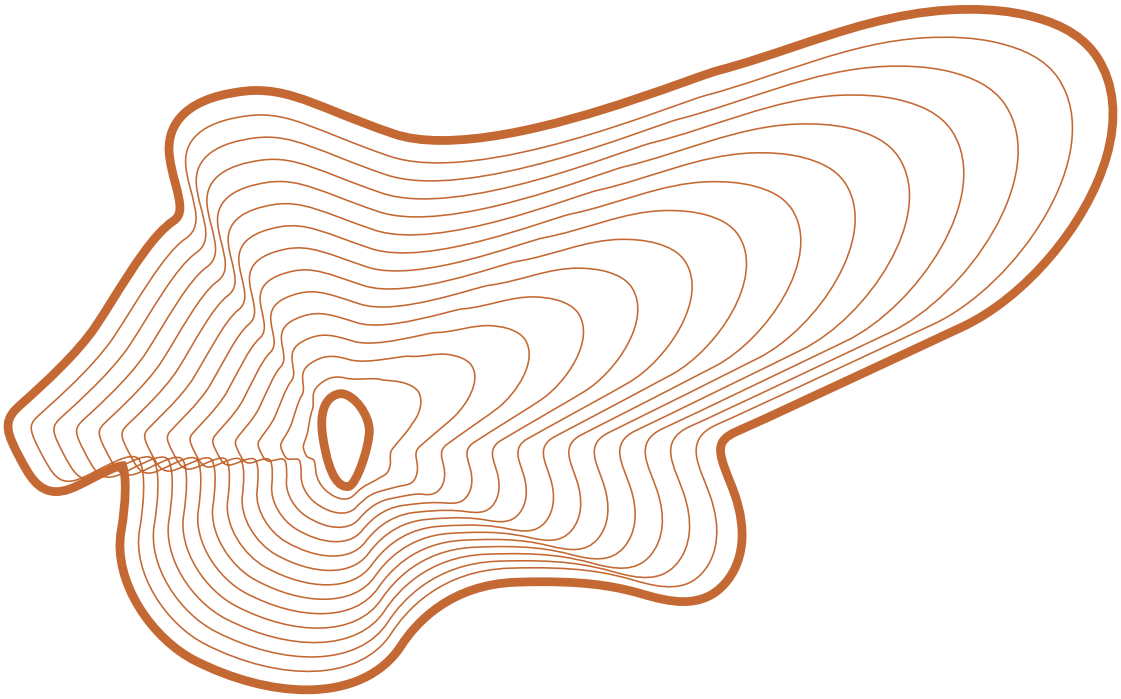
SVETA PETKA
HYDROELECTRIC
POWER PLANT,
SKOPJE, MACEDONIA

KEMPINSKI HOTEL,
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