

ONLINE PANEL

“Authoritarian Bending of Euro-Technocracy Illiberalism’s Devil in The Details in Southeast Europe: The Case of North Macedonia”

It is our great pleasure to invite you on an open panel discussion with topic: **Authoritarian Bending of Euro-Technocracy Illiberalism’s Devil in The Details in Southeast Europe: The Case of North Macedonia**, hosted by the Institute of Social Science and Humanities – Skopje.

The event will take place on **February, 02, 2021** on the **ZOOM** online platform, starting from **11:00 (CET)**.

These series of panels are part of the project “New challenges in the overcoming of ‘democratic backsliding’ in North Macedonia: ‘State capture’ and ‘illiberal democracy’ revisited in an emerging context,” supported by the National Endowment for Democracy.

The project seeks to analyze the public policies and examine the underlying principles in law-making and implementation in terms of their adherence to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, focusing on two issues in particular: the placement of the individual at the center of governing activities (to paraphrase the Charter) and the right to good administration as one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Charter at issue. Full compliance with those aspects shall be fundamental for the national administrative reform agenda and an incremental part of the opening of the EU-accession process. Considering that the newly elected government led by the Social Democrats has prioritized the implementation of the Urgent Reform Priorities (URP) set by the European Commission seeking to hinder the democratic backsliding, we argue that it is time to examine to what extent the allegedly good legislation (but “bad implementation”) adheres to the fundamental principles of the Union. We will focus on the administration and its role of service for the citizens, namely on the issue of the implementation of the IRP in terms of the practice ordinary citizens are faced with on a daily basis. We contend that “the bad implementation” consists in a heavily bureaucratized state apparatus that hinders the right to a good and individual centered administration with no effective means to seek justice and compensation when damaged by the institutions. The “bad implementation” of the allegedly “good laws” is derived from certain tenets of the legislation that betray a self-serving state apparatus, thus rendering the citizen a silent subject to contradictory and costly procedures. The same legislation and the prescribed steps of implementation, present in the laws and bylaws, leave the citizen without juridical and other mechanisms that would help defend individual and collective civic rights vis-à-vis the state.

Thus, we will tackle the adherence to the principles of the fundamentals rights in lawmaking and governance, but, also, the concomitant issues of institutional transparency, and the accountability of low to middle level administrative corruption, encountered by the ordinary people, and measured through our evidence based research.

This project continues ISSHS’ effort to work on “de-capturing” the state institutions by working on projects aimed at depolarizing, creating assumptions for wider social reconciliation, as well as combatting the populist and illiberal tides in Macedonian society. Given the fact

that North Macedonia is expected to start the process of negotiations with the European Union and keeping in mind that the first negotiating chapter covers precisely these areas of judiciary and European fundamental rights, we consider it more than timely to monitor and raise awareness as to whether the legislation and its implementation indeed subscribes to the key values of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. One of the principles – if not the core principle – expressed in the preamble of the Charter is the following: “One of the central principles of the European Union is that It places the individual at the heart of its activities, by establishing the citizenship of the Union and by creating an area of freedom, security and justice.” Thus, good and efficient administration and the values present in Chapter 23 are intrinsically linked (and by extension Chapter 24 too, concerning an efficient and just Administrative Court).

PARTICIPANTS:

Gordan Georgiev, moderator/Assistant Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje

Florian Bieber, Director of the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz, Austria

Harun Cero, Political Scientist with a focus on Southeast Europe/Journalist

Aleksandar Krzhalovski, Director of Macedonian Center for International Cooperation

Niccolò Milanese, Director of European Alternatives

AGENDA

11:00-11:20 Welcoming note and short presentation of the study by **Gordan Georgiev**

11:20-11:45 **Florian Bieber**, “The Lingering Legacy of Competitive Authoritarianism: Conceptualising Uncapturing the State and Re-Democratization”

11:45-12:10 **Harun Cero**, “Bosnian State Capture, Processes led by the ‘Tribe Leaders’ and the System of Privileges that they Made for Themselves”

12:10-12:35 **Aleksandar Krzhalovski**, “Culture of corruption tolerance in public administration”

12:35-13:00 **Niccolò Milanese**, “Devilish details and layers of the inferno: European illiberalism from micro to macro”

13:00-13:30 Plenary discussion with Q&A moderated by **Gordan Georgiev**

SHORT BIOS OF THE SPEAKERS:

Florian Bieber is a Professor of Southeast European History and Politics and Director of the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz, Austria. He holds a Jean Monnet Chair in the Europeanisation of Southeastern Europe. He is the coordinator of the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG) and has been providing policy advice to international organisations, foreign ministries, donors and private investors. He studied Political Science and History at Trinity College (USA), the University of Vienna, and Central European University (Budapest).

He has worked for the European Centre for Minority Issues and taught at Kent University (UK). He is also a Visiting Professor at the Nationalism Studies Program at CEU. He has been a Visiting Fellow at the LSE and New York University, and held the Luigi Einaudi Chair at Cornell University. Recent publications include *Debating Nationalism* (Bloomsbury 2020) and *The Rise of Authoritarianism in the Western Balkans* (Palgrave 2020).

Harun Cero is a political scientist focusing on Southeast Europe and a journalist. He studied political sciences and history at the Goethe University in Frankfurt. For five years, he worked for Al Jazeera Balkans as a political journalist. In the meantime, he was granted the International Parliamentary Scholarship of the German Bundestag, through which he got the chance to work in this institution. Currently, he is the project manager at the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation Dialogue Southeast Europe.

Aleksandar Krzhalovski, born 1969, is a director of the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation (MCIC) since 2009 (and in organization from 1995, after being active in several youth movements in early 90's). Besides management, his experience includes trainings, consultancies (e.g. organizational evaluations), as well as analysis of societal phenomenon's. He is author of several publications, produced as part of MCIC work.

Niccolò Milanese a founding director of European Alternatives, which has been campaigning and organising for transnational democracy for over a decade. He published 'Wir Heimatlosen Weltbürger' co-written with his colleague Lorenzo Marsili with Surhkamp in 2019. Together with Katarina Kolozova he has edited a forthcoming book on European illiberal democracy.

Gordan Georgiev has been active in the civil sector for 20 years. His expertise includes research and field projects on democratic stabilization, reconciliation, inter-ethnic relations, political parties' reform and consolidation, regional political cooperation, international relations and regional security issues, reform of the parliamentary practices, decentralization and reform of the local-self-government. Also, Georgiev was elected as MP (from SDSM) in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, from 2009 to 2013, chairing the Committee on Culture.

He holds a BSc and MSc from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, France, in Political Science and International Relations, and he obtained M.A. in European Studies from King's College London. In 2009 he accomplished the Harvard Executive Education programme. Georgiev obtained his PhD in political sciences in 2016, dealing with societal system theories and structures of power.
