



**Promoting youth empowerment in the Western Balkans: a progressive initiative
for an EU Youth Strategy for the Western Balkans
Durres, 9 June 2017**

9.00-9.30 Welcoming speeches:

- **Victor Boştinaru**, vice-president of the S&D Group
- **Ilir Meta**, speaker of the Parliament and president-elect of the Republic of Albania
- **Milva Ekonomi**, Minister of Economy of Albania
- **Eglantina Gjermeni**, Minister of Urban Development of Albania

9-30-11.00 **The view from the Western Balkan region: how young people perceive the EU and what the situation of the youth is in the different countries** - *moderator S&D AFET co-ordinator Knut Fleckenstein*

Dafina Peci, National Youth Congress of Albania: "Youth-led social changes in Albania, challenges and aspirations."

Amer Osmic, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Sarajevo: "Challenges of youth unemployment in the Western Balkans"

Ajka Barucic, Institute for Youth Development KULT: "Youth in BiH: position, needs and policy solutions"

Blazen Maleski, National Youth Council, FYR Macedonia: "Macedonian youth - from capitulation to resistance"

Krenare Gashi, Kosovo Youth Centers' Network: "Kosovo Youths: tired of isolation"

Kejdi Mehmetaj, Vice-chair of Socialist Movement for Integration, Albania: "Shared Challenges of Balkan Youth and what the EU can do to empower them"

Natasa Celevska, Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, Youth section - "Youth Unemployment in Western Balkan countries"

Denis Piplaş, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung FES - Sarajevo: "Brief presentation of the study 'An Excluded Generation: Youth in Southeast Europe'"

11.00-11.15 Coffee break

11.15-12.30 **The work and role of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans and local youth organisations** - - *moderator S&D vice-president Tanja Fajon*

Djuro Blanusa, Secretary General of RYCO: "RYCO: The good news for the region and from the region"

Ilir Lico, IRIS Network National Coordinator for Albania: “IRIS Network of CSOs that deliver social services in SEE”

Erjola Kaci, ARSIS Project co-ordinator: “Presentation of ARYSE (At Risk Youth Empowerment): Strengthening youth by enhancing youth protection stakeholders”

Ardian Hackaj, Director ShtetiWeb: “Enhancing youth connectivity in the Western Balkans”

Renata Jajoska, Young European Socialists: “The role of YES during the brain-drain process and economic instability”

12.30-14.00 Buffet lunch

14.00-15.00 **Countering populism and nationalism through youth empowerment and cooperation at the EU and regional level** - *moderator Tonino Picula, S&D MEP and chair of the EP delegation for relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo*

Jon Frchkoski, Social Democratic Union of Macedonia: “The great danger of authoritarian populism: Replacing democracy with 'fake-securitization' and 'growing nationalism and Euro-scepticism between the Macedonian youth' and how to change it”

Igor Milosevic, ADP ZID, Montenegro: “Where we lost the civil society in the struggle against populism?”

Jaron Liplijn, European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity: “Reconciliation through capacity building for young politicians”

Djordje Djokovic, President of Youth org. and member of Presidency SPS Serbia: “The dialogue of young politicians of the Western Balkans as a mechanism to resolve differences”

15.00-15.15 Coffee break

15.15-16.30 **The way forward and development of concrete initiatives and actions supporting youth empowerment, economic growth and decent employment** - *moderator Victor Boştinaru, S&D Group vice-president*

Erlis Hoxha, Socialist Party, Albania: “The necessity of youth participation in decision-making”

Adi Kasumovic, SDP, BiH: “Beautiful, empty cities”

Nevena Kekovic, Democratic Party of Socialists, Montenegro: “Impact of the educational system and traditional values on youth unemployment”

Aleksandra Bozic, Democratic Party Serbia, Youth Organisation: “Current situation and perspectives of Youth in Serbia”

Neli Rašović Social-Democratic Party, Montenegro: “Tackling youth unemployment - a local and regional approach”

16.30-17.00 Closing remarks by Victor Boştinaru, S&D Group vice-president