



Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood

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**2nd International Alumni Seminar
of the Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies
Sarajevo, 25-26 June 2015**

**“Defending Democracy, Freedom and Human Dignity
against Internal and External Threats”**

PROGRAMME

24 June 2015

Thursday 25 June 2015	
14:00	<p>Opening of the seminar by the host and by Mr Matjaž GRUDEN, Director of Policy Planning, Council of Europe</p> <p>Welcoming address by Mr Ivo KOMSIC, Mayor of Sarajevo</p>
14:30	<p>Theme 1 ‘<i>Protecting societies without undermining democracy</i>’</p> <p>There are serious concerns in European countries and beyond about threats which are placing strains on democratic stability and pose growing challenges to the prospect of open tolerant societies. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional, legal changes and challenges to the independence of the judiciary; • Restrictions on freedom of the media and the use of state-controlled mass media to manipulate public opinion and to undermine societies’ tolerance of other people’s beliefs, opinions and lifestyles; • Restrictions on the activities of civil society organisations; • Indiscriminate mass surveillance by governments of internet and telephone communications. <p>Terrorist attacks and other security risks lead to calls for greater state control and indeed governments and public institutions have a responsibility to protect their citizens. However, this must not be taken as a pretext to jeopardise freedom and individual rights and to weaken the democratic control of government and political leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can some of the anti-democratic processes be reversed and how can further erosion of the foundations of open societies be prevented? - What policy responses are required to ensure that the right balance is struck between defending freedom and ensuring security without violating fundamental rights at the same time? - What are the prospects for a greater empowerment of the public in political decision-making processes and greater accountability of politicians and democratic institutions?

	<p><u>Chair:</u> Mr Michael REMMERT, Deputy to the Director of Policy Planning, Council of Europe</p> <p><u>Discussants</u> Ms Marina GURYEVA, <i>Deputy Director, Innovation Centre of the National Research University (Russia)</i> Ms Jagoda NOVAK, <i>Deputy Ombudsman (Croatia)</i> Mr Andreas TAKIS, <i>Assistant professor, Law School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)</i></p>
16:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:45 – 18:30	<p>Theme 2 ‘Addressing the root causes of radicalisation in democratic societies’</p> <p>The deadly attacks of Paris, Copenhagen and Tunis which have marked the beginning of 2015 provide further evidence that today democracies are seriously threatened by external attacks that reflect the radicalisation and extremist violence of certain groups. Security responses must be based on the respect of human rights, the rule of law and democracy and should be accompanied by preventative measures aimed at eradicating the root causes of intolerance and extremism, especially among young people. A resolute and ongoing battle against social exclusion, discrimination, racism and hate speech are key instruments to reduce the danger of extremism and to ensure democratic security. Strengthening citizenship education, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue - and involving civil society in decision-making processes including, in particular, its marginalised segments, - also plays a crucial role in this respect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What responses are required to extremist violence, in particular as regards the prevention of radicalisation? - What role for education in creating and transmitting a culture of democratic citizenship and in helping to prevent radicalisation and hate speech? - How to respect the specific sensitivities of religious groups without stifling freedom of expression? - How can intercultural dialogue be further promoted? What is the shared responsibility of political, civil and cultural leaders as well as media professionals in eliminating the incentives of extremism and in building more inclusive societies? <p><u>Chair:</u> Mr Matjaž GRUDEN, <i>Director of Policy Planning, Council of Europe</i></p> <p><u>Discussants:</u> Mr Ahmed DRISS, <i>Director, Ecole politique de Tunis</i> Ms Juliana CICI, <i>Deputy Commissioner, Ombudsman of Albania (Albania)</i> Ms Gergana ANDREEVA-RAKOVSKA, <i>Chairperson of the Business Foundation for Education (Bulgaria)</i></p>
18:30	<i>Dinner at the Hotel</i>
20:00	Reception at the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina hosted by Mr Ivo KOMSIC, Mayor of Sarajevo

09:00

Theme 3 'Promoting women's rights and countering domestic violence'

Violence against women is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights abuses in the world. It crosses every social and economic class, every religion, race and ethnicity. Not only does it threaten women's health and their social and economic well-being, it is also a major obstacle to building fair and democratic societies.

This is a highly topical problem throughout Europe and its neighbourhood, however with particularly high prevalence in the Western Balkans region. Despite the increasing attention paid to this issue - one example being the entering into force of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in August 2014 - the number of victims of violence against women and domestic violence remains intolerably high.

Following a proposal from the Bosnia and Herzegovina School of Political Studies, this round table provides an opportunity to compare different national responses to this problem and to consider possible solutions to eradicate gender stereotypes, combat discrimination against women and promote mutual respect.

- How can economic, social, educational and health policies respond more effectively to violence against women?
- How can civil society contribute to ensuring that violence against women is always understood to be unacceptable and that adequate infrastructure support is available for victims of violence?
- How can men be engaged as agents of change, standing alongside women, to end violence?

Chair:

Ms Mary-Ann HENNESSEY, *Head of Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo*

Invited speaker:

Ms Ismeta DERVOZ, *MP, Sarajevo*

Discussants:

Mr Ruben HAYRAPETYAN, *Associate Professor, Deputy Head of Management Department, Armenian State University of Economics (Armenia)*

Ms Despina SYRRI, *Founder of the Civic School of Political Studies in Greece and Advisor to the Regional Co-operation Council Secretariat*

10:30

Coffee break

11:00

Brainstorming Round Table on the development of the Schools' Alumni Network

The round table will provide an opportunity to hear participants' suggestions regarding the kind of activities that would be the most attractive for the Schools of Political Studies alumni network. They will also be invited to consider their role in developing a strong alumni community and engaging it in a sustained way.

- *How could the impact of the Schools of Political Studies be reinforced in their respective countries?*
- *How could the Schools' Network and the Council of Europe help alumni become steadfast long-term partners of the Organisation?*
- *How could the European Association of Schools of Political Studies help strengthen the Alumni Network?*

12:00	<p><u>Chair:</u> Ms Catherine LALUMIERE, <i>President of the European Association of Schools of Political Studies, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe</i></p> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Mr Jack HANNING, <i>Secretary General of the European Association of Schools of Political Studies</i></p> <p>Closing session</p>
12:30	<i>Lunch at the Hotel</i>
14:00 - approx. 22:00	<p>Excursion to Mostar and group photograph on the Old Bridge</p> <p><i>Dinner at a restaurant on the way back from Mostar</i></p>