



The Middle East & North Africa (MENA) and the Balkans: Challenges of Transformation

Sofia, 13th – 15th December 2012

With the support of: **Sofia Platform**



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Conference Program | Day 1 - Thursday, 13th Dec 2012

Session	Timing		Details
	12:00	13:00	Registration
Opening Remarks	13:00	13:30	New Bulgarian University Plamen Bochkov
			Al Jazeera Center for Studies Salah Eddin Elzein
Keynote Speech	13:30	14:30	A Muslim Case for Liberty Mustafa Akyol, <i>Political Commentator and Author, Turkey</i>
			14:30
First Session	15:30	17:30	The Balkans and Middle East & North Africa: History, Culture and Religion
			The MENA – Balkans Relations: A Historic Perspective The Contacts between the Balkans and MENA in Ottoman Times. Socio-Economic and Demographic Aspects Svetla Yaneva, <i>New Bulgarian University, Sofia</i>
			Cultural ties between the Middle East and the Balkans Muhamed Arnaut, <i>The World Islamic Science & Education University, Amman</i>
			Bulgarian Policy towards the Muslim students in "Al-Azhar" in Cairo Dimitar Gjudurov, <i>New Bulgarian University, Sofia</i>
			The Balkans as a common territory of Christianity and Islam Qani Nesimi, <i>State University of Tetovo, Macedonia</i>
			Moderated By: Taha Ozhan, <i>SETA President, Turkey</i>
End of Day One			

Session	Timing		Details
Keynote Speech	09:00	10:00	Challenges of Democratic Transition in the Post-Revolutions MENA Region Wadah Khanfar, <i>Co-Founder of Al-Sharq Forum</i>
Second Session	10:00	11:30	Lessons from the Balkans
			Transitional Justice in Bulgaria and Egypt Maria Petkova, <i>Oxford University, UK</i>
			Regional Integration in South East Europe and MENA Dimitar Bechev, <i>European Council on Foreign Relations, Bulgaria</i>
			Transformations in the Balkans Region: Lessons for the Middle East Mohammed El Ali, <i>Al Jazeera Net, Qatar</i>
			Moderated By: Louisa Slavkova, <i>Adviser to the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs</i>
	11:30	12:00	Coffee Break
Third Session	12:00	14:00	Crises and International Interventions in the Balkans and the Middle East
			The Role of International Powers in Local and Regional Conflicts Karim Mejri, <i>Al Jazeera Network, Qatar</i>
			Crisis of Order: Regional Implications Taha Ozhan, <i>SETA, Turkey</i>
			Political and Diplomatic Relations Nusrat Cancar, <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>
			To Intervene, or not to Intervene, that is the Question: Bosnia-Herzegovina in Retrospect Riada Asimovic Akyol, <i>Galatasaray University, Istanbul</i>
			Syria and the International Society Aref Alobeid, <i>Hellenic Army Academy, Athens</i>
			Moderated By: Goran Milic, <i>Director of News and Program, Al Jazeera Balkans</i>
	14:00	15:00	Lunch
Fourth Session	15:00	17:00	Religion and Politics
			The Role and Impact of Religion on Contemporary Societies in MENA and the Balkans Hany Salah, <i>Journalist and Researcher, Egypt</i>
			Is Islam Compatible with Democracy? Mariana Malinova, <i>New Bulgarian University, Sofia</i>
			Sacred Diplomacy: Religion, Digitalization and Foreign Policy in the Balkans & MENA Gökhan Yücel, <i>Ministry of Education, Turkey</i>
			Survival of Islam at the South-easternmost Edge of the European Union: The Case of Western Thrace, Greece Ali Huseynoglu, <i>University of Sussex, UK</i>
			Moderated By: Ivan Orlic, <i>Ambassador, Bosnian Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i>
			End of Day Two

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Conference Program | Day 3 - Saturday, 15th Dec 2012

Session	Timing		Details
Fifth Session	09:00	10:00	Concluding Round Table Moderated By: Tarik Dodic, <i>Managing Director, Al Jazeera Balkans</i>
Closing Session	10:00	11:00	Nickolay Mladenov, <i>Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria</i> Salah Eddin Elzein, <i>Al Jazeera Center for Studies, Qatar</i> Salman Sheikh, <i>Brookings Doha Center, Qatar</i> Moderated By: Boyko Vassilev, <i>Bulgarian National Television, Bulgaria</i>
	11:00	11:30	International Press Conference
			End of Conference