

# 25<sup>th</sup> BELGRADE ECONOMIC FORUM

December 17, 2025  
Metropol Palace Hotel

## draft agenda

(invited speakers)

### 09.30-10.00 Registration

#### 10.00 Redrawing the Global Blueprint: Geopolitical Shifts and the Future of International Relations

*Captures the profound transition to a multipolar world order, where the USA, EU, China, and Russia each wield significant influence. For countries like Serbia, this means constantly navigating competing interests and opportunities from these major powers.*

**Marko Đurić**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia

✓ **Jelica Minić**, Member of the Executive Board, European Movement in Serbia

✓ **Prof. Dragan Djukanovic**, Professor, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade

**Elena Lazarou**, Director General, Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy  
**Repr. from Rand - Bruegel**

#### 10.45 European Funding: Fostering Development in the Western Balkans

*In 2024, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development significantly increased their funding for the Western Balkans, primarily focusing on sustainable projects and the private sector, with a notable emphasis on Serbia.*

✓ **Damien Sorrell**, Head of the Regional Hub for the Western Balkans, EIB

✓ **Jelena Ceperkovic**, Deputy Head Serbia, EBRD

**Marko Cadez**, President, Serbian Chamber of Commerce

**Marko Jovanović**, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance of Serbia

#### 11.30 Serbia and the EU: A Prolonged Process, Enduring Goals

*Serbia's long EU accession process is now at a crossroads, with both Serbia and the EU questioning whether the slow progress is worth the effort, especially given Serbia's ties to Russia and China.*

Repr. from Ministry for European Integration of Serbia

**H.E. Andreas von Beckerath**, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of European Union to the Republic of Serbia

✓ **H.E. Mrs Pernille Dahler Kardel**, Ambassador of Denmark to Serbia

## 12.00 Networking Coffee Break

### 12.30 Building on Energy Security through Connectivity in SEE

*Energy security in Southeastern Europe (SEE) is a strategic imperative. Countries in the region are actively creating new energy links, such as the Serbia-Hungary oil pipeline, to diversify their supply sources and enhance independence.*

**Dubravka Djedovic Handanovic**, Minister of Mining and Energy of Serbia  
**Péter Szijjártó**, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary  
**Repr. from Atlantic Council**

### 13.00 Investing in Tomorrow: Serbia's Strategy to Combat Brain Drain

*The discussion describes the country's dual challenge of attracting foreign investment while simultaneously retaining its skilled workforce. The discussion highlights that while low labor costs draw international business, they also contribute to a high rate of working poverty, pushing many Serbs to seek better wages abroad.*

✓ **Tatjana Matic**, Director, Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia  
✓ **Nikola Pontara**, Country Manager for Serbia, World Bank  
Moderator: **Violeta Jovanovic**, Executive Director, NALED

### 13.30 Unlocking Growth: How Serbia's Investment Strategy is Fueling Economic Transformation

*Serbia is fueling its economic transformation by strategically attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) through a combination of tax incentives, free trade agreements, and a business-friendly environment. This investment is being channeled into key sectors like green energy, infrastructure, and the IT industry, aiming to boost productivity and accelerate economic growth.*

**Adrijana Mesarovic**, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Economy of Serbia  
✓ **Rados Gazdic**, Acting Director, Serbian Development Agency  
**Mihailo Vesovic**, Vice President & Director for Strategic Analysis, Services & Internationalization, Serbian Chamber of Commerce  
✓ **Nikola Altiparmakov**, Member of the Fiscal Council of the Republic of Serbia  
✓ Moderator: **Aleksandar Ljubic**, Executive Director, Foreign Investors Council

## 14.00 Light Lunch

### 14.45 Growing Ties: Exploring Trade, Innovation, and Investment Opportunities

*Serbia is expanding its economic partnerships with key global players. It is strengthening ties with Israel through increased trade, investment, and a planned Free Trade Agreement, while also seeing a diversification of Chinese investment beyond traditional sectors into hospitality and electric vehicle manufacturing.*

**Jagoda Lazarevic**, Minister of Domestic and Foreign Trade of Serbia  
**Marinos Giannopoulos**, CEO, Enterprise Greece

### **15.30 The Soaring Serbian Private Healthcare Market: A Magnet for International Investment**

*The Serbian healthcare market is experiencing rapid growth, valued at €5 billion in 2024. The private sector is a key driver, growing at 15% annually and attracting significant foreign investment.*

**Dr Jasmina Knezevic**, Co-owner, 3D Healtech – former owner of BelMedic

### **16.00 Digitalization and Green Transition of Western Balkans**

*The "Go Digital Western Balkans" program is a new initiative from the EU and EBRD designed to support small and medium-sized businesses in the region. Its goal is to boost competitiveness by helping these companies invest in and adopt new digital and green technologies.*

**Bela Balint**, Minister of Science, Technological Development & Innovation of Serbia  
**Mihailo Jovanović**, PhD, Director of the Office for IT and eGovernment

### **16.30 Serbia's Innovation Boom: Unleashing Startups Potential and Global Ambitions**

*The panel describes the country's strategic push to develop its technology sector and global standing. The nation is investing heavily in startups and infrastructure, particularly in artificial intelligence and biotechnology, to transform its economy and compete on the world stage.*

✓**Dr Sasa Lazovic**, Managing Director, Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia  
**Katarina M.V. Galic**, Founder & CEO, X|ergy SusTech Powerhouse | TESLA Venture Studio

### **17.00 Shaping Belgrade: Trends in Urban Development and Property**

*"Shaping Belgrade" refers to the city's ongoing efforts to balance rapid urban expansion and property development with the preservation of its cultural identity and environmental sustainability. The strategy focuses on attracting foreign investment for large-scale projects like Belgrade Waterfront while simultaneously addressing challenges like a lack of green spaces, traffic congestion, and a growing disparity between high-end and affordable housing.*

**Aleksandra Sofronijevic**, Minister of Construction, Transport & Infrastructure of Serbia  
**Aleksandar Sapic**, Mayor of Belgrade  
**Mario Kijanovic**, President, FIC Infrastructure & Real Estate Committee  
**Vlaho Kojakovic**, Director, Head of Real Estate, EBRD

### **17.30 End of Summit**