



UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT  
OHRIDSKI – BITOLA  
“1vi Maj” nn  
7000, Bitola, North Macedonia  
[www.uklo.edu.mk](http://www.uklo.edu.mk)

UNIVERSITY OF TETOVA  
“Ilinden” nn  
1200, Tetova, North Macedonia  
[www.unite.edu.mk](http://www.unite.edu.mk)



**SKOPJE SECURITY FORUM 2026**

**“ARCHITECTS OF STABILITY:  
THE SECURITY IDENTITY OF THE WESTERN  
BALKANS”**

Skopje, North Macedonia  
15-16 June 2026

*Organised jointly by the University “St. Kliment Ohridski” – Bitola and University of Tetova.*

**SKOPJE SECURITY FORUM 2026**  
**Architects of Stability: The Security Identity of the Western Balkans**  
*Skopje, North Macedonia, 15-16 June 2026*

#### Venue and Date:

- 15 June 2026 – Assembly of Republic of North Macedonia, Hall of Big Dome
- 16 June 2026 – TBC

#### Working language

English

#### Description

The **Skopje Security Forum 2026** brings together policymakers, academics, diplomats, and security practitioners to discuss the evolving security identity of the Western Balkans in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment. The agenda focuses on key themes such as regional stability, great-power competition, resilience, hybrid threats, and the region's role in European security architecture. Through keynote addresses, expert panels, and interactive discussions, the Forum aims to promote dialogue, strengthen regional cooperation, and generate forward-looking policy recommendations. The second day emphasises future security leadership, exploring emerging challenges including AI, disinformation, energy security, and institutional adaptation.

#### Forum objectives

- To examine the evolving security identity of the Western Balkans in the context of contemporary geopolitical dynamics.
- To foster strategic dialogue between policymakers, academics, and security practitioners on regional stability and cooperation.
- To analyse key challenges such as hybrid threats, great-power competition, disinformation, and energy security in the Western Balkans region.
- To strengthen regional collaboration and promote shared approaches to resilience and crisis response.
- To generate policy-relevant recommendations for enhancing the role of the Western Balkans within the European security architecture.
- To engage the next generation of security leaders through interactive discussions and forward-looking perspectives on emerging risks.

#### Participants

Security and defence analysts, military strategists, security, international relations and legal scholars, judicial practitioners, policymakers, human rights advocates, civil society and media representatives, diplomats, regional organization representatives, security researchers and experts.

#### Organising Committee

- Aleksandar Ivanov, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia, President
- Igor Nedelkovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia
- Jusuf Zejneli, University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Goran Ilik, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia
- Jonce Ivanovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia
- Fatmir Xheladini, University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Agon Memeti, University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Kire Babanoski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia, Secretary

## PROGRAMME

**15 June 2026**

### **09:30-10:00 ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

### **10:00-10:30 OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE**

- Afrim Gashi, President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia (TBC)
- Bekim Sali, Minister of European Affairs (TBC)
- Timco Mucunski, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of North Macedonia (TBC)
- Igor Nedelkovski, Rector of the University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, North Macedonia
- Jusuf Zejneli, Rector of the University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Petra Drexler, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in North Macedonia (TBC)
- Ben Nupnau, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union in North Macedonia (TBC)

### **10:30-11:00 KEYNOTE SPEECH**

- Sebastian von Münchow, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

### **11:00-11:30 COFFEE BREAK AND GROUP PHOTO**

### **11:30-12:30 PANEL 1**

#### **GEOPOLITICS OF THE WESTERN BALKANS AND THE IDEA OF EUROPEAN SECURITY IDENTIFICATION OF THE REGION**

- Julian Chifu, Center for Conflict Prevention & Early Warning, Romania
- Rene. D. Kanayama, ITSTIME – Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues & Managing Emergencies, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy
- Jowanka Jakubek-Lalik, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Poland
- Zhidas Daskalovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Darko Trifunovic, Institute for National and International Security (INIS), Belgrade, Serbia

**Moderator:** Viktorija Chavkoska, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, North Macedonia

### **12:30-13:30 PANEL 2**

#### **THE CLASH OF BIG POWERS AT EUROPE'S PERIPHERY**

- Jagannath Panda, Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA), Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), Sweden
- Nikola Dujovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Vasko Naumovski, University "St. Cyril and Methodius" - Skopje, North Macedonia
- Shaul Shay, Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Israel
- Fatmir Xheladini, University of Tetova, North Macedonia

**Moderator:** Goran Ilik, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia

### **13:30-13:45 COFFEE BREAK**

### **13:45-14:45 PANEL 3**

#### **RESILIENCE, POLYCRISES AND HYBRID THREATS**

- Massimo Pani, Embassy of the Italian Republic in North Macedonia

**SKOPJE SECURITY FORUM 2026**  
**Architects of Stability: The Security Identity of the Western Balkans**  
*Skopje, North Macedonia, 15-16 June 2026*

- Mirela Imshirovic, Institute for Geopolitics, Economics and Security (IGES) Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Qebir Avziu, University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Shaban Jakupi, University of Tetova, North Macedonia
- Participant from Israel (TBC)

**Moderator:** Kire Babanoski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia

**14:45-15:00 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND KEY MESSAGES**

- Aleksandar Ivanov, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia

**15:00-16:00 WORKING LUNCH / COCKTAIL**



**16 June 2026**

**10:30-11:00 WELCOME COFFEE AND OBJECTIVES BRIEFING**

**11:00-12:00 SECURITY INDEX**

- Cane Mojanoski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Marjan Nikolovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Aleksandar Ivanov, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Kire Babanoski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia

**12:00-12:30 COFFEE BREAK**

**12:30-14:00 DISCUSSION**

**Moderator:** TBC

**14:00-14:30 CLOSING REMARKS AND CERTIFICATES**

- Aleksandar Ivanov, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia
- Kire Babanoski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, North Macedonia