

A Quest for Balance in a World Disrupted

Context:

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has dealt a critical blow to the concept of rules-based international order and to international law, but has also ushered in a surprisingly decisive and unified set of responses from the EU and NATO, including their Member States. The responses were as political as they were security-related, indicating a wide and principled rejection of the aggression. A significant number of UN members joined the condemnation, giving multilateralism a jolt of new life, if only for a moment. The EU was shaken out of its ostensible slumber and its internal doubts, and a need to counteract urgently and decisively was recognized on time.

The consequences of this year's crisis will certainly reverberate in the years to come. The 2022 edition of Dubrovnik Forum aims to provide an opportunity to discuss the possible responses to current continental, as well as global crisis-driven geopolitical, geoeconomic and information credibility challenges, including a look at their possible consequences for the Western Balkans.

8th July 2022

Gala dinner hosted by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Mr Andrej Plenković

9th July 2022

Official opening of the Forum

Working sessions

Panel 1 – Predictability: High in Demand, Low in Supply

Focus: Impact of the aggression on the international rules-based order and international law. In addition to providing a sound and viable diagnosis of the current situation, the panel will aim to encourage an open-minded reflection of the “collective West“ on its role in the current global “disorder”, on its reactions to the crisis so far, as well as on how the existing partnerships can be strengthened and new ones explored, in order to bring about more stability and predictability in international relations. **Key considerations:** *the value of international law, UN charter, Security Council; veto; rethinking the rules; reconsidering and reinvigorating multilateralism; strengthening alliances, assembling the like-minded; openness to partnerships; restoring predictability.*

Panel 2 - Raw Power of Raw Materials

Focus: The pandemic and Russian invasion: consequences on the world's economy/trade, with emphasis on energy and food security, supply chains disruptions, and their overall impact on global relations. The panel will touch upon the current responses to these disorders, discuss additional ways to effectively and sustainably counter the new multiplying asymmetric economic challenges. **Key considerations:** *energy and food (in)security; supply chains' disruption(s); socio-economic consequences; interdependences, de-coupling, competitive blocs; sanctions: effectiveness, consequences and their internal and external strategic communication.*

Panel 3 - (Dis)Information: Readers' Digest

Focus: The impact of today's accrued challenges on the reliability of information, the credibility of journalism and communication *en general*. The aggression on Ukraine, examined through the prism of the media, often leaves the rational reader in doubt as one attempts to objectively navigate and properly digest the available vast amounts of information. The panel will aim at further exploring ways to facilitate our citizens' appropriate information absorption. **Key considerations:** *credibility; exposure to (dis)(in)formation; managing information/readers; narrative formation; strategic communication; social networks; propaganda/information war(s); parallel realities; 'fake news', fact-checking; public opinion, (dis)trust.*

Panel 4 - Decision Time in Europe's "Soft Underbelly"... and Beyond

Focus: The consequences in the Western Balkans of the aggression-induced tremors regarding, *inter alia*, energy, food safety and information credibility. The panel will aim to discuss ways to prevent the potential spill-over of the Russian invasion in Ukraine on the Western Balkans, and the possible role of EU enlargement in helping counter it. "Decision time" serves as a call to both the EU, and to the countries of Europe's South-East, but also to the EU's collective and unified approach to membership applications submitted by Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. **Key considerations:** *(in)stability spill-over; disinformation vulnerabilities; energy dependencies and alternatives; EU enlargement news; criteria, commitment, reforms; alignment with EU's foreign and security policy; enlargement limit(ation)s; the geopolitical argument(s) for/in favour of enlargement in Western Balkans and beyond; "European political union".*

Side-event: Presentation of the 2022 edition of OECD's flagship publication *SME Policy Index: Western Balkans and Turkey*.