



HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE¹

**A NEW REFORM AGENDA
FOR A MORE COMPETITIVE SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

DRAFT AGENDA



#OECDseeurope

Tuesday, 24 April 2018

OECD Conference Centre, CC12

2 rue André Pascal

75016 Paris

France

OECD Global Relations
South East Europe

¹ This conference is not a meeting of an official OECD body.

The [OECD](#) is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

Since 2000, the [OECD South East Europe regional programme](#) has been closely collaborating with economies of the region to foster growth, investment and employment through reforms in favour of competitiveness and private sector development. The programme addresses regional and national needs, capacities and reform priorities while translating OECD standards and best practices into actionable advice for South East European (SEE) economies.

■ WHAT IS THE CONFERENCE ABOUT?

In an increasingly interconnected world where competition for markets is more intense than ever before, countries around the globe need to address structural reform challenges to boost their economic competitiveness. Here, an important driver of reform is the prospect of accession to the European Union.

By designing, adopting and implementing the right economic reforms, governments shape their citizens' future and contribute to their countries' productivity, prosperity and resilience.

Most SEE economies are actively pursuing policies to reinvigorate the competitiveness of the region. This requires a sound analytical basis and tailored policy recommendations. It also necessitates a structured process to turn recommendations into successful reforms with a focus on implementation. The SEE Competitiveness Outlook for South East Europe 2018, the OECD flagship publication, complements existing policy initiatives by addressing key challenges in the most crucial policy areas.

The OECD SEE High-Level Conference 2018 therefore aims to provide a forum to debate how reforms and initiatives can improve competitive economic environment and forge inclusive, prosperous and resilient economies for the people of South East Europe.

■ WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONFERENCE?

The conference's scene will be set by the launch of the SEE Competitiveness Outlook for South East Europe 2018, which defines a sustainable economic reform agenda for greater economic competitiveness through productivity gains in South East Europe.

The OECD SEE High-Level Conference 2018 will explore different pathways to enable the region to capture more and better investment, boost competitiveness and inclusive growth. Special attention will be dedicated to the renewed reform agenda, focusing on turning policy recommendations from the SEE Competitiveness Outlook and other analytical reports into actual reforms that deliver the results expected by SEE citizens.

Governments will share regional experiences and examine international best practices in supporting successful reforms.

■ WHO WILL BE THERE?

The conference will bring together high-level representatives from SEE economies, OECD member countries, the European Commission, international partner organisations and further regional stakeholders.

TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 2018

OECD CONFERENCE CENTRE, CC12

08:30-09:00 **REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE**

09:00-09:05 **WELCOME**

Mr Andreas Schaal, Director for Global Relations, OECD

09:05-09:20 **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Mr Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD

09:20-09:50 **OPENING SESSION**

Ms Katarína Matheriová, Deputy Director-General, DG NEAR, European Commission

EU Presidency trio:

Ms Ana Birchall, Deputy Prime Minister, Romania

Ms Liliana Pavlova, Minister of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Bulgaria

Mr Michael Linhart, Secretary General, Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

09:50-10:30 **LAUNCH OF THE OECD SOUTH EAST EUROPE COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2018**

The OECD SEE Competitiveness Outlook is the regional flagship publication for South East Europe, assessing pro-competitiveness policies across six economies from South East Europe across 17 policy dimensions. The publication provides actionable policy recommendations that form a road map for the region going forward.

The OECD SEE Competitiveness Outlook enjoys strong regional ownership with more than 1200 government officials from South East Europe involved in the assessment. This session aims to present key findings and recommendations that are relevant for the whole region and pave the way for a more competitive South East Europe.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2018 OECD SEE COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK:

- **Ms Marzena Kisielewska**, Head of South East Europe Division, OECD
- **Mr Hendrik Bosshammer**, Project Manager, South East Europe Division, OECD
- **Mr Jakob Fexer**, Project Manager, South East Europe Division, OECD

10:30-11:00 **FAMILY PHOTO AND COFFEE BREAK**

11:00-12:45

WALKING THE TALK: TURNING POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS INTO ACTUAL REFORMS

2018 will be an important year for the South East Europe region. SEE economies are now at the centre of the European and transatlantic strategies which present considerable opportunities to be seized in the face of remaining policy challenges to boost economic growth and increase living standards. The renewed prospect of an accession of the Western Balkan economies to the European Union can be a powerful driver of reform. Building on this new momentum, the economies of South East Europe are accelerating the pace of reform in a context of strengthened regional economic governance.

Formulating an accurate diagnosis and issuing the most relevant policy recommendations are only the first steps on the path to successful reforms, and more stumbling blocks lie ahead for policymakers when turning recommendations into concrete reforms. Confronted with a large number of recommendations from different institutions and advisors, potentially diverging conclusions need to be explored and reconciled. Priorities need to be defined, taking into account interconnections between reforms and the most appropriate sequencing of actions. Roles and responsibilities should be made clear through decisive institutional leadership. During implementation, a larger number of reform processes running in parallel require co-ordination and in the framework of an overall development strategy. Capacity issues should be tackled when arising and inevitable failures need to be analysed and learnt from.

Policy makers will discuss their experiences in walking the reform path, sharing concrete examples and current challenges. Policy makers involved in the SEE Competitiveness Outlook preparation will also be able to share how they used this exercise as a self-discovery tool to catalyse reforms in their respective fields and improve the cross-ministry co-ordination of priorities.

MODERATOR:

- **Ms Irena Sodin**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the OECD, Permanent Delegation of Slovenia to the OECD

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS:

- **Mr Ivan Mikloš**, President of MESA10, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Slovak Republic
- **Mr Peter Pogačar**, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Slovenia

TOUR DE TABLE:

- **Tour de table of the SEE representatives:** Successfully translating policy recommendations into effective policy reforms

12:45-13:00

OFFICIAL CLOSING

Mr Andreas Schaal, Director for Global Relations, OECD

13:00-14:30

LUNCH BUFFET – OECD Chateau de la Muette