

16th Bled Strategic Forum discussions focused on the future of Europe

The 16th Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) will take place between 1 and 2 September at Bled, Slovenia. This year's focus of the two-day event is the future of Europe with a call to increase its resilience to respond more effectively to current and future challenges.

The happenings of the first day will, as per tradition, take place in the Bled Festival Hall with opening addresses by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia, Dr Anže Logar, President of the European Council, Mr Charles Michel and the Prime Minister of Slovenia, Mr Janez Janša.

In the discussions of the first day, the leaders of European countries and high representatives of the European Union will address the main challenges for the future of Europe. The speakers discussing the future of Europe include Prime Minister of Czech Republic, Mr Babiš, Prime Minister of Slovakia, Mr Heger, Prime Minister of Slovenia, Mr Janša, President of the European Council, Mr Michel, Prime Minister of Greece, Mr Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Hungary, Mr Orban, Secretary of State of the Holy See, Mr Parolin, Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr Plenković, President of the European Parliament, Mr Sassoli, European Commission Vice-President for Demography and Democracy, Ms Šuica and President of Serbia, Mr Vučić.

The topics discussed on the first day of the Forum will include post-pandemic recovery, green and digital transformation, and the future of EU enlargement process – the latter traditionally one of the most visited discussions at the Forum. The topic's relevance will be even greater this year, as the panel follows last year's adoption of a new enlargement methodology and precedes the EU-WB Summit, to be held in October 2021. Speakers joining the panel include the Prime Minister of Slovenia, Mr Janša, Prime Minister of Montenegro, Mr Krivokapić, Prime Minister of Kosovo, Mr Kurti, Prime Minister of Poland, Mr Morawiecki, Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr Plenković, Prime Minister of Albania, Mr Rama, Prime Minister of North Macedonia, Mr Zaev and European Commissioner for Enlargement, Mr Várhelyi. The discussions on these topics will continue with panels of former European leaders, thinkers and Members of the European Parliament.

The topics of this year's BSF are closely related to the key themes of the second Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, taking place under the slogan "Together. Resilient. Europe." The Presidency slogan is also reflected in the key themes of the second day, as discussions will focus on the post-pandemic economic recovery and recovery of tourism, strengthening the resilience of the EU, strengthening of cyber resilience, connectivity and digitalisation. The topics of the second day also include discussions on building a more effective response to climate change, the importance of transatlantic and

Indo-Pacific cooperation, challenges facing the Eastern Partnership countries, the stability of the Mediterranean, and joint management of the Adriatic Sea.

In addition to the aforementioned high representatives, Bled will also host Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights Michael O'Flaherty, who will attend the Young Bled Strategic Forum (Young BSF), President of the European Investment Bank (EIB), Dr Hoyer, Executive Director of the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), Mr Regling, President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Ms Renaud-Basso, Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Mr Pololikashvili, and Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Mr Geoană. Representatives of the European Space Agency (ESA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and representatives of Google, Microsoft, Facebook, Generali, Knauf Insulation and Toyota will also take part in the forum.

The panels of the Bled Strategic Forum will be broadcast live via the Forum's website ([link to the website](#)) and the BSF social media accounts. All the latest information regarding the programme and speakers can also be found on the Bled Strategic Forum website.

Bled Strategic Forum is the leading international conference in Central and South-Eastern Europe, which has, for the last sixteen years, been an inclusive platform bringing together a diverse structure of people from diplomacy, politics, business, private and public sector, and academia, in order to discuss Europe's key challenges of the 21st century.