

**Speaker:** *Andi Hoxhaj*

**Presentation title:** The securitisation of the EU enlargement policy for the Western Balkans

This article analyses the new EU enlargement policy for the Western Balkans adopted in 2018 and evaluates how the EU enlargement policy has shifted more towards security and migration issues, rather than socio-economic integration. The article explains the EU rationale behind its re-engagement with the Western Balkans, after its absence for more than a decade, and applies the securitisation theory to explain the development of the EU-Western Balkans policy of 2018. This paper analyses how some EU member states have influenced the new EU enlargement policy approach towards the Western Balkans by making more stricter EU accession conditions for Western Balkans and the policy areas of the new EU-Western Balkans policy of 2018 is heavily based on security issues to respond to organised crime, human trafficking, and corruption. However, these policy objects in the new EU-Western Balkans policy of 2018 are mostly aimed at preventing illegal drugs reaching the EU streets and stop organised crime originating from the Western Balkans in the EU. The paper discusses how the EU could go beyond securitisation of its EU enlargement policy for the Western Balkans, by also establishing a more wider-EU policy to address the high drug consumption in the EU as a way to reduce the operation of organised crime networks from the Western Balkans in the EU.