



# (RE)SOURCES OF (IN)STABILITY



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The availability, geographical distribution and allocation of strategic resources (natural, capital, human, etc.) greatly influence relations between different actors and are among the main determinants of stability in the international order.

Humans are living longer, wealthier and better lives than ever. However, growth, wealth and well-being come at a price. The sources of global instability have become more complex, dispersed and unpredictable.

The effective management of strategic resources maintains stability, reduces security risks and improves living standards, while uneven and unjust distribution leads to inequality and a concentration of resources in centres of power. Globalisation has not only polarised society, but also led to the rise of non-state actors, including international corporations. At the peak of human development, the West is now faced with the challenge of maintaining economic growth, preserving the welfare state and securing key democratic decision-making tools. Furthermore, citizens' alienation from institutions, distrust in governing structures and the unfair distribution of resources strengthen nationalist and populist movements and rhetoric.

The battle for (re)sources has only just begun.

What are the (re)sources of (in)stability regarding peace and security, sustainable development and economic progress?

## Conversation with Presidents

## Multilateralism at Crossroads

## Winning the '20s: A Leadership Agenda for the Next Decade

## Let's Talk About Sustainability

### **The (Soft) Power of Creativity: The Entertainment Industry in International Relations**

Soft power – the ability to influence the behaviour of stakeholders in the international community and achieve one's foreign policy goals through means other than coercion – has undergone a substantial shift in the last two decades. With rapid digitalisation, new media, and countless disruptive innovations, the arts and entertainment industries as the principal components of soft power have undergone extensive transformation, becoming even more critical for cultural diplomacy in shaping the modern world.

Musicians, actors, writers, poets and other “creative influencers” represent cultural values and political ideologies. They can reach far beyond the prescribed formats of political meetings and communications, and interact directly with the target audience. Therefore, they have often been involved in foreign policy initiatives to reinforce national interests abroad. Moreover, the last few decades have seen increased awareness and endeavours by artists and other public figures to influence policies at both the national and international level, on a predominantly humanitarian note.

How can artists in the entertainment industry influence national and global affairs in a world of social media interactions and increasing populism? Do they have an obligation to take a stand on critical issues and use their reputation and influence to shape public opinion and political/civic engagement?

### **Night Owl Session – Creating a Resilient and Inclusive Future**

*In partnership with Global Diplomacy Lab.*

Gender inequality and climate change are two critical contemporary concerns. In a democracy, how can we address these concerns in an inclusive manner to create resilient systems? Women are not only a resource; if provided the right platform, they can be valuable agents of stability. And yet, more often than not, they are excluded from the planning process and leadership. By making linkages we can help policy makers think through these complex problems in a holistic manner and put “gender on the agenda”.

### **NATO: What’s Next? – Views on Euro-Atlantic Security 70 Years after the Washington Treaty**

*In partnership with Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia.*

More than seven decades ago, countries on both sides of the Atlantic committed themselves to fostering the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations, to eliminating conflict in their international economic policies and encouraging economic collaboration.

During these 70 years, NATO experienced many changes in the international politico-security landscape. From the aftermath of WWII and the rebuilding of Europe, the 9/11 attacks, through to contemporary crisis management operations and cyber defence, NATO, with the transatlantic bond at its core, has been able to respond and adapt, thus becoming the most successful alliance in history.

Despite these changes, the Alliance’s purpose and *raison d’être* remains to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members. Alongside defence and deterrence in the strict military terms, NATO has set up a spectrum of activities, such as fighting terrorism, promoting stability in its neighbourhood, preventing piracy and helping to address the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe. Through its consultation and cooperation mechanisms, the Alliance strives to promote democratic values, build trust and thus prevent conflict.

The 70th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty is a good time to look back on the path travelled and on the future of the Alliance.

Are we making the most of NATO’s resources? Is the current ‘It’s all about the money!’ mantra simply a public diplomacy problem? By boosting NATO’s hard power while responding to the changed situation, is there a game plan for the future, bearing in mind the senselessness of yet another arms race? What, if anything, does rising NATO scepticism in some circles mean for the Alliance’s future?

### **(Re)sources on the Move**

Migration is the mainstay of human history. Due to need or desire, people have always been on the move. Migration has shaped every nation. When regulated and safe, it is beneficial to all. When well integrated, migrants bring diversity, fresh energy, innovation and dynamism. They form an integral part of well-functioning economies in the receiving countries; through remittances, they contribute to the development of their countries of origin (globally, remittances amount to three times the total sum of development aid). How should governments adapt their migration policies to their labour market needs, and how should they regulate migration?

Our globalised world is being transformed by the fourth industrial revolution, which is no longer about cost efficiency, economies of scale or the size of the economy. The most precious resource of the future is talent. Due to demographic challenges, Europe will need to keep importing talent to stay in the lead of the innovation game.

With their burgeoning population, developing countries have plentiful talent, which can be used to jumpstart their development and leapfrog to the latest advancements; or they can benefit from exporting their talent to developed countries, thus profiting from remittances and from the eventual return of experienced labour. However, if migration is a form of brain drain, leaving countries without talent, these can suffer severe development setbacks. Where is the balance of labour migration that benefits all?

## Protectionism as a Source of Global Instability

Free trade has not been such a hot political topic for many years. After decades of making rules to liberalise trade, we are facing a retreat into protectionism. We are witnessing increased international confrontation, which is reflected in a shift in US trade policy, intensifying a trade conflict primarily with China, the UK vote for Brexit and various nationalist/populist movements across Europe. However, can anything be gained from protectionism? Is the EU the last remaining defender of an open and free international trade system?

There are more signs that ongoing trade wars between the leading global powers might escalate into currency wars, resulting in more volatility in financial markets. The United States is moving away from the “strong dollar” policy in order to increase its exports, narrow the trade deficit and boost profits for its companies. The next economic crisis seems to be lurking around the corner. How will the Eurozone weather the next economic downturn without all the necessary reforms and mechanisms that are not yet in place to finalise the banking union? Will EU governments defend the achievements of the common market or will populist movements force them to defend their national (protectionist) position?

Will a new competing global economic system arise with China in the lead? Surprisingly, it was Xi Jinping who enthused the Davos crowd in 2017 with his full-throated advocacy of an open world. “Those who push for protectionism are shutting themselves inside a dark house,” he said. “They have escaped the rain and clouds outside, but also missed the light and air.”

## Tax Them If You Can: Fiscal (Re)sources in a Globalised World

Benjamin Franklin once said that nothing in this world is certain, except death and taxes. Today, there is a growing sense that, in a globalised and increasingly digitalised economy, being taxed is no longer an inevitable certainty for everyone.

In today's global businesses, value and income are generated in fundamentally new, highly distributed ways, transcending the state system. The very basic assumptions underlying the existing tax rules are being challenged, in particular the notion of unambiguous physical presence. Answers to basic issues such as where and what to tax have thus far proven elusive.

The task for policy makers to find the right solution is complex, given not only the fiscal challenge in many advanced economies, but in many cases also the democratic accountability of the states. This is additionally demanding in an atmosphere of tax shaming fuelled by general public frustration over multilateral corporations getting away with supposedly huge untaxed income.

Furthermore, state indebtedness is on the rise. Downward tax competition among states in many cases results in smaller state budget revenues, which, in turn, has a direct impact on the sustainability of the welfare state and on rising populism. Many argue that the democratic sovereignty of states has been constrained.

On the other hand, voices of caution claim that the “stateless income doctrine” is an oversimplification, and that the corporate income tax system is not broken. To what extent is this an issue of aggressive accounting and tax strategies and to what extent does it erode the corporate tax base?

There is a clear will and increasing political urgency to compel multinational and digital businesses to contribute their share in a fair redistribution of wealth. Given the global nature of the phenomenon, it is not difficult to conclude that a global solution would be best. However, progress at the global level has been slow – the longer the wait for global solutions, the greater the pressure to fill the gap with suboptimal and interim solutions. The trouble with interim solutions is that they have a tendency to become permanent. Which is better: to wait or not to wait?

## Rules-Based International Order or the Return of Geopolitics?

We live at a time less violent and more affluent than ever before. In many respects, this is due to the multilateral system that we have gradually developed over the past 70 years. Although not flawless, the rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core has brought prosperity, the recognition of human rights and dignity, and relative stability.

At the same time, our world is more unpredictable and uncertain than ever before, with new challenges multiplying and old ones never seeming to go away. Their complexity means that they can only rarely

be resolved by one or a few parties alone. Moreover, an old world view seems to be gaining ground again, a view in which the law of the strongest prevails over the strength of the law. A sharp turn from multilateralism towards assertive unilateralism and the shifting balance of power, also spurred by profound economic and technological changes, opens the door to new or re-emerging actors that attempt to reshape the system. Having invested heavily in consolidating a rules-based international order, the EU has become increasingly polarised and recently also preoccupied with its resurgent populist movements.

In an increasingly multipolar and unpredictable world, the case for preserving multilateralism is clear. However, the future of multilateralism can be secured only by realising that certain things will need to be adapted, changed and reformed in order to be sustainable. How do we go about adapting the current multilateral system to its challenges? What is the future of international institutions in a changed geopolitical context and in a world where policy is not just communicated through, but also formed in, the social media?

## **State of Human Rights:**

### **A Conversation with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**

History teaches us that protecting the dignity and rights of everyone is a cornerstone of stable societies that leave no one behind. We should only remind ourselves that almost all current crises and conflicts around the globe, from Syria and Yemen to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Myanmar and Venezuela, are the result of a disregard for human rights. Despite the ever-growing pile of evidence that (gross) violations of human rights fuel instability, we still fail to do enough to fully implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Designed to protect the individual from oppression by the powerful, human rights and fundamental freedoms are pushed aside by populist movements that use people's fears for political gain, by conflict, by economic disenfranchisement and, sometimes, by pure ignorance. This is a global disease, which is rapidly spreading through our societies. Even Europe, which considers itself a stronghold and beacon of human rights, has fallen prey to this epidemic.

Luckily, the picture is not all bleak. Brave individuals are standing up for their human rights and for those of their fellow human beings. Many governments are taking measures to increase the protection and promotion of human rights through a wide array of policies, from domestic violence to climate change. Seven decades after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the realisation that people all around the world possess these fundamental rights and freedoms can no longer be disregarded.

The status of human rights today, why we need to protect them and how they underpin stable societies will be discussed with the leading person responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights at the global level – the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet.

## **Climate Change – Saving the Planet by Going Circular**

*In partnership with Circular Change.*

Amid global fanfare, the Paris Climate Accord was signed less than four years ago. For a brief moment, this seemed to be quite an achievement. However, the lack of progress since then has made it abundantly clear that we still have a long way to go in terms of meaningful climate action. The negative effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, droughts, floods, storms, abnormal weather patterns and water scarcity prove that we have crossed several planetary boundaries. How do we devise a persuasive climate story plan that we will all agree to and be willing to follow collectively? How do we de-carbonise the planet?

The way the global economy treats our limited natural resources deeply influences the Earth's climate. Unless we radically change course, we will soon need another planet. This means that we must change the way we produce and the way we consume. It also means that we need to transform our economic model from linear to circular, in which resources are reused, recycled and remanufactured. What systemic approach and what partnership is required for such a transformation?

Throughout history, resistance to change has presented a formidable obstacle to innovation-based progress. How do we convince those who feel left behind that the transformation to a green economy makes economic sense and creates new jobs? How do we assure them that implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will lead to lasting prosperity on our planet?

## What lies ahead for the New European Commission?

*In partnership with Real Instituto Elcano.*

Faced with some of the most pressing challenges in its history, the European Union is going to the polls, mapping out the course for the next five-year period. With the outcome of this election overshadowed by rising Euroscepticism on the one hand, and determining the fate of the selection process for the presidency of the European Commission on the other, significant changes to the character of the EU and to its inter-institutional dynamics are imminent. EU bodies will continue to address the core issues on the bloc's identity and functioning. Confronted with the bulk of responsibility, the Commission will emerge in a new composition by the end of the year. Following the Juncker Commission and its attempts to consolidate the 'European voice' in areas such as defence and foreign policy, deliberations about the extent to which these and other priorities will be heralded in the coming five-year mandate in light of the changing nature of the Union are coming to the foreground. With rising questions about the future of the EU budget, the potential constellations in the Commission, and its functioning in a polarised institutional framework, this panel will explore what the future holds for this body, thus providing a long-term perspective on institutional development for one of the central actors in the EU policy arena.

### Data – (Re)source of the Future

Exponential technological advances in artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles and biotechnology is transforming our economies, challenging the way we live, and reshaping our identity as human beings. How can governments adapt to these changes? How do we make sure that technologies do not erode the trust in innovation?

In high-speed digitisation, everything is expressed in data, which is fast becoming the currency of the future. The smart use of big data can be a highly effective mechanism for managing and optimising public systems such as health care, social affairs, education, transport, demographics, energy, and security sectors. When implemented in an inclusive manner, digitalisation can tackle inequalities and social stratification in ways hardly imagined before. Managing open complex data makes predicting events easier, thus enabling control and prevention. Innovation is possible only when data flow freely and safely across borders.

On the other hand, data are also a source of power and influence. Technological development has made it possible for every individual with a smartphone to collect, process and interpret data. As a result, personal data are all too often traded and misused. How do we protect this highly valuable currency? How can we draw up the relevant ethical guidelines and a values-based framework to protect sensitive data and privacy?

### (Re)sources in Women's Hands: Tapping the Potential

Women make up half of the world's population. Nevertheless, women earn only about half as much as their male counterparts; 62 million girls worldwide are still being denied their right to an education, and 104 economies still have laws preventing women from working in specific jobs. Twenty years after the groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, women are still rarely included in peace processes.

Neither sustainable development nor peace and security can be achieved without the meaningful participation of women. The potential of one half of the world's population as a resource must not be overlooked, as was rightly recognised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Data show that when women participate in decision-making processes on an equal footing with men, societies become more resilient, integrated and successful.

On the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and on the verge of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights – we will look at how tapping the (re)sources in women's hands can contribute to a peaceful and sustainable future for humankind.



## **Disinformation Campaigns – A Source of Instability in Eastern Partnership Countries**

*In partnership with Centre for European Perspective and the U.S. Department of State.*

More than 2,500 years ago, Aristotle argued in his treatise entitled Rhetoric: “Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds; the first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker (ethos), the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (pathos), and the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (logos).”

These words still hold true in the context of today’s perspective. Unfortunately, malign actors use the same tactics to establish an emotional connection with their audience by means of compelling messages. We have witnessed how disinformation campaigns – either by state actors, profiteers, status seekers, entertainers or even true believers – have tested our Eastern European partners’ resilience and affected their progress towards democratization.

However, effective resilience requires recommitting to Aristotle’s key principles, along with a renewed resolve to use them in a manner that empowers citizens with the information they need to educate themselves and adjust their behaviour – while reducing their vulnerability to manipulation. Strategic communication (StratCom) therefore plays a crucial role in ensuring a country’s resilience to, deterrence of and response to disinformation. How do we increase the credibility (ethos) of a country’s strategic communications?

Although technology has made access to information and communication easier, it has made the necessary discourse more difficult. How do we use StratCom to address this issue?

Some StratCom elements are universal but some must be customised and country-specific. The EU has recently decided to upgrade the capability of its East StratCom Task Force. What kind of StratCom should we develop in order to reach wider audiences of our Eastern Partners?

## **Western Balkans - Europeisation, Democratisation, Shared Responsibility**

*In partnership with Central European Initiative.*

The story of the EU and the Western Balkans should not be one of missed opportunities, changing and unfavourable circumstances, constant election cycles and broken promises. The relationship between the region and the EU should not be held back or running in circles while the world is moving on.

After years of suspended dreams, is it possible to realise that the EU has no magic wand to wave, and that change is not likely to come from the outside; the region needs to do it itself. Is the region ready for change?

The responsibility rests mainly on the shoulders of the region, as progress on EU integration does not automatically bring the Europeisation of society and values, nor does it automatically ensure the highest democratic standards.

Are the countries ready to carry out the necessary reforms and change the persisting paradigms that are not consistent with the EU perception of the rule of law, democracy or political and economic sustainable development?

Are political elites ready to facilitate the change and, fundamentally, is the EU ready to help restore the promise of a better tomorrow for the region?

Is it time to admit that the enlargement process is flawed, and that the Western Balkans’ EU integration needs fresh wind in its sails, including restored trust between the region, its citizens and the European project?

## SIDE-EVENTS

### **Brexit: Where next?**

*In partnership with Chatham House.*

More than three years after the referendum, the UK has yet to agree on how to leave the European Union. After Theresa May's government negotiated a withdrawal agreement with the EU that was rejected three times by the Parliament, British politics is stuck in a stalemate in which there is currently no majority for any way forward. Meanwhile, the EU side steadfastly refuses to reopen negotiations on the terms of the divorce. The panel will discuss the different scenarios around the October deadline, lessons that can be learned from the process and where Britain may end up.

How will the new UK Prime Minister try to break the deadlock in Westminster? If a breakthrough cannot be reached, what are the prospects of both sides agreeing to a further extension?

What would be the implications of a 'No Deal' Brexit, particularly on the island of Ireland? Is 'No Deal' an end point, or another stage in a process that will lead to further negotiations?

If the Withdrawal Agreement is passed in the UK, what will be the key issues in negotiations on the future relationship? Will the UK develop a settled vision for the future, and will the EU remain as united as it has been in phase one?

What might the UK-EU relationship look like in five years?

### **Resources of Modern Diplomacy: Honorary Consuls and Their Renewed Role**

*In partnership with World Federation of Consuls.*

In today's globalised world, with its increasing number of states, mega-cities and a rising global population, diplomacy among states has gained in importance and complexity. However, many states have not proportionally expanded the resources they allocate for consular diplomatic networks; in fact, numerous states have even downsized them. We are also seeing the rise of powerful regional sub-systems within states due to the rise of mega-cities, the populations of which can surpass those of many smaller states. The economic ties among these regional centres across the globe are becoming more pronounced.

How are states dealing with the increased need for their economic/diplomatic presence everywhere around the globe? How are we to address the need to increase connections between large urban centres that in themselves exhibit a powerful political, economic and financial influence?

In this context, honorary consular work is taking on a greater role in diplomacy among states. It is becoming recognisable as an important element of diplomatic and economic activities and a useful upgrade in the development of traditional diplomacy.

While consular diplomacy, together with all supplementary forms of consular-diplomatic service, will not replace traditional diplomacy, it can successfully supplement and upgrade it and make it more cost-effective. The panellists will examine the latest trends in diplomatic practice, discuss how traditional diplomacy will adopt new forms of practice in order to cope with the increasing speed of dissemination and quantity of information, and develop possibilities for enhanced cooperation between the private and public sectors in order to better serve the citizens of today's world.

### **Start:up Slovenia Meet-up with Yossi Vardi**

*In partnership with Start:up Slovenia, organised by Venture Factory, Slovene Enterprise Fund and Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia.*

(by invitation only)



# PREDICTING THE UNPREDICTABLE



Business BSF

3 September 2018

Bled, Slovenia

[www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)

## **AmCham Reinvention Breakfast –**

### **Predicting the Unpredictable: How to Win in the Flow of Constant Change?**

*In partnership with AmCham Slovenia.*

Globalization, technological development, the new digital era, and a variety of other global advancements and challenges have unleashed a far-reaching tsunami, which is disturbing balance everywhere.

The future is uncertain, and stability cannot be taken for granted. The rules of the game for doing business are regularly changing and companies strive to adjust to the fast-moving, constantly changing landscape. These mysterious conditions are challenging companies and leaving shattered careers in its wake. No matter how much we believe we have prepared for it, it is clear that one can ever be prepared enough.

What are the recipes for success in an era of unpredicted (in)stability? Why companies sink and how to reinvent after a business disaster? What are the new forms of corporate reinvention? How to lead in change? Are we ready for the Society 5.0? Who will take the lead?

Rethink your company's relationship with change.

## **The Three Dimensions of Artificial Intelligence: Science, Business & People**

*In partnership with Siemens.*

In 1950, British mathematician Alan Turing published a paper on computing machinery and intelligence posing the question of whether machines can think. While AI research has steadily progressed over the past 60 years, the promises of early AI promoters proved to be overly optimistic, leading to an "AI Winter" of reduced funding and interest in AI research during the 1970s. The AI winter ended in the 1990s as computational power and data storage were advancing to the point at which complex tasks were finally becoming feasible. In 2015, Alphabet's DeepMind launched software to play the ancient game of Go against the best players in the world using an artificial neural network that was trained on thousands of human amateur and professional games to learn how to play. AlphaGo was able to beat the world's best player at the time, Lee Sedol, four games to one in 2016.

More recently, the availability of big data, cloud computing and the associated computational and storage capacity and breakthroughs in an AI technology called "machine learning" have dramatically increased the power, availability, growth and impact of AI.

While artificial intelligence could boost productivity, contribute to economic growth or solve some of our major medical challenges, it could also present an attack on our democratic and ethical values, impinge on our privacy, and leave millions of people jobless. How can we benefit from AI to advance our economies and secure a better quality of life for everyone, while giving up retaining our rights, freedom and human dignity? Can we boost productivity, and design machines to perform tasks that would overburden humans,



while being able to afford basic social protection for everyone? Will automated jobs create more working poor or will they create 4-day working weeks, so that we can spend more time with family and friends?

The panels will bring to the stage three prominent speakers, one for each dimension of artificial intelligence. They will discuss the rapid advances in technological AI development and what these mean for economic landscape as well as for the required social changes.

### **A Climate-Neutral Smart Economy – Greentech**

*In partnership with Center of Energy Efficient Solutions and Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.*

The transition to a green and more environmentally friendly economy (GreenTech) – encompassing social, environmental, climate and energy aspects – is a major challenge for modern society.

Resources (air, water, land, workforce, etc.) come at a price: this should not burden the next generation; on the contrary, it must be paid by current users. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, less environmentally damaging technologies, improved resource management, as well as land, water, waste and energy use policies have all become inevitable and have profoundly affected all sectors of the economy, the transformation of enterprises, organisations, society and individual habits. Indeed, they have brought about a shift in policies and changes to the map of progressive green countries.

Numerous countries, companies and investors have already recognised the advantages and tangible benefits of green economy: financial, environmental and business as well as those related to knowledge, experience and reputation. Green economy is the driving force of innovation in all areas: from technology, business models, education, human resources and forms of cooperation. For this reason precisely the focus should be shifted to green innovation, and funds channelled in the same direction. At the same time, the regulatory environment including green taxes, banks through green investments, insurance companies, international financial institutions and court decisions foster the green economy; the same also goes for activist societal movements.

The discussion on a climate-neutral future economy – GreenTech – will aim at setting relevant political outlines and guidelines. Slovenia has a chance to take the lead in this respect and position its resources (nature and knowledge) on the global map of the drivers of sustainable development. From a country of cheap resources it must develop into the world leader in terms of quality of life and social responsibility.

### **Pitch your Green Idea!**

*In partnership with Center of Energy Efficient Solutions, EIT InnoEnergy, and ABC Accelerator.*

Green startups address today's global climate challenges and tomorrow's risks. Their socially responsible innovative solutions have significant environmental impact and generate economic value. They solve different problems, directly or indirectly reduce emissions, waste and the use of natural resources, and are highly energy efficient.

Green startups are a great example of transition to a climate neutral economy, and thus represent an important opportunity for investors. They attract venture capitalists and responsible green investors, who have the necessary passion and drive to rise above challenges. They are able to grow fast, while helping to protect the environment and health of humanity.

The best way to attract investment is to carry out an excellent pitch about a future-proof idea. Pitching is all about presenting business ideas capable of transforming markets and, consequently, our societies.

At the event, four green startups will present their solutions to potential investors.

### **Invest Talk Slovenia 3.0: Trends and Challenges of Global FDI: A Threat or an Opportunity?**

*In partnership with Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia.*

The intensification of global foreign direct investment (FDI) activity has important implications for both origin and destination countries. However, within FDI landscape there has been a shift in the last decade from traditionally advanced economies to emerging market economies (EMEs), both as a source of, and destination for, investments, attracting a growing share of FDI flows. Global FDI flows are declining, which is in contrast to the accelerated growth in GDP and trade.

New investment regulations in 2017 mainly reflected concerns about national security and foreign ownership of land and natural resources, and intensified the scrutiny of foreign takeovers, in particular of strategic assets and technology firms. Since the EU clearly has one of the world's most open investment regimes – with more than 35% of total EU assets belonging to foreign-owned companies – it will be interesting to get a glimpse of the Union's future strategy and its impact on Slovenia.

What are FDI trends and drivers from global and EU perspectives? What is the purpose of the recently adopted EU investment screening framework? What are the insights of the state and investment promotion agencies (IPAs), and what is the investor perspective of the country investment climate and of the risks and benefits when deciding where to invest?

### **Tourism for All Destinations: Dispersal over Place and Time**

*In partnership with Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenian Tourist Board.*

Tourism is a tool for peace and for achieving a balance between different, more and less developed, parts of the world. International tourism is growing exponentially. Countries, destinations and companies in the global tourism market are “fighting a sophisticated battle” for tourists. This important economic branch brings prosperity and generates 10% of global GDP, creates one in 10 jobs and accounts for 30% of services exports.

Digitalisation has transformed concepts of destination promotion. In the era of Industry 4.0 and hyperconnectivity, tourists easily exchange advice about where and when to travel. Instagrammable locations gain further popularity, while others struggle to catch the attention of visitors, in spite of hard efforts. Owing to new technologies and a variety of tourist capacities, travel has become cheaper and more accessible to wider groups of people and different generations. The need to travel is becoming a fundamental need of many who wish to visit the most popular and best-rated global destinations.

According to experts, modern technologies and smart solutions are among the most powerful tools. Can we develop sustainable tourism to satisfy tourism stakeholders, visitors and local residents? Do we possess enough knowledge, skills and other resources to steer tourist flows?

At this year's tourism panel within the framework of the Bled Strategic Forum, we will try to provide practical strategies on how to address the growth of tourism in Europe to the benefit of all. Some highly respected experts will share with us their ideas and experiences.



# YOUTH AS A (FUTURE) (RE)SOURCE



Young BSF

31 August – 2 September 2019  
Ljubljana/Bled, Slovenija  
[www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)

## Youth as a (Future) (Re)source

Recently, the European Commission's DG for Education and Culture carried out a study on the "State of young people and youth policy in Europe". The study argues that there are two dominant discourses pertaining to the youth, i.e.: the image of 'Youth as a Resource' and 'Youth as a Problem'. Typically, the image of 'youth as a resource' prevails in periods of stability, economic growth and social reforms, while the image of youth 'as a problem' prevails in periods of economic crisis or political instability. At such times, the media portray youth as 'dangerous', 'deviant', 'criminal', and 'violent'. The young people attending this year's Young BSF will prove that youth is a valuable resource in several ways. They are not valued merely as potential contributors to society, in their status as adults-to-be, but also in their present status as young people, contributing to society precisely because they are young, full of innovative ideas and capable of out-of-the-box thinking. They will also prove that they are able to act as agents, or be conceptualised as such, being both responsible for, and capable of, participating in the on-going construction of reality and the future of themselves and of society.

## SIDE-EVENT

### Conflict and Cooperation in the Mediterranean: Mare Nostrum or Global Space?

*In partnership with Istituto Affari Internazionali.*

Globalising trends in a number of sectors, including migration, environment, maritime activities, trade and investment, and security have radically transformed the Mediterranean region. Its characterisation as "Mare Nostrum" or "European lake" appears more misleading today than ever. Political and economic links of South-Mediterranean with neighbouring areas such as the Gulf and the Sahel have strengthened. The region continues to be of crucial strategic importance for Europe and the West, but other external powers, most notably Russia and China, have considerably expanded their influence. Non-state actors, including civil society organizations and militant groups capable of operating across the region are playing an increasingly prominent role.

At the same time, the southern rim of the Mediterranean remains highly fragmented due to the ongoing wars in Syria and Libya, heightening tensions in interstate relations and persistent internal conflict dynamics, often fuelled by the same popular claims that sparked off the Arab uprising in 2011. South-European states, in turn, are still coping with the long-term effects of the economic crisis limiting their regional economic projection and political engagement.

Is a renewed effort to promote regional cooperation a realistic proposition in this context? What are the shortcomings and potentials of the ongoing regional cooperation initiatives led by the EU, the UN, NATO and the OSCE? Is a convergence of efforts among all key players envisageable? What are the most promising policy fields for developing new forms of regional cooperation?

## About the Bled Strategic Forum (BSF)

After more than a decade, Bled Strategic Forum has evolved into a leading international conference in Central and South-Eastern Europe, bringing together a diverse set of participants, including heads of state and government, ministers, diplomats, businesspeople, scholars and experts, youth, and media from around the world. The Forum focuses on engaging the participants in discussions about, and seeking out-of-the-box solutions for, contemporary regional and global challenges. It also provides an excellent opportunity for tailored bilateral and multilateral meetings and networking with prominent regional and global actors from the diplomatic, political, business, science, and innovation spheres.

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