



The Amsterdam Centre for European Studies Practitioner Engagement Series
Organized by Dimitris Bouris

The European Union and state-building in the Western Balkans

Date: 26 November 2018, 13:00 – 15:00

Venue: Roeterseiland Campus, Room REC B2.08

In November 1993, while the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU was being launched, Sarajevo was under siege. Since then, EU external action has developed in close relations with its involvement in the Western Balkans. The region has been theatre of several EU civil and military missions, with important roles in the reform of the security sectors, some of which (EUFOR Althea and EULEX Kosovo) are still in place. At the same time, a political process of ‘stabilisation and association’ was launched, with binding agreements between each country and the EU. These agreements formed the basis for the roll-out of the EU enlargement process – now refocused on its ‘fundamentals’: rule of law and fundamental rights, economic governance, public administration reform – and of its pre-accession financial assistance (IPA). Today accession negotiations are ongoing with Serbia and Montenegro, and the EU is preparing to opening them with Albania and with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia too; Bosnia and Herzegovina also formally applied for EU accession in 2016. In February 2018, the Commission published a new strategy for the Western Balkans that envisages 2025 as a best-case scenario for the EU accession of the first new members states from the region. Given the challenge of enlargement-fatigue in the EU and the influence of other foreign powers in the region, is the EU enlargement process still the best instrument for peacebuilding and state-building transformations in the Western Balkans?

Speakers

Dr. Giulio Venneri, Policy Officer (Political Desk Albania), European Commission DG NEAR.

Dr. Davide Denti, Policy Officer (fundamental rights desk Bosnia and Herzegovina), European Commission DG NEAR.