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SAFEGUARDING THE FUTURE

Leaders' Panel

Current developments in the international community give a cause for concern; the number of vectors of instability is on the rise, and the inability to deal with them effectively might lead to serious regional and global negative security-policy scenarios. Our ability or inability to successfully deal with these challenges in the future will depend on our capacity for integration, and will be based on solidarity, responsiveness, and respect for universal standards, norms and values.

Water Risks in Global Perspectives

The 2015 World Economic Forum ranked water crises as a top global risk. The population affected by lack of drinking water, pollution, catastrophic floods and droughts as well as problems related to cross-border water management have increasingly been identified as serious threats to peace and sustainable development. Security of water supply is not an isolated threat, but is in many ways related to the security of food and energy supply, while global climate changes are continuously increasing these risks. Migration is another important consequence of threatened water security. Global trends will continue to aggravate this threat. It is therefore of vital importance for the international community to establish adequate instruments and mechanisms to enable effective responses to the challenges posed by these factors. Strong political will and incentives for its mobilisation are particularly important in positioning water as an essential factor of cooperation and instrument of peace.

European Union: Integration vs. Disintegration

The European Union found itself amidst the centre of geostrategic shifts, which considerably undermined faith in its structures and decision-making processes, as well as the weakening trust and solidarity among its member states, particularly with regard to ensuring safety and effective protection of its external borders. The increasing migration wave, terrorist attacks, instability in our immediate neighbourhood and internal tensions pose new challenges, which will require clear solutions based on European values, norms and past achievements. In this context, the main emphasis is on the economic stability, which in the last few years has been severely tested, while an effectively functioning Economic and Monetary Union is still a long way off. The process of creating an ever closer Union is no longer a self-evident response to these challenges, and some member states demands for a redefinition of its relations with the Union might put the debate about its future in a completely different context.

Energy Geopolitics

The panel on energy geopolitics will deal with new international challenges posed by global energy trends by the year 2040 on the basis of key indicators obtained from the most authoritative global survey published annually by the International Energy Agency. It will be centred around changes in international relations arising from, among other things, global fluctuations in the demand for energy, the prices of energy products, diversification of oil suppliers, increased competitiveness in the global gas market, particularly following the entry of U.S. liquefied natural gas exports into the world market, security risks, mostly related to terrorism, and efforts aimed at achieving universal access to energy and eradicating energy poverty. Special attention will be devoted to the geopolitical consequences of the Paris Climate Agreement, which opens possibilities for new investments in sustainable low-carbon technologies and innovative energy solutions.

Human Security: You and I Matter

Most often political discussions are dominated by talks of national security and the states' military capabilities in the event of armed conflicts and terrorist attacks. Security is therefore primarily perceived in

terms of threats to the state, and not to the individual. Within this perception, many other factors threatening the lives of individuals and consequently the security of states are frequently ignored. Lasting peace and security cannot be achieved without adequate protection of individuals' human rights and their protection against other threats to which they are exposed at home, within their community, their state and globally. The panel will therefore deal with human security, focussing on the individual, and highlight various factors threatening the individual both in terms of the developmental and security aspects and human rights protection.

Reinventing European Security

Daesh terrorist attacks on European soil, conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis, as well as hybrid and cyber threats show that security in the Euro-Atlantic area cannot be taken for granted. Effectively adapting European security and defence structures to the current geostrategic reality and to new types of threat is vital for ensuring long-term stability and security on the European continent. What message does the erosion of security budgets and capabilities send to our allies? What is the European Allies' vision of NATO's adaptation (Warsaw Summit)? On what grounds can engagement with Russia be re-established? Is the system of military transparency and predictability in the framework of OSCE still credible or is it time to re-define it? What is the common denominator of concrete cooperation between the EU and NATO?

Western Balkans: is the EU still a pull factor?

So far, the enlargement process has been one of the most successful EU policies. Each group of new members seems to have brought fresh strength and additional quality to the European Union family. The process was becoming increasingly demanding, but the attraction of the EU prevailed. As before, for the countries of the Western Balkans, progress on the EU path remains the best motivator for reforms, sustainable progress and stability.

However, in the past couple of years a number of crises have abruptly exposed the EU's vulnerabilities and weaknesses. For how long can the EU retain its pull factor and attractiveness?

In times of crisis, when the EU faces the challenge of agreeing upon an efficient response to migration and ensuring the appropriate treatment of refugees, coordination and partnership between the EU and candidate countries is not only necessary, but should be recognised as a precondition for any kind of positive results.

At the point when some of the Western Balkan leaders are openly stating that the EU might no longer be very desirable, it is perhaps time to recognise the need to speed up some processes, deepen cooperation and engage in a new kind of discussion. Have we come to the point of recognising that the EU is something the Western Balkans desire, and the Western Balkans is something the EU needs?

Night Owl Session – Ordinary radical(s): In Search of a Meaningful Response

The Night Owl Session will be held in cooperation with Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL) an international cross-sectoral platform for exploring a more inclusive diplomacy, which goes beyond traditional politics. GDL is an initiative of Germany's Federal Foreign Office and several private foundations.

The discussion will be centred around preventive action, whereby participants will address the reasons for the increasing radicalization of young people and reflect on opportunities for education, employment and inclusion, in an innovative and collaborative format.

How can we get to the roots of conflicts and lack of understanding leading to intolerance and extreme acts, such as terrorist attacks? The attacks in Paris resulted in a unified and very clear condemnation, as well as in the unanimous response of the media with numerous analyses and reflective editorials in the world press. But attacks are occurring everywhere. How do we respond and what action is taken when attacks target places outside the Western hemisphere? The global terrorist threat dictates a clear, unified and determined response to attacks, regardless of their geographical location. In addition to security measures, the fight against terrorism must include actions aimed at more successful integration, better education, future perspectives, and the eradication of poverty, as well as in-depth analysis of nationalist and religious conflicts in various parts of the world.

Hidden Dimensions of International Relations – The Key Disruption of the Future

World is turning into a global village, technological progress reduces distances, and global political and economic processes enable countless new opportunities. Meanwhile, we face growing inequality, increased security threats arising along a number of social axes.

Growing tensions are already threatening security around the world, and new challenges and new threats may further erode trust between generations, nations, states, interest and social groups. This might generate yet more tension and additional threats. Trust is vital for ensuring a future of well-being and security, despite inevitable disruptions.

However, complex and dynamic challenges can no longer be resolved through approaches to which we have grown accustomed. We will address the issue of trust by seeking answers to the question of how we measure it, whether we understand the factors that affect it and how we can contribute to reversing the global trend of eroding trust in all social contexts.

Hidden Dimensions – Terrorism and the Media: An Uneasy Relationship

The relationship between terrorism and the media has long been clear. However, due to advancements in communication and information technologies, this relationship has grown strong and widely influential. Mutual interaction, dependency and inseparability have characterised their coexistence. By providing extensive media attention on TV stations, newspapers, radio and the internet, the terrorists take use of the media coverage to spread their message, create fear and recruit followers. Without the media, only a small number of people would know that an attack has taken place, while terrorists would not have been able to use such coverage for promoting their own agendas. How can we rethink the sensationalist coverage of terrorism and stop providing terrorists a free media platform? To what degree can the media itself be held responsible for providing terrorism with the “oxygen of publicity”? Is it possible for the media to objectively report about terrorists without promoting their actions and instigating fear?



Digital Transformation

Changing all sectors of our economies, digital transformation is becoming the number one priority in strategies of today's businesses and institutions. As such, it offers a prospective development opportunity for merging the innovative use of digital technologies and services at all levels of operation: citizens, government and society. Moreover, connecting the business sector, state, academia, researchers and start-ups into an intelligent and effective ecosystem has the potential to drive the next stage of growth and competitiveness of the European economy.

Smart Cities and Cognitive Communities

Taking use of the information and communications technologies in order to enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of our urban populations is already rapidly advancing us to the age of smart cities. However, while the concept of smart cities is already well established, the next step is transforming these urban environments into comprehensive, intelligent and cognitive communities. Anything embedded with electronics, software, sensors, and network connectivity, will enable these objects to collect and exchange data – which is key to tackling inefficiency. The gathered information and knowledge will enable us to understand what is happening in our cities, how our communities are evolving, and how a better quality of life can be enabled.

Mobility and the Future of Automotive Industry

The increasingly advanced and globalised world is challenging our well-established concepts of mobility, which has a significant impact on the development of the automotive industry, both in terms of introducing new technologies and in perceiving new realities concerning the use of motor vehicles. From this viewpoint, the central challenge for the automotive industry will be its own ability to adapt to changes in the modern world while taking into consideration new environmental, social and economic realities of contemporary societies.

Security and Sustainability in Tourism

Tourism depends heavily on global security. The key threat in 2016 is terrorism, with migration only increasing the challenges to security. In future, in addition to political refugees and economic migrants, Europe will also have to face climate migrants. Living conditions and economic woes will force many people in threatened areas, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, to migrate north.

Today, the concept of sustainability is more topical than ever – in addition to political consensus – balanced environmental, social, economic, and climatic aspects of life are essential for containing migration and ensuring global security. Tourists need the assurance of safety at every step – a safe purchase, safe trip, safe accommodation, safe food, safe air, water and environment.

Europe faces major security challenges. Slovenia is considered a safe and green country, both according to global indexes and in the perception of actual and potential tourists, but this view can be radically affected by global threats. Therefore, in the light of Ljubljana being the 2016 European Green Capital and of World Green Day, which is taking place in Slovenia this year, tourism and sustainability experts will help us answer questions of global security challenges and find sustainability in the tourism industry, so that – despite numerous obstacles – the desired results in tourism can be achieved in the future.



Young Bled Strategic Forum (Young BSF)

The Young BSF has become a unique meeting place for a diverse array of young leaders, offering them a platform to share their visions, exchange ideas and network with their peers, prominent diplomats, politicians, academics and entrepreneurs from around the world.

Each year, it features a select group of young leaders, who engage in interactive dialogue on pressing issues, and addresses inventive approaches to promoting change and meeting complex challenges. As a generator of ideas and creative solutions, the Young BSF has become an engine of change.

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