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Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence, University of the Peloponnese, Greece

CALL FOR PAPERS

The EU and the Balkans at the End of the Second Decade of the 21st Century

An International Conference

University of the Peloponnese, Corinth, Greece 4-5 June 2018

Eleven years after Romania and Bulgaria became full EU members on the 1st of January 2007 and nearly fifteen years after the EU officially offered an 'EU future' to the remaining (Western) Balkan states with the adoption of the Thessaloniki Agenda in June 2003, EU relations with all the countries in this region remain 'complex' at best. Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia (so far the only Western Balkan state able to fulfil the tightened EU accession conditions since 2006, becoming the newest EU member in 2013), have been considered as somewhat 'incomplete' members of the EU which still need to work hard to reach the level of democratisation and socio-economic standards set by the 'old' EU members. Although the prospects for the acceleration of the (almost stalled) integration of several official candidates and two potential candidates for EU membership from the Western Balkans have considerably improved after the defeat of Euro-sceptic parties in the Dutch and particularly French elections in the first half of 2017, the 'EU future' of these countries remains uncertain as they still need to overcome many domestic (primarily political) challenges as well as the reluctance of large circle(s) of the EU's political elite to accept the inevitability of their 'EU future'. Moreover, pressured by a series of crises that since the early 2010s have negatively affected the prospects for further European integration, particularly Brexit, EU officials and political leaders have continued to postpone the final resolution to the sovereign debt crisis in Greece and seem to have forgotten that Erdogan's Turkey is still an official candidate for EU membership.

The conference seeks to address the relationship between the EU and the political and socio-economic developments in the Balkan states from various angles. The conference organisers welcome papers from a broad range of disciplines, including but not limited to: political science, history, economics, sociology and cultural studies. The following **thematic topics** are expected to be discussed in greater detail:

1. The remaining challenges and obstacles to EU accession of the Western Balkan candidates and potential candidates for EU membership

2. The EU's peace and statehood-building efforts in the Western Balkans – failures and achievements
3. The EU's Structural Funds in South-East Europe: the impact on governance
4. EU pre-accession aid to the Western Balkans: lessons (not) learned
5. Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia: new EU members with 'Balkan problems'
6. The EU and the (solution of the) Greek crisis
7. Is Turkey still a candidate for EU membership?

Please, submit abstracts of about 250 words with your name, title and affiliation to the conference administrative coordinator, **Ms. Eleni Georgoulia** (elenigeorgoulia@uop.gr), by **20 February 2018**. The organisers expect to inform participants of the acceptance of their papers by **12 March 2018**. The conference organisers expect to publish one or more edited volumes (a book or a special journal issue) from the selected papers presented at the conference. Participants will be invited after the conference to submit an extended and enhanced version of their papers for possible publication. The accepted participants should register and pay a moderate conference fee (for the purposes of catering) of 25 Euro by 20 April 2018. The conference dinner will be arranged for those participants who express an interest.

For any further information please contact the conference administrative coordinator, **Ms. Eleni Georgoulia**, or one of the programme coordinators listed below.

Keynote speakers:

Professor Ludger Kühnhardt, Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung (ZEI)/ Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI), University of Bonn, Germany.

Dr. William Bartlett, Senior Research Fellow, European Institute, LSE, London, UK.

Conference Organisers:

Dr. Nikolaos Tzifakis, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of the Peloponnese.

Dr. Milenko Petrovic, Jean Monnet Chair, National Centre for Research on Europe, Senior Lecturer Above the Bar, University of Canterbury.

Conference Programme Coordinators:

Thematic topics 1, 2 and 5: Dr. Milenko Petrovic, Jean Monnet Chair, National Centre for Research on Europe, Senior Lecturer Above the Bar, University of Canterbury.

Email: milenko.petrovic@canterbury.ac.nz

Thematic Topic 3 and 4: Dr. Manos Papazoglou, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of the Peloponnese.

Email: epapaz@yahoo.gr

Thematic Topic 6 and 7: Dr. Efstathios T. Fakiolas, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of the Peloponnese.

Email: fakiolas@uop.gr