



**Berlin  
Process**



**Joint Science  
Conference**  
BERLIN PROCESS

**Berlin Process 2026**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Stakeholders of the  
Science, Education, Research and Innovation Pillar**  
**12–14 October 2026 \* Podgorica**

***Western Balkans in Europe: People – Innovation – Transformation***

**PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME**

<b>Monday * 12 October 2026</b>	
<b>Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (CANU) * Ulica Rista Stijovića 5, 81000 Podgorica</b>	
During the day	Arrival of participants and accommodation at <a href="#">Hotel Ramada****</a> Bulevar Save Kovačevića 74, 81000 Podgorica, Montenegro
16:30– 16:45	Transfer by bus from hotel to CANU
16:45 – 17:15	Registration and refreshments
17:15– 17:45	<b>Official Opening</b> Ljubiša Stanković, President, Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts Vladimir Božović, Rector, University of Montenegro Anđela Jakšić-Stojanović, Minister of Education, Science and Innovation of Montenegro (tbc) Bettina Rockenbach, President, German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
17:45 – 19:15	<b>Introduction and Framing</b> <i>This session will establish the conference framework by examining past achievements and anticipating systemic changes within the scientific systems and knowledge economies of the Western Balkans and wider Europe.</i>

	<p><i>Panellists will address the conference's three core topics: (1) transformation of the higher education sector amidst demographic shifts; (2) economic transformation through innovation, competition, and emerging technologies; and (3) state modernisation through the application of scientific expertise to deliver evidence-based solutions in critical sectors, enhancing resilience and sustainability.</i></p> <p><b>Keynote</b></p> <p><b>Conversation with Researchers and Innovators</b></p>
19:15 – 20:00	Transfer by bus to restaurant
19:30 – 21:00	<p><b>Welcome dinner</b></p> <p><a href="#">Restaurant Imanje Knjaz</a> (tbd)</p>
21:00	Transfer back to hotel
<p><b>Tuesday * 13 October 2026</b></p> <p><b>University of Montenegro (UCG) * Cetinjski Put 2, 81000 Podgorica</b></p>	
09:30 – 10:00	Transfer by bus from hotel to UCG
10:00 – 10:10	<p><b>Course of Action</b></p> <p>Representatives of CANU &amp; UCG</p>
10:10 – 11:30	<p><b>Session #1: Anticipating Transformations in the Higher Education System</b></p> <p><i>This session will explore anticipated transformations in higher education systems across the Western Balkans and wider Europe, addressing: (1) demographic shifts, including depopulation and declining student numbers; (2) integration of artificial intelligence-based technologies in learning; (3) evolving skills development, career trajectories for young people, and labour market dynamics; (4) emerging models of university strategic internationalisation; and (5) financial and performance-related pressures on higher education institutions.</i></p>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 13:15	<p><b>Session #2: Recalibrating Innovation and Local Innovation Ecosystems</b></p> <p><i>This session will explore innovation generation and valorisation as critical components of Europe-wide economic restructuring (change of economic models), connecting developments in the Western Balkans with EU debates (European Innovation Area, European Research Area, industrial policy, strategic autonomy, and other relevant sectoral policies). The session addresses: (1) the knowledge value chain from fundamental and applied research through demonstration to innovation valorisation (commercialisation, dissemination, intellectual property, start-ups, and scale-ups); (2) different forms of transformative innovation with their implementation specifics; and (3) innovation-supportive ecosystems at local and regional levels, including incentive structures, strategic networks with industry, and Single Market integration, and dual-use effects.</i></p>
13:15 – 14:00	Lunch break

14:00 – 15:15	<p><b>Session #3: Redefining the Contribution of Sound Scientific Systems to State Modernisation</b></p> <p><i>This session will connect current European strategic discourse on the role of scientific expertise (science-for-policy) in state modernisation and governance to Western Balkans contexts. Key areas include: (1) developing autonomous capabilities in strategic sectors, including energy, critical raw materials, water resources, bioeconomy, transport, and logistics; (2) digital transformation of infrastructure and public services; and (3) integrating systemic autonomy with resilient sustainability (inter alia, preparedness, regeneration, adaptation) through long-term policy agenda setting.</i></p>
15:15 – 15:45	Coffee break
15:45 – 16:15	<p><b>Wrap-up for the Joint Statement</b></p> <p><i>This session will synthesise key conclusions from the conference discussions, reflecting the common understanding achieved amongst participants. It will structure preliminary recommendations for incorporation into the Joint Statement and formulate a forward-looking message for the Western Balkans Summit of Heads of State and Government in Podgorica on 22 October 2026.</i></p>
16:30 – 17:45	Transfer by bus to a location outside Podgorica (tbd)
17:45 – 20:00	<b>Dinner</b>
20:00 – 21:00	Transfer by bus back to hotel
<p><b>Wednesday * 14 October 2026</b></p> <p><b>Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts (CANU) * Ulica Rista Stijovića 5, 81000 Podgorica</b></p>	
09:30 – 10:00	Transfer by bus to CANU
10:00 – 11:30	<p><b>Political Panel</b></p> <p><i>This outreach session will present and discuss briefly the conference's key conclusions, core messages, and structured recommendations to representatives of the Western Balkans Summit of Heads of State and Government and the European Commission.</i></p> <p><b>Keynote</b></p> <p>High-level representative of the Government of Montenegro (tbd)</p> <p>Presentations of the conclusions followed by Q&amp;A</p> <p>With the participation of ambassadors of the 16 Berlin Process Countries and the Head of Mission of the Representation of the European Union to Montenegro</p>
11:30 – 12:30	Farewell brunch
Afterwards	Departure

# LIST OF INVITEES

<b>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: NATIONAL ACADEMIES</b>
Academy of Sciences of Albania
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts
French Académie des sciences
German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina
Academy of Athens
Italian Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei
Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosova
Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts
Polish Academy of Sciences
Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts
Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
The UK Royal Society
<b>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: UNIVERSITIES</b>
University of Tirana
Polytechnic University of Tirana
Agricultural University of Tirana
University of Sarajevo
University of Banja Luka
University of Mostar
University of Tuzla
University of Zagreb

University of Rijeka
University of Zadar
University of Prishtina
University of Mitrovica
University of Applied Sciences of Ferizaj
University of Montenegro
University of Skopje
University of Štip
University of Bitola
Southeast European University of Tetovo
University of Belgrade
University of Niš
University of Novi Sad
University of Kragujevac
University of Ljubljana
University of Maribor
European University Institute
College of Europe Tirana Campus
<b>INSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES: RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS</b>
Italian National Research Council
Jožef Stefan Institute
Ruđer Bošković Institute
<b>DISTINGUISHED <i>AD PERSONAM</i> EXPERTS</b>
Several ad personam experts from research and innovation and policy

Subject to change  
As of 4 June 2026

**Organised by**



**Leopoldina**  
Nationale Akademie  
der Wissenschaften

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