



European Studies Department, Faculty of Philosophy
“Jean Monnet” Centre of Excellence
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

with the support of

Hanns Seidel Foundation
and
Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies¹

organises

Thirteenth International Scientific Conference “Risks and Prospects for Europe”

13-14 May 2026, Sofia²

New Conference Hall, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Rectorate
Address: 15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd

¹ The conference receives financial support from the European Parliament. Sole liability rests with the organiser, the European Parliament is not responsible for the activity.

² The conference is planned as follows: 13 May 2026 (Wednesday, full day) and 14 May 2026 (Thursday, morning session only)

13 May 2026 (Wednesday)

Conference venue:

New Conference Hall, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Rectorate
Address: 15, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd

09.00 – 09.30	Registration
09.30 – 10.00	Opening of the conference ○ Prof. Sonya Karabeliova, DSc – Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (tbc) ○ Assoc. Prof. Nikolina Tsvetkova, PhD – Head of the European Studies Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” ○ Yordanka Chobanova – Head of the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria (tbc) ○ Teodor Stoychev – Head of the European Parliament Representation in Bulgaria ○ Prof. Ingrid Shikova, PhD – European Studies Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” – Chairperson of the Scientific and Organizing Committee
10.00 – 11.00	First panel: RISKS AND PROSPECTS FOR EUROPE – EU Economic Governance and Strategic Resilience <i>Moderator:</i> Prof. Ingrid Shikova, PhD ○ Assoc. Prof. Kaloyan Simeonov, D.Sc. and Ralitsa Stoycheva, PhD candidate, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The Digital Euro as a Strategic Response to global and EU challenges</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Tsvetan Manchev, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The EU's Risky Expansionary Austerity Policy Strategy</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Georgiana Ciceo, Faculty of European Studies, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca – <i>From Stability to Preparedness: Transforming the EU Budget at a Time of Permanent Crisis</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Roksana Trifonova, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The Economic Role of EU-India Trade Relations in Europe's Post-Crisis Recovery</i> ○ Discussion
11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break

11.30 – 12.45	Continuation of the first panel: RISKS AND PROSPECTS FOR EUROPE – Security, Defence and Democratic Resilience <i>Moderator:</i> Assoc. Prof. Nikolina Tsvetkova, PhD ○ Assist. Prof. Vihar Georgiev, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>Constructive Ambiguity as Institutional Design: Article 42(7) TEU and the Limits of EU Mutual Defence</i> ○ Garvan Walshe, PhD, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies – <i>The centre right and the defence of democracy</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Iskren Ivanov, PhD, Department of Political Science, Sofia University – <i>European Defence à La Carte: Do We Need Russia back?</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Jean Crombois, PhD, American University in Bulgaria – <i>European Defense and Security: Views from Central and Eastern Europe</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Branimir Stanimirov, PhD, Department of Politics and European Studies, American University in Bulgaria – <i>Fighting on or giving up? The persistent weaknesses of the EU's approach to stalled democratisation. The case of Bulgaria</i> ○ Discussion
12.45 – 13.45	Lunch
13.45 – 14.15	KEYNOTE SPEECH: <i>Moderator:</i> Prof. Ingrid Shikova, PhD ○ Matthias Waechter – Director General of Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE) – <i>Current Geopolitical Risks as Challenges and Opportunities for European Unity</i>
14.15 – 15.15	Continuation of the first panel: RISKS AND PROSPECTS FOR EUROPE - The European Union between Polycrisis and Political Maturity <i>Moderator:</i> Assist. Prof. Miruna Andreea Balosin, PhD ○ Prof. Ingrid Shikova, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The European Union: From Collective Grief to Political Maturity?</i> ○ Prof. Anna Krasteva, Doctor honoris causa of University of Lille, France, – <i>The Mega Crises: Climate, Migration, Post-democratic. Risks and Prospects for Europe</i>

	○ Assist. Prof. Gergana Radoykova, PhD, Department of Political Science, Sofia University – <i>The European Union of Different Speeds: A Pragmatic Response to Crises or an Institutional Compromise</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Monika Moraliyska, PhD, University of National and World Economy (UNWE) – <i>From Interdependence to Resilience: The Evolution of European Strategic Autonomy</i> ○ Discussion
15.15 – 15.45	Coffee break
15.45 – 16.45	Second Panel: EUROPEAN VALUES, SOCIETY, EDUCATION AND CULTURE <i>Moderator: Assist. Prof. Branimir Stanimirov, PhD</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Nikolina Tsvetkova, PhD and Assist. Prof. Desislava Karaasenova, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The Transform4Europe Experience: Challenges and Opportunities in Cross-Border Microcredentialing</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Natasza Styczyńska, PhD, Institute of European Studies, Jagiellonian University Kraków – <i>Fighting for EU Values? Student Attitudes toward the EU in Serbia's 2024–2025 Protests</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Miruna Andreea Balosin, PhD, Faculty of European Studies, Babes-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca – <i>Civil Society and the Protection of Fundamental Rights in EU AI Governance</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Alexandra Milanova, PhD, Institute of Balkan Studies and Centre of Thracology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – <i>Culture Compass for Europe: The role of culture in shaping the EU's future</i> ○ Discussion
16.45 – 17.00	End of the first day of the conference

14 May 2026 (Thursday)

Conference venue:

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09.00 – 09.30	Registration – second day
09.30 – 10.45	Third Panel: EU'S EVOLVING DIGITAL GOVERNANCE, DISINFORMATION AND DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE IN THE EU <i>Moderator: Ralitsa Stoycheva, PhD candidate</i> ○ Prof. Douglas B. McKechnie – <i>Countering Misinformation Without Content Control: Constitutional Perspectives on the Conditions of Democracy</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Mariya Yurukova, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>The European Union and the Defence of Democracy in the Digital Age</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Mira Kaneva, PhD and Nikola Peykov, PhD student, Department of International Law and International Relations, Sofia University – <i>Democratic Resilience as the European Union's Strategic Response to Global Power Rivalry in the 21st century</i> ○ Assist. Prof. Jakub Olchowski, PhD, Faculty of Political Science, University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska – <i>21st Century Warfare – Information as a Weapon</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Denitza Toptchiyska, PhD, Department of Law, New Bulgarian University – <i>EU Data Protection and AI Regulation: Considering a Shift in the Approach to Innovation and Fundamental Rights</i> ○ Discussion
10.45 – 11.15	Coffee break
11.15 – 12.00	Fourth panel: EU ENLARGMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES <i>Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Kaloyan Simeonov, D.Sc.</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Mirela Veleva, D.Sc., Assoc. Prof. Daniela Decheva, Assist. Prof. Lubomira Popova, PhD, European Studies Department, Sofia University – <i>"Europeanisation" in Bulgarian Academic Literature: 1993-2024</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Christopher Walsch, D.Sc., Department of International Relations, Institute of Global Studies, Corvinus

	University Budapest – <i>Territorial integrity in the Western Balkans in times of Russian and American neo-imperialism</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Ivana Radic Milosavljevic, PhD, Assoc. Prof. Miloš Petrović, PhD, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade – <i>Serbia's Pre-Accession Fund Management: Issues in Vertical Coordination in the case of IPARD</i> ○ Discussion
12.00 – 12.45	Continuation of the Fourth Panel: EU ENLARGMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES <i>Moderator:</i> Assist. Prof. Lubomira Popova, PhD ○ Assist. Prof. Janja Simentić Popović, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade – <i>Between Law and Conditionality: The Legal Regimes Governing EU Enlargement and Their Impact on Candidate State Behaviour</i> ○ Assoc. Prof. Doris Malaj, PhD, Institute of European Studies, University of Tirana – <i>Between Formal Compliance and Substantive Transformation: Evidence of a Repetition Trap in EU Conditionality</i> ○ Elena Polo, PhD, Institute of European Studies, University of Tirana – <i>Reforming the State, Transforming the Economy: Political–Economic criteria Interdependence under EU Conditionality</i> ○ Discussion
12.45 – 13.00	Closing remarks