

**8TH RECTORS'  
FORUM OF  
SOUTHEAST  
EUROPE  
AND WESTERN  
BALKANS &  
4TH EUTOPIA  
WORKSHOP 2024**

## **Minutes of the Meeting**

**30 May 2024**

The first day of the Rectors' Forum Southeast Europe and Western Balkans focused on the future of universities and the activities of the Rectors' Forum and the working groups.

The welcome address was delivered by Prof. Dr. Rifat Škrijelj, Rector of the University of Sarajevo.

Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik and Thomas Ekman Jørgensen, the authors of two influential EUA documents published earlier this year, introduced the discussion on the future of universities. The documents are the result of the UniFE project, one of the most influential and important initiatives of the European University Association. The innovative approach of the report lies in the description of four possible futures for our continent and in the analysis of the impact of these futures on our sector, in particular on transnational university cooperation.

The presentation was followed by a debate and reflection by the university leaders, including Prof. Biljana Angelova, Rector of Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Prof. Enita Nakaš, Vice-Rector of the University of Sarajevo for International Cooperation, Prof. Igor Nedelkovski, Rector of the University of Bitola and Prof. Gregor Majdič, Rector of the University of Ljubljana, who discussed the potential and various future perspectives of higher education, research and innovation across Europe, with a special focus on Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans. The panel discussion was moderated by Prof. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Rector of the University of Rijeka and President of the Rectors' Forum for Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans.

After the presentation of the Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans and the activities of the working groups, the participants discussed the use of the research infrastructure under the leadership of Siniša Marčić from the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

It was also decided that a corporate identity for the Rectors' Forum for South Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans should be developed and that new initiatives for membership should be discussed and decided at the next General Assembly in Bitola in September.

Several universities in the region have committed to join and cooperate with the network of Centres for Advanced Studies (CAS) and have signed the agreement on the regional CAS network: the University of Rijeka, the University of Belgrade, the University of Montenegro, the University of SS. Cyril and Methodius, the University of Sarajevo, the University of Prishtina Hasan Prishtina, the University of Tirana and the University of Ljubljana. The Centre for Advanced Studies Southeast Europe (CAS SEE) is a regional centre for postdoctoral research under the direction of the University of Rijeka.

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The members of the Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and Western Balkans also work together on various projects and activities. The University of Tirana, the University of Arts in Belgrade, the University of Kragujevac and Alma Mater Europaea signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of Sarajevo during the event to promote and deepen further cooperation.

In the afternoon, the participants split into three parallel working groups to address the challenges facing higher education and research in this part of Europe. The first and second working groups, which dealt with the development of education and science policy and the progress and development of higher education programmes in Southeast Europe, were led by Prof. Marta Žuvić, Vice-Rector for Studies, Students and Quality Assurance at the University of Rijeka. The third group focused on progress in research and innovation and was led by Prof. Boštjan Markoli, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation and Quality at the University of Ljubljana.

### **31 May 2024**

The second day was dedicated to the 4<sup>th</sup> Eutopia More workshop on research funding at international, national and institutional level. During the workshop, representatives from the Slovenian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, the University of Sarajevo, the University of Belgrade, the University of Rijeka, Babeş-Bolyai University and the University of Ljubljana presented examples of research funding, practises and challenges they face.

The next two meetings of the Rector's Forum of Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans will be organized at the University St Kliment Ohridski Bitola (September 2024) and the University of Montenegro (May 2025).

Prepared by: Katja Cerar

Prof. Dr. Snježana Prijić-Samaržija  
President of the Rectors' Forum of  
Southeast Europe and Western Balkans

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**Attendees at the event:**

1. Adaleta Durmić, University of Sarajevo, INGEM
2. Adrian-Gabriel Corpădean, Babeş-Bolyai University, Dean
3. Aleksandar Ostojić, University of Banja Luka, Vice-Rector for Scientific Research and University Development
4. Aleksander Nikolić, University of Sarajevo
5. Alja Čušević, University of Sarajevo, Associate at Research Support Office
6. Alma Shehu Lokaj, University "Haxhi Zeka", Vice-Rector for Teaching, Students's Affairs and Scientific Research
7. Andrea Mešanović, UNIRI, Rectors' assistant
8. Arberora Haxhija, University "Haxhi Zeka", Director of the Office for International Cooperation
9. Armand Krasniqi, University "Haxhi Zeka", Rector
10. Biljana Angelova, "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, Rector
11. Boštjan Markoli, University of Ljubljana, Vice-Rector for Internationalization and Quality
12. Branko Raković, University of Arts in Belgrade, Vice-Rector
13. Dejan Mirakovski, Goce Delcev University, Rector
14. Dijana Smajlović, University of Sarajevo
15. Dušanka Bošković, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for Quality
16. Dženana Husremović, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Rector
17. Ekrem Halimi, Public University "Kadri Zeka", Vice-Dean
18. Elmedina Krupalija, University of Sarajevo, Student Coordinator for International Cooperation
19. Emir Mulahasanović, University of Sarajevo, Student Coordinator for International Cooperation
20. Enita Nakaš, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation
21. Gazela Pudar Draško, University of Belgrade, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Director
22. Gordan Jelenić, University of Rijeka, Vice-Rector for Science and Arts
23. Gregor Majdič, University of Ljubljana, Rector
24. Hurija Džudžević-Čančar, University of Sarajevo, Professor
25. Igor Nedelkovski, University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, Rector
26. Ivan Svetlik, University of Ljubljana, Professor
27. Ivana Didak, The Guild, Head of Higher Education Policy
28. Ivo Čolak, University of Mostar, Vice-Rector for Science and Development
29. Jasmina Gradašević-Pleh, University of Sarajevo, Senior Officer, Research Support Office
30. Jasna Bošnjović, University of Sarajevo, Head of IRU
31. Jelena Krunić, University of East Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for Science, Research and Development
32. Judit Füzér, Pannon European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, Deputy Director
33. Katja Cerar, University of Ljubljana, International Relations Office
34. Lejla Dizdarević, University of Sarajevo, Senior Associate
35. Lejla Pojskić, University of Sarajevo, Scientific advisor, Head of the Human Genetics Laboratory

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36. Ludvik Toplak, Alma Mater Europaea University, Rector
37. Maida Hadžiabdić, University of Sarajevo, Associate at Research Support Office
38. Maja Arslanagić-Kalajdžić, University of Sarajevo, Professor of Marketing and Head of Centre for R&D
39. Marko Gutalj, University of East Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation and QA
40. Marta Žuvić, University of Rijeka, Vice-Rector for Students, Studies and Quality Assurance
41. Mirza Dautbašić, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for Scientific Research
42. Naris Pojskić, University of Sarajevo, IGEB Scientist
43. Nermina Hadžigrahić, University of Tuzla, Rector
44. Nermina Hadžigrahić, University of Sarajevo
45. Ognjen Marina, "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, Director of CAPRIS UKIM / Rectors' Special Adviser for Rectors' Forum
46. Pasarić, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Dean
  
47. Petar Bojanic, University of Belgrade, University of Rijeka, Director, UNIRI CAS SEE, Professor University of Belgrade
48. Rifat Škrijelj, University of Sarajevo, Rector
49. Sanja Peković, University of Montenegro, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation
50. Sašo Koceski, Goce Delcev University, Dean
51. Siniša Marčić, Regional Cooperation Council, Senior Expert on Human Capital Development at the RCC
52. Snježana Prijčić-Samaržija, University of Rijeka, President of the Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and Western Balkans, Rector of the University of Rijeka
53. Stojan Sorčan, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Secretary
54. Tarik Zaimović, University of Sarajevo, Vice-Rector for Finance
55. Vesna Bratovčić, University of Tuzla, Vice-Rector for International and Interuniversity Cooperation
56. Vladimir Senić, University of Kragujevac, Vice-Rector for Innovation and Development
57. Xhevdet Thaqi, Public University "Kadri Zeka", Dean of Applied Sciences Faculty
58. Zdenko Klepić, University of Mostar, Vice-Rector for Business, Human Resources and Quality Management
59. Zorica Vujić, University of Belgrade, Vice-Rector for Finance
60. Željko Jaćimović, University of Montenegro, Full professor