



BALKAN PERSPECTIVES 2020

The Fight for a Timely Inclusion

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

WELCOME REMARKS

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

After having served at the Italian Embassy in Washington D.C. and as Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of Italy in Prague, Amb. Minuto-Rizzo worked as Head of the External Relations Office of the EEC from 1981 to 1986. In the next years, his career focussed on Europe and Space Policy. In 1997 he was appointed Diplomatic Counsellor of the Minister of Defence Nino Andreatta, then of his successors Carlo Scognamiglio and Sergio Mattarella. In 2000, Minuto-Rizzo held the position of Italian Ambassador to the Western European Union and to the Political and Security Committee of the EU, of which he was among the founding members. He was Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance, between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic-political industrial area, in the relations with sensitive countries such as those in the Gulf and the Southern Mediterranean. He is the author of the books: "The road to Kabul" (Il Mulino-Arel, 2009); "A political journey without maps, diversity and future in the Greater Middle East" (Rubbettino, 2013), and "NATO and the Middle East: The Making of a Partnership" (New Academia Publishing, 2018).

Stephen J. Mariano

Dean, NATO Defense College, Rome

Stephen J. Mariano was appointed Dean of the NATO Defense College in January 2019. Prior he was Professor of National Security Studies at the National Defense University's National War College. Dr. Mariano taught military strategy and comparative military systems at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, as well as politics and U.S. foreign policy at the Royal Military College of Canada. Formerly, he was U.S. Army War College Visiting Defense Fellow at Queen's University's Center for International Relations, U.S. Army's Senior Fellow at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and M.I.T. Seminar XXI Fellow. He acted as Deputy Director of Strategy, Plans, and Assessments at the Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq, where he liaised with the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, and as Military Advisor to NATO's Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan. He also served as Strategic Plans and Policy Officer within NATO's International Military Staff in Brussels and at the U.S. European Command in Stuttgart.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Nicola de Santis

Head, Engagements Section, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels

Head of the Engagements Section of NATO Public Diplomacy Division since 2019, Nicola de Santis was the former Head of the Middle East and North Africa Section of the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO HQ. In this capacity, he was responsible for developing and promoting NATO policy, political relations, individual practical cooperation programs and better public understanding in Middle Eastern and North African countries - especially those participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He also ensured the coordination with all the other Divisions of NATO's International Staff, International Military Staff and relevant NATO Military Authorities for all aspects of the Alliance cooperation with countries in the Middle East and in North Africa. Prior to that, he was the Head of the MD and ICI Countries Section within the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division.

SESSION I

Ivan Vejvoda

Permanent Fellow, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

Before joining the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna as Permanent Fellow in 2017, Ivan Vejvoda was Senior Vice President for Programs at the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States. From 2003 until 2010, he served as Executive Director of GMF's Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions in South-Eastern Europe. Vejvoda came to GMF in 2003 after distinguished service in the Serbian Government as a Senior Advisor on foreign policy and European integration to Prime Ministers Zoran Djindjic and Zoran Zivkovic. Prior to that, he served as Executive Director of the Belgrade-based Fund for an Open Society. During the mid-1990s, Vejvoda held various academic posts in the United States and in the U.K., including the Smith College in Massachusetts, Macalester College in Minnesota and the University of Sussex in England.

Maciej Popowski

Acting Director-General, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission, European Union, Brussels

Ambassador Popowski is a Polish diplomat with 25 years of professional experience. He was Director for EU Affairs at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time of Poland's accession negotiations. In 2001-2008 he was Deputy Head of the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Poland to the European Union. In 2003-2008 he was Poland's first Permanent Representative in the EU's Political and Security Committee. He then joined the European Commission as Director of DG Development focusing on policy coherence, aid effectiveness, financing, relations with other donors, and public information. In 2009 he was seconded from the European Commission to become Head of Cabinet of Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament. From 2011 until 2015, he was Deputy Secretary-General of the European External Action Service.

Ian Lesser

Vice President and Executive Director, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Ian Lesser is Vice President at The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and a member of GMF's executive team, managing programmes across the organisation. He also serves as Executive Director of the Transatlantic Center, the Brussels office of GMF, and leads the GMF's work on the Mediterranean, Turkey and the wider Atlantic. Prior to joining GMF, Dr Lesser was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, as well as Vice President and Director of Studies at the Pacific Council on International Policy. He spent over a decade as a Senior Analyst and Research Manager for RAND Corporation. From 1994 to 1995, he was a member of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State, responsible for Turkey, Southern Europe, North Africa, and the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and the Pacific Council on International Policy. He serves on the advisory boards of the Delphi Economic Forum, the Atlantic Dialogues, the NATO Defense College Foundation and Turkish Policy Quarterly.

Ahmet Evin

Founding Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Sabanci University, Istanbul

Professor Evin had received his B.A. and PhD degrees at the Columbia University. He is currently founding Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Professor Emeritus at Sabanci University, serving as Senior Scholar and Board Member of the Istanbul Policy Center. He has previously taught at Harvard, New York University, the University of Pennsylvania (where he was Director of the Middle East Center), the University of Hamburg and Bilkent University (heading the Political Science department). He has authored and edited several volumes on politics, culture, and development.

Andrea Orizio

Head of Mission, OSCE, Belgrade

Ambassador Orizio, an Italian career diplomat, has been heading the OSCE Mission to Serbia since 1 October 2016. He came to Belgrade from Rome where he served as Balkans Director at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation. Between 2013 and 2014, he was Head of the Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime/G7 Unit at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2008 to 2012, he was Deputy Head of Mission the Italian Embassy to Egypt. Between 2005 and 2008, he served as First Counsellor at the Italian Permanent Delegation to NATO in Brussels. Prior to that, he led the Western Balkans Department at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Earlier in his career, he held diplomatic posts in Zagreb as Deputy Head of Mission and Prague, and served on the Africa Desk, the Defence Minister's Diplomatic Counsellor office, the Armaments Authorization and Control Authority. He is a member of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law and "Cavaliere Ufficiale" of the "Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana".

QUESTION TIME

Damon Wilson

Executive Vice President, Atlantic Council, Washington D.C.

Damon Wilson is Executive Vice President of the Atlantic Council. His areas of expertise include NATO, Transatlantic relations, Central and Eastern Europe, and national security issues. From 2007 to 2009, he acted as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European affairs at the National Security Council. Previously, he served at the US Embassy in Baghdad as Executive Secretary and Chief of Staff and as Director for Central, Eastern, and Northern European affairs at the National Security Council (2004-2006). Between 2001 and 2004, Damon Wilson held the position of Deputy Director of the Private Office of the NATO Secretary General, assisting Lord George Robertson in his drive to transform the Alliance by enlarging NATO membership, conducting operations beyond Europe, and adapting Allied capabilities to face modern threats. Prior to serving in Brussels, he worked in the US Department of State's Office of European Security and Political Affairs, in the State Department's China desk, and at the US Embassy in Beijing as a presidential management fellow.

Valerie Hopkins

South-East Europe Correspondent, Financial Times, Budapest

Valerie Hopkins is the Financial Times' South-East Europe correspondent, covering Hungary, Romania, the former Yugoslavia and Albania. Before moving to Budapest, she worked extensively in the Balkans, with the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project and as a freelance journalist. Her writing has appeared in The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Politico, Foreign Policy, Al Jazeera, the Guardian, Reuters, Open Democracy, Mother Jones, and more. Valerie has a Master of Arts in Political Journalism from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, and a B.A. in International Relations (focus on Russian and Post-Soviet Studies) from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

SESSION II

Jan Kickert

Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to Rome

Ambassador Jan Kickert became Head of the Austrian Embassy in Rome in July 2020. Prior to his appointment, he acted as Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations (2015-2020). Since November 2011, he was Director General for Political Affairs at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2009 to 2011, Amb. Kickert served as Austrian Ambassador to Croatia. Since 2005, he also served in a number of other Government positions at the Cabinet of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, with two years as Deputy Head of the Cabinet (2007-2009). In the autumn of 2004, he acted as the personal representative to Kosovo of Javier Solana, the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. Prior to that, from 1999 to 2000, he was political adviser to the UN Special Representative to Kosovo.

Luisa Chiodi

Scientific Director, OBC Transeuropa, Trento

Director of the Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso since 2006, she holds a PhD at the European University Institute of Fiesole (Florence), and a degree in Political Science at the University of Milan. From 2003 to 2008 she held lectures on “Eastern European studies” at the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bologna and has taught in other university courses in Italy and abroad. She has edited several academic publications and coordinated many research projects. Her research interests focus on civil society and the transnational social dynamics of post-communism.

Remzi Lani

Executive Director, Albanian Media Institute, Tirana

Remzi Lani is the Executive Director of the Albanian Media Institute. He has a long career in journalism, and he is author of articles on Balkan affairs for different local and foreign papers and magazines such as *El Mundo* (Madrid), *The Guardian* (London), *Quimera* (Barcelona), *The International Spectator* (Rome), etc. Lani has been also an expert for the International Commission on the Balkans (Amato Commission). He is member of the Board of OSIFE (Open Society Foundation for Europe), of the Steering Committee of GFMD (Global Forum for Media Development) and of the European Council of Foreign Relations. He has been working on media projects in Africa, Central Asia and the Balkans. Collaborator of the Aspen Institute (Berlin), CESPI (Rome), Center for International and Strategic Studies (Washington), Carter Center (Atlanta), Hellenic Foundation (Athens), CIDOB (Barcelona) in different projects on Balkan issues.

Valbona Zeneli

Chair, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Dr. Zeneli joined the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in August 2011 as a professor of national security studies. She is also Chair of the Strategic Initiatives Department. Previously, she served as the Black Sea and Eurasia program Director and Deputy Director for the Central and South-East Europe program. Valbona Zeneli is member of the teaching faculty for the Program in Applied Security Studies (PASS), the Program on Countering Narcotics and Illicit Trafficking (CNIT), the Program on Cyber Security Studies (PCSS), the Senior Executive Seminar (SES) and the Seminar on Regional Security (SRS). From 2003-2005, Dr. Zeneli has served as chief of protocol and later economic adviser to the Albanian Prime Minister. Prior to that, she worked as adviser to the Minister of Economy of Albania from 2002-2003. Dr. Zeneli holds a Doctor of science degree (PhD) in political economy from the University of Studies “Aldo Moro”, Bari, Italy (2011), as well as a postgraduate studies degree on international marketing from Georgetown University, Washington D.C (2006).

Lubomir Ivanov

Former Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, NATO, Brussels

Bulgarian Permanent Representative to FAO, Ambassador Lubomir Ivanov has been Chairman of the FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters between 2015 and 2017. He has a long-standing career in international and Euro-Atlantic organisations. In 1995 he approached security organisations as

Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Bulgaria to Belgium, Luxembourg and Mission of Bulgaria to WEU (Western European Union) and NATO. Between 1998 and 2001 he was the Deputy Director of the NATO and Security Issues Directorate at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia. Lubomir Ivanov has been leading the negotiation for the accession of Bulgaria to NATO between 2001 and 2004. After that experience, he has been appointed as Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to NATO from 2004 to 2009. Between 2012 and 2016 he ran his first mandate as Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to FAO. Since May 2017 Ambassador Ivanov is Ambassador-at-Large on security matters.

Arne Sannes Bjørnstad

Special Representative for Western Balkans, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo

He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as desk officer (legal affairs) in the Shipping Department in 1990. After postings to Ankara (1994- 97), Rabat (1997) and Paris (1998-2001), he was Coordinator for Norway's Foreign Policy and Justice/Home Affairs cooperation with the European Union 2001-2003. From February 2003 through September 2006 he was Senior Adviser at the Office of the Prime Minister and secretary to the Government Security Council. Minister Counsellor for European and Economic Affairs at the Norwegian embassy in London 2006-08, then Deputy Head of Mission in London 2008-11. Senior Adviser attached to the Foreign Service Control Unit from 2011, becoming Inspector General of the Foreign Service in 2013. Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Serbia from September 2015, to the Republic of Montenegro from November 2015 and to the Republic of North Macedonia from December 2015.

SPECIAL INTERVENTION

Michele Risi

Commander, Kosovo Force (KFOR), NATO, Pristina

Major General Risi has been the Defence Advisor to Italian Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council since 21 July 2016. Before being assigned to the NATO, he was the Commander of the Julia Alpine Brigade and the Multi-National Land Forces Command located in Udine, Italy. While deployed with the Julia Brigade in 2015, he was also the Commander of the Train and Advise Command-West (TAAC-West) Operation Resolute Support, Herat, Afghanistan. A career Mountain Infantry Officer (Alpini), Major General Risi has served in key leadership positions at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of the Italian military, NATO and the United Nations to include Commander of ITALFOR XVII and RC-Capital Battle Group 3, Operation ISAF in Afghanistan (2008); Chief Plans of the Strategic Military Cell - Department for Peace Keeping Operations, New York - during the Lebanese crisis of 2006; Chief of Staff of the Kabul Multinational Brigade (2005), Operation ISAF in Afghanistan.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Piero Fassino

President, Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Rome

Piero Fassino is the President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian Chamber of Deputies. Elected for the first time in 1994, re-elected in all the following legislatures until 2011 - when he became mayor of Turin (2011-2016) - and elected again to Parliament in 2018. Currently he is also a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and Vice-President of the Political Commission, President of the Italy-France friendship section of the Inter Parliamentary Union. Under-Secretary of State for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1996-1998 in the PM Prodi government) and, in the same period, Under-Secretary for European Union Policies to the Prime Minister; Minister of Foreign Trade (1998-2000 in the PM D'Alema government); Minister of Justice (2000-2001 in the PM Amato government). From 1991 to 1996 he held the role of International Secretary of the PDS, leading it in the joining to the Socialist International and in the foundation of the European Socialist Party. From 2016 to March 2020, President of the Socialist Group and spokesman for the Mediterranean at the Congress of Local Authorities of the Council of Europe.