



**IDU  
FORUM  
2026**  
ZAGREB, CROATIA

# *Conference Agenda*

APRIL

**29-30**

2026





# Welcome

*Dear IDU members, partners, and friends,*

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Zagreb for the IDU Forum 2026, our flagship gathering of centre-right leaders, parliamentarians, and policymakers from across the democratic world.

We meet at a moment when the stakes for freedom could not be higher. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues. Iran and its terrorist proxies fuel instability across the Middle East. China's authoritarian reach extends ever further into the Global South. And across our own societies, citizens increasingly question whether democratic institutions and free markets can still deliver the lives they aspire to.

We gather this year in Zagreb which is the heart of a nation that has made its own historic journey from conflict to democracy, from isolation to the European mainstream. Croatia and our gracious hosts, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), stand as proof that centre-right values can transform a country. At a time when the Western Balkans stand at a crossroads on their path toward deeper democratic consolidation and European

integration, Zagreb is a fitting and inspiring venue. The path Croatia has walked is a model for its neighbours.

The challenges before us are not abstract. They are immediate, serious, and they demand a confident, principled response from the centre-right. Zagreb reminds us that freedom is not inherited. It is built, defended, and renewed by each generation. That is the work we gather here to advance. This Forum will bring together successful centre-right governing leaders, experienced political figures, and distinguished policymakers to share best practices, debate ideas, and deepen the global network that makes the IDU so unique.

As always, I want to thank all of you, our members and partners, for your steadfast commitment to the principles that bind our political family together.

I wish you a productive and inspiring IDU Forum 2026 here in Zagreb.

Sincerely,

*Rt Hon.*  
**Stephen Harper,**  
**PC CC AOE**


IDU Chairman,  
22nd Prime Minister of Canada

# About the IDU

The International Democracy Union (IDU) is the global alliance of centre-right political parties. Founded in London in 1983, it has grown from 19 signatories to more than 80 member parties across every continent.

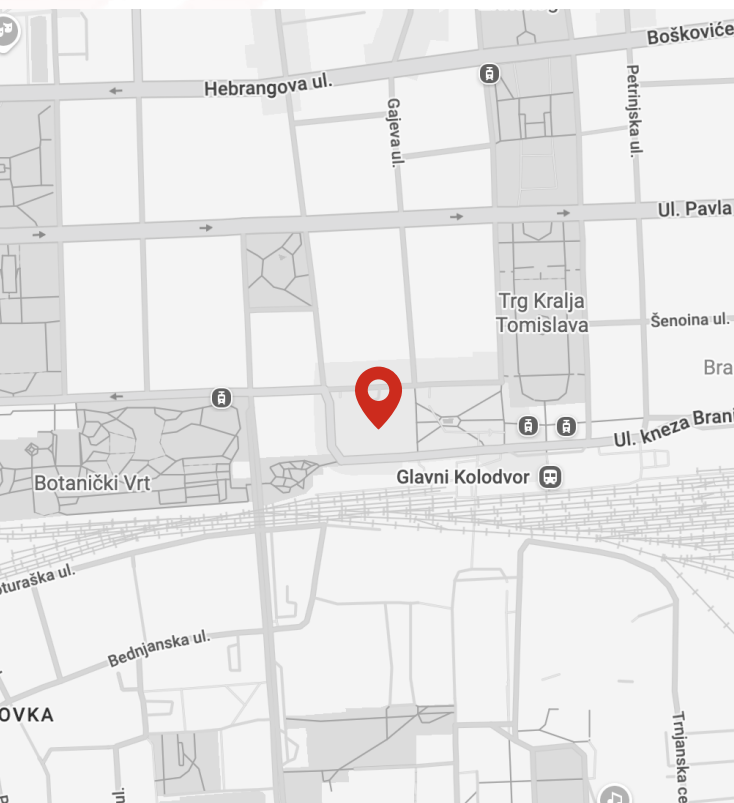
Together, these parties share knowledge, campaign expertise, and policy experience to strengthen democracy, promote free markets, uphold the rule of law, and defend individual liberty. The IDU provides a unique forum where leaders and parties can learn from one another, build partnerships, and coordinate efforts to advance freedom worldwide.

## Follow us

-  International Democracy Union
-  @idualliance
-  @internationaldemocracyunion



# Location



## Venue

We're delighted to host this Forum at the Esplanade Zagreb Hotel – a historic venue with a distinctive character right in the heart of the city.

## Accreditation

Open from 3:00pm - 6:00pm on Wednesday, April 29. Please wear your badge at all times for access to IDU Forum sessions and events.



## Address

Esplanade Zagreb Hotel  
Mihanovićeveva 1  
10000 Zagreb, Croatia

# History

From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the rise of new regional unions, the IDU has stood at the heart of global democratic change, building networks, strengthening parties, and advancing freedom across every continent.



## 1983

The IDU Forum was founded in London with 19 signatories from Europe, North America, Oceania, and Asia.

## 1990

Founding of the International Women's Democrat Union, uniting women in support of Christian Democratic and conservative politics.

## 2018

Stephen Harper, 22nd Prime Minister of Canada, is elected Chairman of the IDU in Madrid, Spain.

## 2019

First IDU Forum in Washington, D.C., featuring the inaugural Bush-Thatcher Freedom Award, presented to the Maldivian Democratic Party.

# Supporting Partners

The International Democracy Union extends its sincere thanks to our partners for their generous support of the IDU Forum 2026. Your commitment helps bring together leaders, thinkers, and advocates from across the democratic world - and this event simply wouldn't be possible without you.

## Platinum Partner

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## Gold Partners

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## Silver Partners

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## Bronze Partners

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## Exclusive Training Partner

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# *Agenda*



# Day 1

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Esplanade Zagreb Hotel, Mihanovićeve 1, 10000 Zagreb

**9:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

**Campaign Managers' Meeting** (*IDU Campaign Managers Only*)

**3:00 PM - 6:00 PM**

**Registration and Accreditation**

**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**IDU Forum 2026, Zagreb  
Opening Reception**

**Remarks by:** H.E. Davor Božinović  
Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia, Minister of the Interior,  
International Secretary, HDZ

# Day 2

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Esplanade Zagreb Hotel, Mihanovićeve 1, 10000 Zagreb

8:45 AM

## Opening of the IDU Forum 2026, Zagreb

Rt Hon. Stephen Harper, IDU Chairman and 22nd Prime Minister of Canada

H.E. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia, President of HDZ

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM

## A Shifting World, An Enduring Alliance: The Transatlantic Relationship in a New Geopolitical Era

**Introductory Remarks:** H.E. Gordan Jandroković, Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, HDZ

Commissioner Dubravka Šuica, EU Commissioner for the Mediterranean, HDZ, Croatia

H.E. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, 4th President of Croatia

Rt Hon. Sir Michael Fallon, Former Secretary of State for Defence, Conservative Party, UK

Sudha David-Wilp, Vice President External Relations & Senior Fellow, The German Marshall Fund of the United States

**Moderator:** Harry Coulson, Chief of Staff, Coalition for Global Prosperity

10:15 AM - 10:30 AM

COFFEE BREAK

10:30 AM - 10:50 AM

## Security, Strategy and Skulduggery: Public Opinion in the Balkans

Presentation by Lord Ashcroft, KCMG PC, IDU Honorary Chairman

10:50 AM - 11:45 AM

## The Forgotten Frontier: The Western Balkans and Europe's Unfinished Promise

H.E. Sali Berisha MP, Former President and Prime Minister of Albania, Democratic Party

H.E. Timcho Mucunski, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, VMRO-DPMNE, North Macedonia

H.E. Christian Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vice Chair of the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation

H.E. Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, HDZ

**Moderator:** Paul Prosofski, Resident Program Director for the West Balkans, International Republican Institute

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM

## “Firing Line” — Rapid Leaders' Dialogue with Florian Hahn MP, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, CSU, Germany

12:00 PM - 12:45 PM

## Growth or Green? The Centre-Right's Environmental Reckoning

Emanuele Loperfido MP, Fratelli d'Italia, Italy

Lord Hannan of Kingsclere, International Secretary, Conservative Party, UK

Thibault Muzergues, Political Director, Shared Ground

**Moderator:** Hon. Tony Clement, Chairman, Canadian Conservatives Abroad

# Day 2

Thursday, April 30, 2026

Esplanade Zagreb Hotel, Mihanovićeva 1, 10000 Zagreb

12:45 PM - 2:00 PM

NETWORKING LUNCH

2:00 PM - 2:45 PM

## The Numbers That Will Define Europe: Migration, Demography, and the Decisions We Keep Avoiding

H.E. Davor Božinović, Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia, Minister of the Interior, International Secretary, HDZ

Hon. Antonio Giordano MP, Secretary-General, ECR Party, Fratelli d'Italia, Italy

H.E. Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen, Distinguished Fellow, Danube Institute, Former Ambassador of Hungary to the Holy See and to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

**Moderator:** Zsófia Rácz, Editor-in-Chief, Hungarian Conservative Magazine, Head of Communications, Danube Institute

2:45 PM - 3:15 PM

COFFEE BREAK

3:15 PM - 4:00 PM

## Europe's Security Architecture: Russia's Influence on an Evolving Landscape

H.E. Petro Poroshenko MP, 5th President of Ukraine, Chairman, European Solidarity

Ellen Demuth MP, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the German Bundestag, CDU

John Lough, Senior Research Fellow, Head of Foreign Policy & International Partnerships, New Eurasian Strategies Centre

**Moderator:** Dr. Bob Seely, Former Member of Parliament, Journalist, Conservative Party, UK

4:00 PM - 4:45 PM

## Decarbonize or Defend? Europe's Strategic Autonomy Dilemma

H.E. Ante Šušnjar, Minister of Economy, Croatia

Zala Tomašič MEP, Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)

Rihards Kols MEP, National Alliance, Latvia

**Moderator:** Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, IDU Chairman, 22nd Prime Minister of Canada

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

BREAK

7:00 PM

## IDU Forum 2026, Zagreb Prime Ministers' Dinner

LAUBA, prilaz baruna Filipovića 23A, 10000, Zagreb, Croatia

**Remarks by:** Rt Hon. Stephen Harper, IDU Chairman and 22nd Prime Minister of Canada

**Remarks by:** Hon. Enda Kenny, 13th Taoiseach of Ireland, Patron of Worldwide Support for Development (WSD)

**Keynote Speaker:** H.E. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia, President of HDZ

10:00 PM

## IYDU Drinks & Democracy

Konoba Mašklin i Lata, Ul. Andrije Hebranga 11, Zagreb

# Day 3

Friday, May 1, 2026

*Esplanade Zagreb Hotel, Mihanovićeve 1, 10000 Zagreb*

**9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

**IDU Executive Committee Meeting (IDU Members Only)**



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*Speaker  
Biographies*

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *Rt Hon.* **Stephen Harper** **PC CC AOE**

IDU Chairman,  
22nd Prime Minister of Canada

For nearly a decade The Right Honourable Stephen J. Harper led Canada through the world’s most complex geopolitical, economic and security challenges as the country’s 22nd Prime Minister. He created the modern Conservative Party of Canada, won three successive national elections, and was the longest serving Conservative Prime Minister since Canada’s founding Prime Minister in 1891.

Since leaving office in 2016, Mr. Harper founded and is Chairman and CEO of Harper & Associates, a global consulting and strategic advisory business, and is Chairman and a founding partner of Vision One, a fundamental value-oriented investment fund based in Miami, Florida. He serves as Board Chair of the Alberta Investment Management Corporation (AIMCo), Director of Colliers International Group Inc. and Alimentation Couche Tard Inc., and is President of the Advisory Committee of Awz Ventures, a technology focused Canadian-Israeli venture capital firm.

Mr. Harper is also the author of “Right Here, Right Now: Politics and Leadership in the Age of Disruption” and a frequent speaker on geopolitical trends, populism, and business. His latest book “Flags of Canada” was published in February 2025 in association with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society commemorating the 60th anniversary of Canada’s national flag.

Mr. Harper serves as Chairman of the International Democracy Union and is a member of the Global Advisory Board of India’s Observer Research Foundation. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in economics from the University of Calgary, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Philosophy from Tel Aviv University and received an honorary degree from the Jerusalem College of Technology.

He is a Companion of the Order of Canada, a member of the King’s Privy Council for Canada, and is the recipient of the Alberta Order of Excellence plus numerous international recognitions including the Order of Liberty, Ukraine’s highest civilian honour. Mr. Harper resides in Alberta, Canada with his wife Laureen; they have two adult children, Benjamin and Rachel.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Andrej Plenković**

Prime Minister of Croatia  
and President of HDZ

Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia Andrej Plenković has been leading his country's government since 19 October 2016, following the Croatian Democratic Union's (HDZ) victory in the Parliamentary Elections of September 2016. Elected leader of the centre-right HDZ, affiliated with the European People's Party (EPP), in July 2016, he went on to lead the party to further successes in the Parliamentary Elections of July 2020 and April 2024. With three consecutive terms in office, Plenković has become the longest-serving Prime Minister in Croatia's history since the country gained independence.

His leadership has been characterised by significant achievements, notably the revitalisation and modernisation of the Croatian economy. This progress has been underpinned by an unprecedented surge in investment, strong employment growth, record-low unemployment, and marked improvements in living standards, wages, and pensions.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, two major earthquakes, and the energy crisis triggered by Russia's aggression in Ukraine, Plenković's government successfully delivered two key strategic objectives: Croatia's accession to the Eurozone and the Schengen Area in 2023. During his tenure, Croatia also joined both the U.S. Visa Waiver and the Global Entry programs. In 2024, following a third consecutive parliamentary victory, he also led HDZ in the European elections, where the party secured six of Croatia's twelve seats—the best result for any EPP member party.

Alongside these achievements, Plenković has prioritised Croatia's membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with accession targeted for 2026. For his third term, he has outlined four key national priorities: accelerating the green transition, advancing digital transformation, promoting demographic renewal, and investing in education. These strategic goals aim to position Croatia as a competitive economy and a prosperous society.

Born in Zagreb in 1970, Andrej Plenković is married with three children. He speaks fluent English, French, and Italian, and has a good command of German.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Lord Michael Ashcroft KCMG PC**

IDU Honorary Chairman

Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is an international businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. He is the former Treasurer and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party in the UK, the current Honorary Chairman and former Treasurer of the International Democracy Union (IDU), and currently a Privy Council member. He was formerly the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Veterans' Transition. In the UK, he is the founder and Chair of Trustees of both Crimestoppers and the Ashcroft Technology Academy. He is a former Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University (which awarded him an Honorary Doctorate in 1999), a former Patron of the Forces in Mind Trust Research Centre, a former Trustee of Imperial War Museums and a former President of the West India Committee. He is currently Vice Patron of the Intelligence Corps Museum, a Trustee of the Cleveland Clinic in the US and a Life Governor of the Royal Humane Society. As well as donating tens of millions of pounds to good causes, he signed up to The Giving Pledge in 2013, a commitment by some of the world's richest people to dedicate the majority of their wealth to charity. His life-long interest in bravery led to the creation of the largest collection of Victoria Crosses (VCs) in the world, which currently stands at more than 240 such decorations. Lord Ashcroft has varied and substantial business interests around the world in public and private companies. He has written 31 books, largely on politics and bravery. He was Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations from 1998 to 2000.

He was knighted and created a life peer in 2000, but he resigned from the House of Lords in 2015 to concentrate on other areas of his work. In 2016, Lord Ashcroft was made Knight Grand Cross of the Most Sacred Order of the Holy Trinity (Ethiopia) and a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. In 2017, he was made a Senior Fellow of the International Strategic Studies Association, in 2021 he was promoted to Grand Collar of the Most Sacred Order of the Holy Trinity (Ethiopia) and in 2022 was honoured with the hereditary title of Viscount Gondar by the Crown Council of Ethiopia. Lord Ashcroft has also been decorated for his extensive work in support of war-torn Ukraine: in 2025, he was awarded the Ukraine Above All medal and in 2026 he was awarded the Honorary Cross of Merit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Lord Ashcroft carries out extensive polling, mainly linked to his interest in politics, and the quality of his work in this area is widely acclaimed.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Ali Aslan**

International TV Host  
and Journalist

Ali Aslan is an internationally renowned TV host and journalist with a global career spanning over 20 years, including at CNN in Washington D.C., ABC News in New York and Deutsche Welle TV in Berlin.

A globally recognized conference moderator, Aslan is frequently moderating and hosting high-level international events for global organizations, such as the UN, G20, EU, World Bank, IMF, NATO and OECD.

Throughout his international career, Aslan has interviewed and shared the stage with numerous world leaders, heads of state, CEOs, Nobel Peace Prize laureates, celebrities and global newsmakers.

Aslan holds Master's degrees in International Affairs and Journalism from Columbia University in New York as well as a bachelor's degree from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington D.C..



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Sali Berisha** **MP**

Former President and Prime Minister of Albania, Leader of the Democratic Party

Prof. Dr Sali Berisha stands as one of the central figures of Albania's modern history and a leading voice of center-right politics in Southeast Europe. As a founding leader of the democratic movement in 1990, he played a decisive role in the peaceful overthrow of one of the most isolated and repressive communist regimes in Europe, opening the path toward freedom, pluralism, and a market-based society.

A renowned cardiologist and former professor of medicine, Dr Berisha entered politics at a defining moment for Albania and quickly emerged as a symbol of democratic change and resistance to authoritarianism. As President of Albania (1992-1997), he led the country through its first democratic transition, establishing the foundations of political pluralism, free elections, and fundamental freedoms.

During his tenure as Prime Minister (2005-2013), Albania underwent profound transformation. His government implemented far-reaching economic reforms, modernized national infrastructure, and firmly anchored the country in the Euro-Atlantic community. Under his leadership, Albania became a member of NATO in 2009 and achieved visa liberalization with the European Union—milestones that reshaped the country's strategic future and strengthened its democratic trajectory.

Across more than three decades of public life, Dr Berisha has remained a consistent and outspoken defender of democracy, rule of law, and individual freedoms. Today, as Chairman of the Democratic Party and Leader of the Opposition, he continues to challenge authoritarian tendencies, expose state capture and corruption, and advocate for free and fair elections, institutional accountability, and Albania's full integration into the European Union.

His political career is defined by resilience, conviction, and an unwavering commitment to liberty. In a region still facing democratic backsliding, Prof. Dr Berisha remains a powerful and principled voice for democratic values, national sovereignty, and the Euro-Atlantic future.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Davor Božinović**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister  
of the Interior, International  
Secretary of HDZ, Croatia

Davor Božinović currently serves as Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia (since 2019) and Minister of the Interior (since 2017), with a mandate encompassing internal security, migration policy, civil protection, counter-terrorism, border management including Schengen affairs, and crisis coordination at both national and European Union levels.

Prior to his current appointments, he held the positions of Head of the Office of the Prime Minister (2016), Observer in the European Parliament (2012), and Member of the Croatian Parliament (2011). Earlier, he served as Minister of Defence (2010) and State Secretary for Political Affairs and European Integration at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (2008-2009). His diplomatic career includes appointments as Ambassador and Head of Mission of the Republic of Croatia to NATO (2005) and Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to Serbia and Montenegro (2002), as well as senior diplomatic postings in Sarajevo and Sofia, focused on regional cooperation and post-conflict stabilization.

Dr Božinović holds a PhD in International Relations and National Security from the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, and has completed executive education programmes at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and the Harvard Kennedy School.

He is the author and co-author of several books and numerous professional and academic publications in international relations and security. He has lectured in postgraduate studies in diplomacy at the University of Zagreb, in graduate and doctoral studies in international relations and diplomacy at Libertas University, as well as in public administration studies at the Baltazar University of Applied Sciences, and has contributed as a lecturer at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ban Josip Jelačić War School. He currently lectures at the Political Academy of the Croatian Statehood Foundation and regularly delivers lectures at various universities.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *The Hon.* **Tony Clement P.C.**

Chairman, Canadian  
Conservatives Abroad

The Honourable Tony Clement has had a long and distinguished career, spanning four decades, in politics, the law and business. He served in senior roles in Prime Minister Harper's Cabinet (2006-2015) as Health Minister, Industry Minister and President of the Treasury Board. In those roles he was tasked with senior leadership responsibilities. He initiated the cost reductions and business transformations. In 2009 he negotiated the deal with Chrysler and GM, auto sector corporations unions and the US Government that saved the domestic auto sector.

As Health Minister for Canada 2006-2008 he fashioned the first National Pandemic Plan. He also created the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer and the Mental Health Commission. As Industry Minister he initiated Canada's Digital Strategy and later Canada's open data strategy as part of the worldwide Open Government Partnership. As President of the Treasury Board Clement led the work to successfully balance the federal budget in 2015. Tony Clement served as a Member of Parliament 2006-2019, representing Parry Sound-Muskoka, Ontario.

Prior to federal politics Tony Clement served in the cabinets of Ontario Premiers Mike Harris and Ernie Eves (1997-2003), taking leadership positions as Minister of Transportation, Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. During 2003 he was the frontline Health Minister during the SARS outbreak in Ontario.

As a business entrepreneur Tony Clement leads IT, AI and health startup companies, serves on IT and health care boards and provides strategic advice both nationally and internationally. He is the Chair of the Small Modular Reactor Forum, designed to promote SMR nuclear reactors in Canada.

As an aside Tony Clement hosts the daily television program "Boom and Bust" on The News Forum network, which focuses on business, the economy, tech and national security. He also is the Executive Producer of "Everything Political" podcast, hosted by Steve Paikin. He hosts a monthly radio show "Rockin Shindig" at Hunters Bay Radio, in Muskoka.

Tony Clement lives in Muskoka, Ontario and his wife Lynne is a lawyer and successful author. They have three adult children.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Harry Coulson**

Chief of Staff, Coalition for  
Global Prosperity

Harry is Chief of Staff at the Coalition for Global Prosperity, leading its transatlantic programme and engagement with the centre-right. He previously worked in the UK Parliament and served as an infantry officer in the British Army Reserves. Harry holds a first-class BA in War Studies from King's College London.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Sudha David-Wilp**

Vice President External Relations  
and Senior Fellow, The German  
Marshall Fund of the United States

Sudha David-Wilp is GMF's vice president of external relations and a senior fellow. She joined GMF in 2011, and as a member of the executive team she splits her time between Berlin and Washington, D.C.

She leads GMF's teams covering cities, government relations, strategic democracy initiatives, leadership programs, and strategic convening. She has extensive experience in stakeholder management with decision-makers on both sides of the Atlantic and has conceptualized a variety of convening formats involving high-level speakers in D.C. and across GMF's European office network.

David-Wilp is an expert on German-American relations and the transatlantic partnership. She has written for outlets such as Axios, CNN, and Foreign Affairs, and has been featured in The New York Times, BBC, Bloomberg News, NPR, and numerous German newspapers and broadcasters. Prior to joining GMF, she was director of international programs at the US Association of Former Members of Congress in Washington, D.C., and managed outreach to Capitol Hill and US government officials for programs such as the Congressional Study Group on Germany.

She received a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and a master's degree from Columbia University, and is an alumna of the Robert Bosch Fellowship and the American Council on Germany's McCloy Fellowship programs.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Ellen Demuth MP**

Member of the Foreign Affairs  
Committee of the German  
Bundestag, CDU

Ellen Demuth was born on July 10, 1982, in Linz am Rhein, Rhineland-Palatinate. She studied Business Administration in Bad Honnef-Bonn and Melbourne. From 2011 to 2025, she was a directly elected member of the Rhineland-Palatinate Landtag. Since 2025 Demuth has been a Member of the German Bundestag for the Neuwied/Altenkirchen constituency. There she is a full member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, and the Committee on Culture and the Media. She is also a member of the German delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and serves as deputy chair of the Subcommittee on Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *Rt Hon.* **Sir Michael Fallon**

Former Secretary of State for Defence,  
Conservative Party, United Kingdom

Rt Hon. Sir Michael Fallon KCB, the former Defence Secretary, retired from Parliament at the last election after 31 years as MP for Darlington and then Sevenoaks. He served as a minister in four Conservative governments under Margaret Thatcher, John Major, David Cameron and Theresa May. As Secretary of State for Defence from 2014 to 2017 he led the UK's contribution to the Coalition against the Daesh; he began the British Army training of Ukrainian forces after the invasion of Crimea and launched the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF).

Sir Michael is chairman of Aberdeen Investcorp Infrastructure Partners (AIIP); senior adviser (aerospace and defence) at BlueFive Capital, non-executive chairman, Avanton Limited (property development); adviser to Nova Innovation Ltd (renewable energy) and consultant to other companies in the security and infrastructure sectors.

Sir Michael is a member of the Advisory Board of the Council on Geostrategy; a UK member of the Indo-Pacific Commission chaired by former Canadian PM Stephen Harper at Policy Exchange; and an advisory council member of the Centre for Policy Studies. He writes, lectures and broadcasts on defence, security and international affairs. He also reviews books on classics and ancient history for Classics For All.

He is President of the Friends of St Mary's Church, Sundridge. He served as President of the Royal Society for Blind Children from 2010 to 2024.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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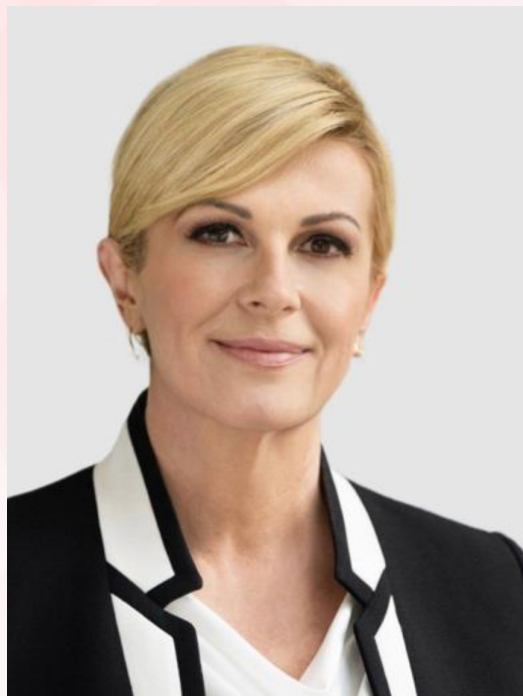
*Hon.*  
**Antonio  
Giordano**  
**MP**

Secretary-General of the ECR Party  
and IDU Executive Vice Chairman,  
Fratelli d'Italia, Italy

Born in Naples in 1964, Antonio Giordano is a Member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in the 19th legislature, serving on both the Finance Committee and the Committee on European Union Policies. He is Secretary-General of the European Conservatives and Reformists Party (ECR Party) and Executive Vice Chairman of the International Democracy Union (IDU), the global organization of centre-right and conservative parties committed to defending democracy and freedom. With a legal background and professional experience in management and entrepreneurship, he has taken part in the major developments of the Italian conservative movement—first within Alleanza Nazionale, later in Fratelli d'Italia, and subsequently in the broader European conservative family (ECR Party). He is actively engaged in promoting IMEC's strategic and geopolitical vision and serves as chair of the interparliamentary group on the project.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# *H.E.* **Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**

4th President of Croatia, HDZ

Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović is the 4th and 1st female President of Croatia (2015-2020) with broad national and international experience in geopolitics, diplomacy and international security. During her career as an elected official and in national and international civil service, among others, she was elected a Member of the Croatian Parliament (2003), and served as Croatia's first female Minister of Foreign Affairs (2003-2008) and Ambassador to the United States, co-accredited to Mexico, Panama and the Organisation of American States (2008-2011), as well as the first female Assistant Secretary General and member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Senior Leadership (2011-2014).

She was elected an Independent Member of the International Olympic Committee in 2020, and has been appointed Chair of the Future Hosts Commission for the Games of the Olympiad. She is a co-chair of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board, co-convened by the WHO and the World Bank, and serves on the boards of a number of non-profit institutions, such as the US Atlantic Council, Halifax International Security Forum, Concordia Leadership Council, GLOBSEC, and Friends of Europe. She is a Member of the High Level Advisory Council for the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and chair emerita of the Council of Women World Leaders.

Parallel to her diplomatic and political careers, she has pursued an academic career in government, international relations and security studies at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy (1994-1995), the George Washington University (2002-2003), Harvard University (2009), the Johns Hopkins University (2011), and the University of Zagreb. She is a recipient of the 2019 Fulbright Lifetime Achievement award for her "remarkable contributions as a leader, diplomat, and public servant", the George Washington University President's medal, and a number of other national and international awards, decorations, recognitions, honorary doctorates and honorary citizenships.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Eduard Habsburg- Lothringen**

Distinguished Fellow, Danube Institute;  
Former Ambassador of Hungary to the  
Holy See and the Sovereign Military  
Order of Malta

Eduard Habsburg-Lothringen is 59 years old, married and the father of six children. Until 2025, he was, for ten years, Ambassador of Hungary to the Holy See and to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. He has studied in Germany and in Switzerland, and he wrote his thesis on Thomistic philosophy. Before his current position, he was a screenwriter, and a presenter in a TV series, and has worked for five years as the spokesman of Msgr. Klaus Küng, Bishop of St Pölten and “family bishop” of Austria. He has published several novels and books on history and family, his latest books are: *Dubbe: The Double-Headed Eagle* (2020); *The Habsburg Way, 7 Rules for Turbulent Times* (2023); *Building A Wholesome Family in a Broken World: Habsburg Lessons from the Centuries* (2024). He is passionately active on X and currently has more than 100,000 followers. He speaks seven languages: German, English, Italian, Hungarian, French, Spanish, Latin.



## **Florian Hahn** **MP**

IDU Vice Chairman,  
Minister of State at the Federal  
Foreign Office, CSU, Germany

Florian Hahn was born on 14 March 1974 in Munich. He has been a Member of the German Bundestag since 2009 and was appointed Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office on 6 May 2025.

Before assuming his current role, Hahn served as Defence Policy Spokesman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group from 2021 to 2025, and as European Policy Spokesman of the same group from 2018 to 2021. Between 2014 and 2018, he acted as Spokesman of the CSU regional group on foreign policy, defence, EU affairs, development cooperation, human rights and humanitarian assistance. From 2012 to 2015, he also served as a Lecturer at the Bavarian Academy for Advertising and Marketing in Munich.

Prior to his parliamentary career, Hahn worked for the management team at Gast Service AG from 1997 to 2000, before moving into press and public relations at Krauss-Maffei-Wegmann from 2000 to 2002. He then qualified as a Certified Senior Clerk in Electronic Marketing at the Bavarian Academy for Advertising and Marketing in Munich (2002-2003), after which he worked in party politics from 2003 to 2009 as Deputy Head of Policies and Party Work for the Christian Social Union (CSU) and Administrative Manager of Junge Union Bavaria.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Lord Hannan of Kingsclere**

IDU Vice Chairman; International Secretary, Conservative Party, United Kingdom

Daniel Hannan, Lord Hannan of Kingsclere, is International Secretary of the Conservative Party. An author and journalist, he lectures at Buckingham University and, from June 2026, he will take over as Director of the Institute of Economic Affairs, the oldest free-market think tank in the UK.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Gordan Jandroković**

Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, HDZ

Gordan Jandroković currently serves as Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, a position he has held continuously since 2017. He is serving his third consecutive term as Speaker and his seventh term as a Member of Parliament, following his re-election in 2024.

Prior to assuming the position of Speaker, he held a number of parliamentary roles, including Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament (2016–2017), Chairman of the European Affairs Committee (2015–2016), Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee (2004–2007), and Chairman of the Committee on the Economy, Development and Reconstruction (2003–2004), as well as Deputy Chairman and member of several key committees. He also served as Head of the Parliamentary Delegation to the Croatia-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee (2004–2007) and as a member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

He served as Deputy Prime Minister (2010–2011) and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (2008–2011), where he was responsible for Croatia’s foreign policy and the European integration process.

His earlier professional career includes employment in a private construction company (1989–1994), followed by service as a diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1994–2000), and subsequently managerial positions in the private sector (2000–2003).

Jandroković graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Zagreb, where he earned a Master of Arts in Political Science. He also graduated from the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the University of Zagreb, obtaining a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering. Additionally, he attended the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1996 to 1997. In 1995, he completed the Graduate Course in European and World Affairs at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, as well as a course on issues in market economies at Erasmus University Rotterdam. From 1997 to 2002, he served as Executive Editor of the “Witnesses of History” series.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *Hon.* **Enda Kenny**

13th Taoiseach of Ireland,  
Patron of Worldwide Support  
for Development (WSD)

Enda Kenny is an Irish politician of the Fine Gael party who served as Ireland's Taoiseach (Prime Minister) from 2011 to 2017, following a historic victory at the 2011 general election, with his party becoming the largest in the state for the first time. During his two terms in office, he led Ireland from its worst recession to a period of unprecedented prosperity, with Ireland becoming the fastest-growing European economy in the last three years.

He counts a number of successes under his leadership: Ireland gained full access to the financial markets in 2013; unemployment more than halved; borrowing rates plummeted, and Ireland became the first country to allow for same-sex marriages via public referendum. He also changed the relationship between the Irish Government and the Catholic Church with an uncompromising condemnation of a series of scandals exposed within the Church. In 2013, he conducted the Presidency of the EU and oversaw the agreement on its budget of €960 billion. He is the longest-serving TD currently in Dáil Éireann, which makes him the incumbent Father of the Dáil.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Rihards Kols MEP**

National Alliance, Latvia

Rihards Kols is a Latvian politician, currently a member of the European Parliament, working in the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on International Trade and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. Member of the ECR Party Board of Directors.

Previously Rihards Kols was a member of the 14th Saeima (Parliament of Latvia) and Chairman of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Committee, as well as a member of the 13th and the 12th Saeima, representing the “National Alliance” party. Rihards Kols served as the head of the Saeima delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Security and Cooperation Organization (OSCE), representing the Saeima in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

His previous work experience includes working as the Prime Minister’s Parliamentary Secretary, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Culture and interning at the Royal Institute of International Affairs Chatham House. Rihards Kols serves in the Latvian National Guard, is a Millennium Fellow at the Atlantic Council, and is a member of the Senior Network of the European Leadership Network. Rihards Kols holds a Master’s Degree in Diplomacy and a Professional Bachelor’s Degree in Law.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Emanuele Loperfido MP**

Fratelli d'Italia, Italy

Emanuele Loperfido, born in Pordenone in 1975, holds a degree in Political Science from the University of Padua. He is a Member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, where he serves as Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee and sits on the Defence Committee. He is also a member of the Italian Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and chairs the Italy-Poland Parliamentary Friendship Group.

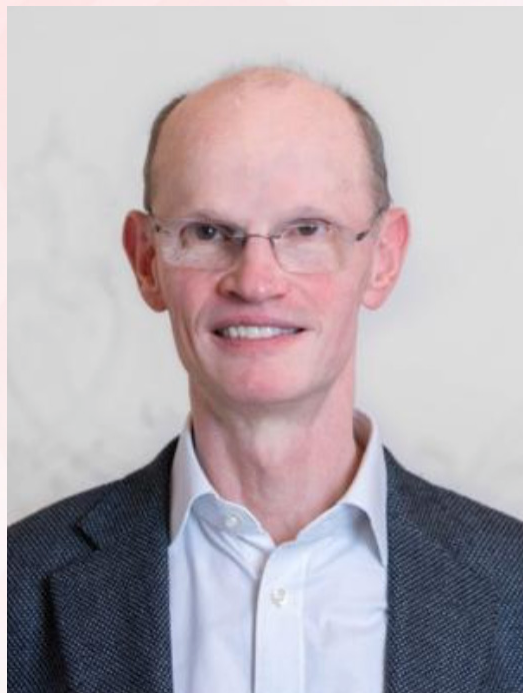
Before entering Parliament, he took part in the governance of the City of Pordenone, serving as Deputy Mayor from 2021 to 2022 and as Municipal Executive Councillor for Commerce, Security and Civil Protection from 2016 to 2021. He was also a City Councillor from 2006 to 2022.

Professionally, he has over 15 years of experience in international trade. He worked for nine years as Export Manager for a mechanical engineering company based in the Province of Treviso, followed by five years as Sales Area Manager for a Swedish foundry operating in the earthmoving machinery sector. Since 2019, he has been employed by LTL Spa, part of the EssilorLuxottica Group, as Sales Area Manager; he is currently on leave due to his parliamentary mandate.

He speaks English, Portuguese and Spanish fluently.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### **John Lough**

Senior Research Fellow, Head of Foreign Policy & International Partnerships,  
New Eurasian Strategies Centre

John Lough is a geopolitical expert with a background in Russia and Eastern Europe, whose 35-year career has spanned the worlds of business, diplomacy, and research. Before moving to NEST Centre, he was a partner at Highgate, a leading London-based strategy consulting firm. Since 2009, he has been an Associate Fellow with the Russia & Eurasia Programme at Chatham House, London, where he has written extensively on a wide range of issues related to Russia and Ukraine. He leads NEST Centre's work on foreign policy issues. Between 2016 and 2021, he ran his own consultancy business, advising clients on political and investment risk in Russia, Ukraine, and other countries of the former Soviet Union. From 2008 to 2016, he led the Russia/CIS practice at BGR Gabara, a public affairs consultancy. From 2003 to 2008, he served as an international affairs adviser at TNK-BP, Russia's third-largest oil company at the time. He spent six years with NATO, managing information programmes aimed at Central and Eastern Europe, including a posting to Moscow where he set up NATO's Information Office in Russia. He was the first Alliance official to be permanently based in Russia (1995-1998). Before joining NATO, he was a senior lecturer at the Soviet Studies (later Conflict Studies) Research Centre in the UK, writing on defence, security, and foreign policy issues related to the former Soviet Union. He studied German and Russian at Cambridge University and holds a diploma in international relations from the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. He is the author of *Germany's Russia Problem* (Manchester University Press, 2021).

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Timcho Mucunski**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
Foreign Trade, VMRO-DPMNE,  
Republic of North Macedonia

Timcho Mucunski is an Associate Professor at the Iustinianus Primus Faculty of Law at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on Roman law, rhetoric, argumentation models, corporate ethics and others. He has co-authored two university textbooks, as well as over 30 scientific and professional papers published in international and domestic scientific journals. He has taken part in a number of international scientific conferences, while simultaneously being actively engaged in several international and domestic scientific research projects.

Between 2015 and 2017 he held the office of Deputy Minister for Information Society and Administration, while from 2020 to 2021 he also served a term as MP in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, chairing the Parliamentary Committee on Financing and Budget while also serving as member in the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Policy and the Committee on European Affairs. In 2018, he was appointed the International Secretary of VMRO-DPMNE, serving the role until he was named Vice-President of the party.

In October 2021 he was elected Mayor of the Skopje Municipality of Aerodrom, discharging the mayoral office until June 2024, when he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. He also served as the International Secretary, as well as Vice-President of VMRO-DPMNE.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Thibault Muzergues**

Political Director, Shared Ground

Thibault currently serves as Political Director for Shared Ground, a think-tank that works to reconcile conservatism and centre-right politics with the environment. A seasoned expert in European, Mediterranean and transatlantic politics, he started his career as a political advisor and campaign consultant in the UK and France in the 2000s before working for the International Republican Institute for nearly 15 years, working to advance democracy around the world - and especially in Europe. A public intellectual and Research Associate at the Wilfred Martens Center for European Studies in Brussels and the Istituto Affari internazionali in Rome, he is also the author of four books - the latest of which, "La Droite Woke" came out in March this year in France, as well as numerous publications and op-eds in French, English and Italian language media.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# *H.E.* **Petro Poroshenko MP**

5th President of Ukraine and Chairman  
of the European Solidarity Party

Petro Poroshenko is the Chairman of the Political Party “European Solidarity”, the co-Chairman of the parliamentary group of “European Solidarity”, the member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (the Parliament of Ukraine) and the 5th President of Ukraine (2014-2019).

Petro Poroshenko was born in the city of Bolhrad, Odesa region, on September 26, 1965. From 1982 to 1989, he studied at Taras Shevchenko National University at the Faculty of International Relations and International Law from which he graduated with a Diploma in International Economic Relations. In 1998, he started his political career with his election as a Member of the Parliament of Ukraine. In 2005, Petro Poroshenko served as Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. In 2006, he was elected as Member of the Parliament of Ukraine and, from 2006 to 2007, chaired the Committee on Finance and Banking Activity of the Parliament of Ukraine. In 2009, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and in 2012 - the Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine.

In November 2013 - February 2014 he was one of the key leaders of the Revolution of Dignity and strong promoters of Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic integration. In May 2014 Petro Poroshenko won in the first round of the early presidential elections and became the 5th President of Ukraine. The conclusion and entry into force of Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, introduction of visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine, creation of new modernized NATO-standard Ukrainian Armed Forces, as well as consolidation of international unity and solidarity with Ukraine against Russian aggression are among the key achievements of his presidency.

After his defeat in the 2019 presidential elections, in May 2019 Petro Poroshenko was elected as the Chairman of the Political Party “European Solidarity” and led the party to the new Parliament of Ukraine following early parliamentary elections in July 2019.

Petro Poroshenko is honored economist of Ukraine, laureate of the State Prize of Ukraine in the sphere of science and technology, laureate of the P. Orlyk international prize, holder of the Grand Cross Order of Civil Merit of the Kingdom of Spain.

He is married to Maryna Poroshenko. They have 4 children: sons - Oleksiy (1985) and Mykhailo (2001), daughters - Yevheniya and Oleksandra (2000).

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Paul Prososki**

Resident Program Director for the West  
Balkans, International Republican Institute

Paul Prososki is a government affairs, campaign, and advocacy consultant who has worked in Washington and around the world for 20+ years. He was the Resident Program Director for the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Serbia and Bosnia from 2005–2015, and currently serves as the Director for the Western Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia) based in Belgrade. Paul has led IRI's respected public opinion research program across the region, and advised major political parties in seven national elections. He created multiple grassroots NGOs to fill niches in advocacy, and funded and advised others, to drive public demand for reforms. He advised ministers on labour market and agricultural reforms in Serbia, NATO membership in Montenegro, and trade liberalization in Bosnia, as well as business leaders in Iraq. Paul has also consulted in Brussels, Hungary, Jordan, Korea, Lebanon, Oman, Poland, Slovakia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Prior to joining IRI, Paul was the chief economist and lobbyist for the State Government Affairs team at Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), one of the leading strategy and advocacy groups for the centre-right in Washington. At ATR, he built coalitions of businesses and activists at the state and federal level, and led successful coalition campaigns to change economic policy in six states and to defeat 10 legislators. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Americans for Tax Reform Foundation. Paul also has extensive legislative experience, serving as a legislative assistant for educational policy for the Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Tom Petri of Wisconsin.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Zsófia Rácz**

Editor-in-Chief, Hungarian Conservative Magazine; Head of Communications, Danube Institute

Zsófia Rácz began her professional career at the United Nations, where she represented Hungarian youth as Hungary's UN Youth Delegate from 2017 to 2018. In the summer of 2019, as a "Magyar Foundation Fellowship" grantee, she spent six months researching and working at the Center for European Policy Analysis in Washington, D.C. Her international advocacy work was later followed by serving the interests of Hungarian youth; from 2020 to 2022, she worked as Deputy State Secretary for Youth Affairs, first at the Ministry of Human Resources and then at the Prime Minister's Office alongside the Minister for Families. From 2022 to 2023, she worked as a Ministerial Commissioner at the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration. Currently, she serves as editor-in-chief of the Hungarian Conservative online magazine and Head of Communications at the Danube Institute.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Gordan Grlić Radman**

Minister of Foreign and European Affairs,  
HDZ, Croatia

Gordan Grlić Radman has served since July 2019 as Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia. Prior to his current post, among others, he was Croatian Ambassador to Germany from October 2017 to July 2019, and from 2012 to 2017 Ambassador to Hungary, where he also acted as Secretary of the Danube Commission (2011-2014). Before joining the diplomatic service, he worked in Switzerland as a research development team leader and member at Melior-Haefliger AG (1984-1991). During the early 1990s he volunteered in the Government's Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees and at the Medical Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia. Alongside his diplomatic career, Minister Grlić Radman has lectured at the Faculty of Political Science, Dag Hammarskjöld University College, the Diplomatic Academy, and the War College of the Ministry of Defence. He holds a PhD in political science from the University of Zagreb (2007) with a dissertation on European security architecture and neutrality. Earlier studies included management in Switzerland and a degree in agricultural economics at the University of Zagreb.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *H.E.* **Christian Schmidt**

High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina; Vice Chairman of the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation

Christian Schmidt was born in 1957 in Oberzenn, Germany. He is married and the father of two children. By profession a lawyer, he studied at the University of Erlangen and the University of Lausanne.

Schmidt has been serving as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1 August 2021. He served as a Member of the German Bundestag from 1990 to 2021, during which time he was a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and rapporteur for the Western Balkan States. Between 1992 and 1998, he represented the CSU parliamentary group in the Western Balkans advisory circle of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and chaired the Parliamentary Working Group for Foreign Policy, Defence and European Affairs for the CSU parliamentary group from 1991 to 2002.

He served as Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Defence from 2005 to 2013, and subsequently as Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development from 2013 to 2014. From 2014 to 2018, he held the position of Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture. Earlier, from 2002 to 2005, he served as Spokesperson of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group for Defence.

Beyond his parliamentary roles, Schmidt served as Vice-Chair of the CSU from 2011 to 2017. He has been President of the German Atlantic Association since 2006 and Vice-Chair of the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation since 2018.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *Dr.* **Bob Seely**

Former Member of Parliament, Journalist,  
Conservative Party, United Kingdom

As a young foreign correspondent, Bob Seely witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union close up, reporting from throughout that country as it broke up. He first warned of a revanchist Russia in the mid-1990s and has researched and written about it extensively since then.

As a British soldier, he served on the Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and ISIS campaigns, where he witnessed the changing nature of war at first hand. He was decorated with a Military MBE for his operational tours by the late Queen, Elizabeth II.

As a Member of Parliament from 2017 to 2024, he warned of the growing threat to peace and the changing nature of threats, not only from Russia, but also from China.

Dr. Seely has long been fascinated by the fusion of different forms of conflict, trying to understand them from informational, military, academic and political angles. He devoted a decade of study to Russian warfare for his PhD from the famous War Studies Department at King's College, London.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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### *Commissioner* **Dubravka** **Šuica**

European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, EPP Vice President, IDU Vice Chairwoman, HDZ, Croatia

Dubravka Šuica is a Croatian politician from the City of Dubrovnik. She entered politics in the 1990s as a member of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ/EPP) and served as a Member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice Chair of the EU Integration Committee.

She served as Mayor of Dubrovnik for two terms from 2001 to 2009 as its first female mayor and was awarded the 2006 World Mayor Award.

From 2002 to 2012, she was the Vice President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. From 2008 to 2011, she was the President of the Croatian Parliament Delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

From 2013 to 2019, Dubravka Šuica served as a Member of the European Parliament and Head of the Croatian delegation of HDZ/EPP. She was Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee and in June 2019, she was elected as first Vice Chair of the EPP Group in the European Parliament. She is currently Vice-President of the EPP and Vice Chairman of the International Democracy Union. From December 2019 until December 2024, Dubravka Šuica was Vice President of the European Commission in charge of Democracy and Demography.

Since 1 December 2024, Dubravka Šuica is the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, in the second Commission of President von der Leyen. Commissioner Šuica is also responsible for Demography. The new portfolio on the Mediterranean is accompanied by the establishment of the new Directorate-General MENA within the European Commission, for relations with the Middle East, North Africa, and the Gulf countries.

As the Commissioner for the Mediterranean, Dubravka Šuica is responsible, amongst others, for developing the New Pact for the Mediterranean and the Trans-Mediterranean Initiative on Energy and Clean Tech.



## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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*H.E.*  
**Ante  
Šušnjar**

Minister of Economy, Croatia

Ante Šušnjar was born on January 27, 1983, in Mostar. He graduated from the Faculty of Law in Split in 2006 and passed the bar examination in 2009. Since 2010, he has been registered in the Bar Register.

He built his professional career in legal practice, with a focus on commercial law and working with entrepreneurs. From 2012 to 2024, he served as a partner at the law firm Potočnjak & Šušnjar in Zagreb, and from 2020 also as a licensed insolvency administrator.

He was appointed Minister of Economy in May 2024. At the time of his appointment, he came from the private sector, without a conventional political background, which set him apart from the typical profiles associated with that office. In initial media coverage, he was also described as the “cheerful minister” – a characterization he himself embraced as a message of optimism in the public sphere. In his public role, he places emphasis on energy, industry, entrepreneurship, and investment, with an approach grounded in analysis, experience, and dialogue with the business community.

## *SPEAKER BIOGRAPHY*

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# **Zala Tomašič MEP**

Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)

Zala Tomašič is a Member of the European Parliament from Slovenia. Before her election, she worked in Slovenian diplomacy and within European institutions, building on her studies in political science and economics in the United States and a master's degree in international relations from King's College London. In the European Parliament, she focuses on competitiveness, digital transformation, and the green transition.



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