



GREEN TRANSITION FORUM 5.0: POWERING UP COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION IN THE CEE

Co-organised by [Dir.bg](http://dir.bg) and the Bulgarian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Sofia Event Center, Mall Paradise, floor 3

Day 1, June 16th, Monday:

Spotlight Topics for Day 1:
BOOSTING CEE COMPETITIVENESS, SECURING ECONOMIC GROWTH, UNION OF SKILLS AND WORKFORCE, REDUCING ADMINISTRATIVE BURDENS, THE NEW EUROPEAN AUTOMOTIVE STRATEGY, THE ReARM PLAN AS A SECURITY BLUEPRINT

08:30 - 09:00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
8:00 - 9:00 Alpha 2+3	<p>High-Level Business Leaders Discussion with Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, Former Prime Minister of Italy (Invitation only)</p> <p>Keynote Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, former Prime Minister of Italy <p>Moderator: Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria (2005-2009), Member of SFC, GTF</p>
09:00 - 10:30 Beta Hall	<p>Welcome Address from the Organisers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monika Stanisheva, Founder of GTF and President of the Board, Dir.bg • Savvas Karafyllidis, President, Bulgarian-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Industry <p>Key-note: Opening: Accelerating EU Competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrico Letta, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, former Prime Minister of Italy • Keynote address: Mathias Cormann, Secretary General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <p>Roadmaps for Economic Growth, Sustainable and Inclusive Progress High-Level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria (2005-2009), Member of SFC,</p>

	<p>GTF</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roxana Mînzatu, EU Commission Executive Vice-President, Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs, and Preparedness • Borislav Gutsanov, Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria • Krasimir Valchev, Minister of Education and Science, Bulgaria • Victor Negrescu, VP, European Parliament • Lukas Mandl, Member of the EU Parliament, SEDE • Dimitar Tsotsorkov, CEO, Divela Investments <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the Clean Industrial Deal in supporting EU industries • Key recommendations from Enrico Letta's report on EU economic transformation • The Union of Skills: Building a Workforce for the Digital and Green Transition • Educational initiatives to meet industry demands
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
Parallel Sessions	
11:00 - 12:30 Beta Hall	<p>Panel Discussion: Completing the EU Single Market and Reducing Administrative Burdens</p> <p>Moderator: Kostadin Sirleshtov, Partner, CEE and Head of Energy & Climate Change, CMS</p> <p>Fireside chat with Denys Strobykin, General Manager, PMBG</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prof. Manyu Moravenov, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, Bulgarian Stock Exchange • Christof De Mil, CEO, UBB • Evgeni Angelov, Chairman, Bulgarian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association • Ioannis Masoutis, President, Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, tbc • Ioanna Konstantopoulou, Vice President, Hellenic Investors Association • Tsvetelina Kuzmanova, Senior Manager Projects, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership • Paul Davidson, Head of Measuring Regulatory Performance Programme, OECD <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing Overregulation: Identifying and eliminating excessive bureaucratic

	<p>complexities that obstruct business efficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulatory support for innovation as key to driving competitiveness, productivity, sustainability and better life standards. Supporting SMEs: Tailoring regulatory frameworks to facilitate small and medium-sized enterprises' growth and competitiveness. The importance of stock exchanges in CEE: Boosting IPO activity, encouraging private sector growth, and developing new financial products tailored to local needs
11:00 - 12:30 Alpha 2+3	<p>High-level Roundtable Discussion Union of skills – exchanging views with members of Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria (<i>Side event</i>)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roxana Mînzatu, EU Commission Executive Vice-President, Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs, and Preparedness Andriana Sukova, Deputy Director-General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Zornica Rousinova, President of the ESCB Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria
12:30 - 13:00	Lunch Break & Networking
Parallel Sessions	
13:00 - 14:30 Beta Hall	<p>Transport & Connectivity: The Backbone of a Competitive CEE High-level panel</p> <p>Moderator: Petar Vitanov, Member of the European Parliament (2019-2024)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Commissioner For Sustainable Transport And Tourism Grozdan Karadjov, Minister of Transport, Bulgaria Christos Dimas, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, Greece Beata Daszynska-Muzyczka, President and CEO Three Seas Business Council Jesus Caballero, CEO, SOF Connect Konstantinos Maraitidis, President of Hellenic Industrial Council, tbc Suzana Carp, Co-Founder, Cleantech for CEE <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding and modernizing transportation networks to enhance economic growth and strengthen connectivity Strengthening transport links in the Region to facilitate trade, investment, and regional integration through strategic infrastructure projects Leveraging digitalization and innovation to create intelligent transport systems that accelerate economic development and improve regional mobility

13:00 - 14:30 Alpha 2+3	<p>Roundtable Discussion: Implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive - challenges and opportunities B2G format</p> <p>Moderator: Slavcho Neykov, Member of the Strategic Foresight Committee, GTF</p> <p>Participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parliamentary Committee on Energy ● Ministry of Energy ● Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works ● Sustainable Energy Development Agency ● General Directorate for Fire Safety and Civil Protection ● Bulgarian Construction Chamber ● European Digital Innovation Hub in the Construction Sector ● Bulgarian Facility Management Association ● Fund of Funds ● National Trust Eco Fund ● Center for Energy Efficiency Effect ● Center for the Study of Democracy ● Other stakeholders from the construction sector <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The mandatory construction of net-zero buildings from 2030 - administrative burdens and possible pathways ● Application of the minimum energy standards for existing buildings
13:00 - 15:00 Alpha 1	<p>Bulgaria 2040 - Round table Discussion <i>Co-Organised in collaboration with BESCO</i></p>
Parallel Sessions	
14:30 - 16:00 Beta Hall	<p>Shaping the Future of EU Defence and Security in Turbulent Times High-Level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Boyko Vassilev, TV presenter and host, BNT</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Atanas Zafirov, Deputy Prime-Minister, Bulgaria ● Rossen Plevneliev, Former President of the Republic of Bulgaria ● Tonino Picula, Member of EU Parliament, AFET ● H.E. Nathaniel Copsey, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Bulgaria ● Sylvie Matelly, Director, Jacques Delors Institute ● Katerina Tsapikidou, Director International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thessaloniki ● Petar Cholakov, Co-Chair, Association "Bulgarian Defence Industry", Member of the Board of Directors, OPTIX AD ● Svilen Rangelov, CEO, Dronamix

	<p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the ReArm Plan contribute to the EU's strategic autonomy in a world of growing geopolitical tensions? • Mobilising Financial Resources for EU Defence: Strategies and Implications • Economic Impacts of Increased Defence Spending • Enhancing Investments with Dual-Use Technologies: Driving Innovation and Security
<p>14:30 - 16:00 Alpha 2+3</p>	<p>Electrification of Transport and Green Mobility Panel Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Lubomir Stanislavov, CEO, Automotive Cluster, Bulgaria</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vladimir Sedlarski, Chairman of the BOD, Plant Manager, Yazaki, tbc • Mario De Martino, Managing Director, Porsche BG EOOD & Porsche Inter Auto BG EOOD • Petar Vitanov, Member of the European Parliament (2019-2024) • Kristian Krastev, Minister of Transport (2013), Deputy Mayor of Sofia (2020-2022) • Konstantinos Chatzifotis, European Affairs Manager, Motor Oil Group • Ivo Tsachev, Expert, Head of eMobility Solutions, TotalEnergies • Vladislav Atanassov, CCS task force leader, FPPG, tbc • Petar Georgiev, Strategic Alliances, Regulatory & Sustainability at AMPECO • Victor Popov, Co-Founder and CEO, Autoware Lab <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Path to a New European Automotive Strategy: Balancing Decarbonization, Competitiveness, and Economic Security • Ensuring the EU remains a global leader in automotive innovation • Trade Policy and Global Cooperation: Navigating trade challenges and opportunities in the automotive sector • Decarbonising the Automotive Industry: Strategies for transitioning to sustainable mobility • Scaling up EV adoption and sustainable logistics for the next-generation transport systems • Driving climate innovation in electric vehicles/mobility: helping citizens choose zero-emission vehicles • Policy Alignment and Best Practices



EVENING AGENDA (15 June):

19:00 - 21:00 - Exclusive VIP Dinner (Invitation Only) N.B. To request attendance, please contact the organiser

Venue: [Hilton Hotel](#), RUEN Hall

Keynote speaker:

- **HE Enrico Letta**, President of the Jacques Delors Institute, Former Prime Minister of Italy

Honorary Guests:

- **HE Roxana Mînzatu**, EU Commission Executive Vice President
- **HE Natalia Kiselova**, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria

Moderator: Mr. Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria (2005-2009)

An exclusive networking dinner bringing together top policymakers, industry leaders, and experts to foster dialogue on the green transition, competitiveness, and innovation in the CEE region.



Day 2, June 17th, Tuesday:

Spotlight Topics for Day 2:

ENERGY SECURITY AND CONNECTIVITY, THE FUTURE OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION, SCALING UP RES, REGIONAL COOPERATION, PROF. DARON ACEMOGLU MASTERCLASS, GLOBAL ECONOMIC SHIFTS AND TRADE CONFLICTS, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, BULGARIA-ROMANIA-TURKEY BUSINESS FORUM

08:30 - 09:00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 10:30 Beta Hall	<p>Strengthening Regional Cooperation, Developing Infrastructure & Connectivity for Economic Growth and Competitiveness</p> <p>Opening Remarks from Discussions Organisers: Green Transition Forum, Bulgarian-Romanian and Turkish-Bulgarian Chambers of Commerce and Industry</p> <p>Energy Security and Connectivity – Building a Resilient Energy Future High-Level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Slavcho Neykov, Member of the Strategic Foresight Committee, GTF</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Zhecho Stankov, Minister of Energy, Bulgaria ● Stavros Papastavrou, Minister of Environment and Energy, Hellenic Republic, tbc ● Sebastian-Ioan Burduja, Minister of Energy, Romania, tbc ● Jan Dusík, Deputy Director-General for Climate Action, tbc ● Kumi Kitamori, Deputy Director of the Environment Directorate, OECD ● Kyriacos Kakouris, Vice President, EIB ● Lukasz Kolinski, Director for Green Transition and Energy System Integration, DG Energy, EC ● Eng. Georgi Mikov, CEO, Electrohold Bulgaria ● Nicholas Snowdon, Head of Metals and Mining Research, Mercuria Energy Trading SA ● Rob Dobbins, Head of Partnerships and International Assets, OMV Petrom <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The role of regional cooperation in securing energy supply ● Infrastructure investments: grids, interconnectors, pipelines, and storage ● How to reduce the prices of energy to boost economic growth in the region

10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
Parallel Sessions	
11:00 - 12:30 Beta Hall	<p>Scaling Up Renewable Energy – What’s Next for RES in CEE? Breaking Regulatory Barriers & Enabling Faster RES Integration</p> <p>Moderator: Genady Kondarev, Senior Associate, E3G, Energy Expert, Sustainable Energy</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angelin Tsachev, Executive Member of the Board and CEO, Energy System Operator • Georgi Peshev, CEO, Energeo • Andreas Chollet, Head of Development at wpd Europe GmbH and Country Manager for Bulgaria • Bozidar Dedus, Co-Founder, Member of the Board, Croatian Association for the development and application of hydrogen fuel cells • Adam Harmat, Climate and energy programme leader, WWF CEE <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind, solar, hydro, and beyond – what technologies hold the most promise? • Overcoming land, regulatory, and grid challenges • The role of corporate PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements) in RES expansion • The impact of permitting delays and bureaucratic hurdles on RES projects in Bulgaria • Best practices from countries leading in renewables deployment
11:00 - 12:30 Alpha 2+3	<p>Roundtable Discussion: Energy, Trade, Workforce and Regional Competitiveness in the Balkans. Perspectives from business leaders and policymakers</p> <p><i>Co-Organised in collaboration with the Bulgarian-Romanian and Turkish-Bulgarian Chambers of Commerce</i></p> <p>Moderators: Hristo Radichev, Country Manager, Mediapost Hit Mail; Eleonora Ivanova, Founder, BRCC</p> <p>Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iva Petrova, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Bulgaria • Pencho Milkov, Mayor of Ruse Municipality • H.E. Brândușa Ioana Predescu, Ambassador of Romania to Bulgaria • H.E. Mehmet Sait Uyanık, Ambassador of Türkiye to Bulgaria, tbc

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kamen Ivchev, Regional Manager, MET Energy Trading Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, and Albania • Mila Nenova, CEO, Invest Bulgaria Agency • Borislav Kostadinov, Fund Director Green for Growth Fund, Finance in Motion • Veselin Todorov, President, Solar Academy Bulgaria • Mag. Svetoslav Mladenov, CEO & Member of the Board of Directors, Smart Solar Technologies • Daniela Boycheva, Managing Director, CTP Bulgaria • Svetlozar Dimitrov, Co-founder and CEO, euShipments.com • Bulmarket Representative, tbc <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trade dynamics between Romania, Türkiye and Bulgaria • Key sectors for investment and cross-border collaboration • Removing regulatory and logistical barriers • Strengthening the digital economy & tech ecosystem • Cybersecurity & data protection in a connected market • The role of PPP for building sustainable and resilient infrastructure
11:00 - 12:30 Alpha 1	<p>Masterclass with Prof. Daron Acemoglu, Nobel Prize Winner for Economy, 2024</p> <p>Moderator: Iliya Lingorski, Chief Economist of the Bulgarian Development Bank</p> <p>Topic: Understanding the Intersection of Economic Growth, Technology, and Sustainability in the Global Economy</p> <p>C-level Exclusive Session with Opportunities for Direct Interaction with the Nobel Prize Winner for 2024</p> <p>Limited Seats (Available Only for Participants, Pre-Registered by the Organizers)</p>
12:30 - 13:00	Lunch Break & Networking
Parallel Sessions	

13:00 - 13:30 Beta Hall	<p>Geopolitics and Economic Security – How Should the EU Respond to Global Economic Shifts and Trade Conflicts While Maintaining Competitiveness?</p> <p>Fireside Chat with Maros Šefčovič, Vice-President of the European Commission</p> <p>Moderator: Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of Bulgaria (2005-2009)</p> <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic responses to geopolitical challenges • Maintaining EU competitiveness in the face of global trade tensions • Ensuring energy and economic security in an uncertain world
13:30 - 15:30 Beta Hall	<p>How to Secure Sufficient and Affordable Power for Businesses and Households</p> <p>Fireside Chats: The Future of Energy Security and Connectivity in CEE Region</p> <p>Opening Keynote: Iva Petrova, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy, Bulgaria</p> <p>1. How to Lower Energy Prices and Reduce Regulations to Boost Industry Competitiveness</p> <p>Moderator: Martin Vladimirov, Director, Energy and Climate Program, Center for the Study of Democracy</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dietmar Preinstorfer, Vice President, Council of European Energy Regulators • Plamen Mladenovski, Chairman, Energy and Water Regulatory Commission • Valentin Nikolov, CEO, Bulgarian Energy Holding • Vladimir Dichev, Chief Commercial Officer, Electrohold Bulgaria • Kalina Trifonova, Deputy chairperson of the Management Board, EVN Bulgaria • Dirk Buschle, Partner, Becker Butner Held • Kostadin Sirleshtov, Partner, CEE and Head of Energy & Climate Change, CMS <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural issues affecting high energy costs in CEE • Market-based vs. policy-driven solutions for price reduction • How energy-intensive industries can adapt to fluctuating prices <p>2. Is nuclear energy the key to ensuring an affordable and reliable energy supply?</p> <p>Moderator: Kaloyan Staykov, Chairman of the Board, Energy Management Institute</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tzvetelina Penkova, Member of the European Parliament, ITRE • Petyo Ivanov, Executive Director, NPP Kozloduy New Build

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bogomil Manchev, Chairman, Bulgarian Atomic Forum <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of Nuclear in the energy future of the region
13:30 - 15:00 Alpha 2+3	<p>The Role of Natural Gas as a Transition Fuel. Gas Networks and Energy Security</p> <p>Moderator: Claudia Patricolo, Energy & Climate Journalist</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vladimir Malinov, CEO, Bulgartransgaz • Teodora Georgieva, CEO and Board Member, ICGB • Murad Heydarov, Executive Director for Balkans, Socar • Predrag Grujicic, Head of Gas Unit, Energy Community Secretariat • Dmytro Lyppa, Advisor to the CEO, Energy Company of Ukraine • Szabolcs I. Ferencz, Chairman-CEO, FGSZ Natural Gas Transmission • Peter Fildishev, Head of Gas Trading and Operations, MET Energy Trading Bulgaria • Svetoslav Benchev, Chairman, Bulgarian Petroleum and Gas Association • Maria Krasteva, Executive Director, Bulgarian Natural Gas Association <p>Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Gas in the Energy Transition • Enhancing regional energy security through interconnected gas networks • Best practices for cross-border cooperation and infrastructure development • E-Fuels and the Future of Low-Carbon Energy Solutions • The role of LNG in Energy Security and EU supply chains
Parallel Sessions	
17:30 – 19:00	<p>Prof. Daron Acemoglu public lecture</p> <p>Moderators: Monika Stanisheva, Founder of Green Transition Forum Eddie Milev, The Economist Group</p> <p>Access to the Public lecture requires additional tickets</p>

EVENING AGENDA:
20:00 - 21:45 - Exclusive VIP Dinner (Invitation Only)
Venue: [Hilton Hotel](#), MUSALA Hall



Honorary Guests:

- **HE Rumen Radev**, President of the Republic of Bulgaria
- **Prof. Daron Acemoglu**, Nobel Prize Winner for Economics, 2024

Host: Iliya Lingorski, Associate Professor of FEBA, Sofia University

Keynotes:

- **HE Rumen Radev**, President of the Republic of Bulgaria
- **Prof. Daron Acemoglu**, Nobel Prize Winner for Economics, 2024
- **Monika Stanisheva**, Founder of Green Transition Forum

An exclusive networking dinner bringing together top policymakers, industry leaders, and experts to foster dialogue on the green transition, competitiveness, and innovation in the CEE region.



Day 3, June 18th, Wednesday:

Spotlight Topics for Day 3:

SCALING UP INVESTMENTS AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCE, UNLOCKING PRIVATE CAPITAL AND CAPITAL MARKETS TO BOOST COMPETITIVENESS, INVESTMENT, ESG, SMART CITIES, CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND RECYCLING

08:30 - 09:00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
Parallel Sessions	
09:00 - 11:00 Beta Hall	<p>Sustainable Development of the Regions. Carbon-Neutral and Smart Cities: From Vision to Reality High-Level Opening Panel</p> <p>Opening Remarks: Vasil Terziev, Mayor of Sofia</p> <p>Moderator: Silvia Georgieva, CEO, NAMRB</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivan Ivanov, Minister of Regional Development and Public Works, Bulgaria • Kata Tüttö, President of the European Committee of the Regions • Konstantinos Gioulekas, Deputy Minister of the Interior, sector of Macedonia and Thrace, Hellenic Republic, tbc • Andriana Sukova, Deputy Director-General, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion • Dominik Jarmer, Managing Director, EVN Bulgaria • Hans Rhein, Head of LIFE Unit, CINEA • Dragomir Tsanev, CEO, Center for Energy Efficiency EnEffect <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key challenges and opportunities in achieving net-zero emissions • The road to net-zero: Strategies for urban decarbonization • Best practices from the first 100 carbon-neutral EU cities • Green infrastructure, mobility, and smart city innovations • The potential of energy communities in the energy transition
11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break
Parallel Sessions	
11:30 - 13:00 Beta Hall	Unlocking Private Capital for CEE Competitiveness: Leveraging Savings, Pension Funds, and Investment Vehicles

	<p>Moderator: Sophia Kassidova, Head of Strategy and Green Policies, BDB</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vassil Golemanski, Chair of the Financial Supervision Commission • Stefan Tzalov, Head of Unit, Institutional Relationships, Nordics, Baltics & CEE, EIF • Tsanko Arabadjiev, CEO, Bulgarian Development Bank • Svetla Nestorova, CEO, GPF Doverie • Martin Gikov, Chairperson, Board of Jeremie, Bulgaria, EIF • David Reeser, Founder and CEO, OpiAld <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilizing Private Capital for Growth – How can CEE tap into private savings, pension funds, and institutional investments to fuel innovation and infrastructure? • Pension Fund Reform & Market Deepening – Strengthening regulatory frameworks to encourage pension fund participation in long-term investments and capital markets • Unlocking Institutional Investments – Overcoming barriers to private equity and venture capital expansion in CEE to support high-growth sectors • Developing Investment Vehicles for Competitiveness – Creating targeted financial instruments such as investment funds, bonds, and structured products to channel capital into strategic sectors • How can CEE countries integrate more effectively into the EU's capital markets to boost financial stability and competitiveness?
<p>11:30 - 13:00 Alpha 2+3</p>	<p>Interlinked Conversations:</p> <p>Key Topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Driving the Circular Economy Forward – Pathways and Best Practices for Sustainability <p>Forget recycling. Enter the circular economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keynote speech of Vojtech Vosecky, Founder, The Circular Economist, Sweden <p>Moderator: Genadi Kondarev, Senior Associate, E3G, Energy Expert, Sustainable Energy</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arno Behrens, Senior Environmental Economist, Environment, Natural

	<p>Resources and Blue Economy Global Practice, Europe and Central Asia Region, World Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jana Velichkova, Executive Director, Bulgarian Soft Drinks Association • Georgios Karakatsanis, Founder & Director at EVOTROPIA Ecological Finance Architectures <p>2. Circular Thinking and Innovations in Design, Architecture, and Construction</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sofia Hagen, Director & Owner, Sofia Hagen Ltd • Spas Kerimov, CEO, Pheuma • Arch. Georgi Stanishev, Architecture and Scenographie Atelie, France <p>Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating the Circular Economy in Urban Planning • Circular Design & Adaptive Architecture – Modular, flexible, and sustainable building concepts. • Rethinking Materials and Sustainability in Construction.
13:00 - 13:30	Lunch Break & Networking
Parallel Sessions	
13:30 - 15:00 Beta Hall	<p>Scaling up Investments and Financial Instruments to Boost EU Competitiveness High-Level Policy Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Lilyana Pavlova, Vice President of the European Investment Bank (2019 - 2023)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delyan Dobrev, Chair of the Committee on Budget and Finance, National Assembly, Bulgaria • Ilyana Tsanova, Chief Risk Officer, EC • Martin Danovski, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Innovations and Growth, Bulgaria • Borislav Bangeev, Head of Corporates, UniCredit Bulbank • Manuela Naessl, Head of Bulgaria, EBRD • Pawel Nierada, Senior Advisor Three Seas Business Council, former Member of Supervisory Board of the Three Seas Initiative Investment Fund <p>Fireside chat with Rasih Ozturkmen, Founder and Managing Director, Carbonaires Ltd.</p>

	Key Discussion Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilising capital for transformative projects, bridging funding gaps, and catalysing sustainable growth • Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) & Private Equity: Attracting more capital to the region, especially for sustainability-driven projects • Addressing regulatory and structural barriers to facilitate capital flow in CEE economies
13:15 - 13:30 Alfa 2+3 13:30 - 14:30 Alfa 2+3	Interlinked Discussions: Investment in Green Solutions: Shaping the Future of Sustainability Keynote: Robin Teurlings , Managing Partner, Zero Emissions Fund Green Solutions from Bulgaria: The Innovators Speaking Co-organised by Move.bg Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ana Doneva, Project Manager, MOVE.bg Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Startup Champions from Green Solutions from Bulgaria Discussion points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships between governments, businesses, and financial institutions to scale circular practices • Integrating circular economy principles in the manufacturing and consumer goods industries in CEE
14:30 - 15:30 Alfa 2+3	Youth Innovators Panel: Green Digital Hub for Startups and Enterprises - GreenDigiHub co-organised by FEBA, Sofia University, IEDC (Slovenia), LIBA (Lithuania), American University Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assoc. Prof. Savina Mihaylova-Goleminova, PhD • Fund of Funds Key Discussion Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Entrepreneurial Skills for young people • Using AI and digital tools to create social enterprises and startups • Supporting green startups in energy transition
Parallel Sessions	

15:30 - 17:00 Beta Hall	<p>ESG as a Growth Engine: Turning Responsibility into Competitive Advantage</p> <p>Moderator: Tsvetelina Kuzmanova, Senior Manager Projects, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ellen Wasylina, Founder and CEO, Trocadéro Forum ● Borislav Kostadinov, Fund Director Green for Growth Fund, Finance in Motion ● Claudia Marcusson, Adjunct at National University of Singapore and C-Level Advisor ● Denimir Dimitrov, Founder & CEO, Zero Wave <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How sustainability drives innovation, profitability, and resilience in the CEE region ● Lessons from businesses that have successfully incorporated ESG strategies into their growth models ● The 'S' in ESG: Rethinking Social Impact Beyond Diversity Reports – employee well-being, supply chain ethics, and true social responsibility
15:30 - 17:00 Alpha 2+3	<p>Interlinked Conversations: Driving the Circular Economy Forward – Pathways and Best Practices for Sustainability Smart Water Management</p> <p>Moderator: Ivan Ivanov, President of Bulgarian Water Association</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Atanas Kostadinov, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Water, tbc ● Wendy Francken, President, European Water Association ● Veronica Manfredi, Director, Zero Pollution, Water Resilience & Green Urban Transition (ENV.C), DG ENV, European Commission, tbc ● prof. eng. Gancho Dimitrov, PhD, Bulgarian Water and Sewerage Holding EAD <p>Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EU Water Resilience Strategy ● Reducing water loss through infrastructure modernization ● Desalination, wastewater reuse, and alternative water sources ● Digital solutions for water monitoring, efficiency, and recycling



Day 4, June 19th, Thursday:

Spotlight Topics for Day 4:
CLEAN INDUSTRIAL DEAL, DECARBONIZATION, BLACK SEA REGION, ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION, BLUE ECONOMY AND WATERS, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

08:30 - 09:00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 10:30 Beta Hall	<p>Driving Clean Industrial Decarbonization – Challenges and Opportunities High-Level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Boyko Vasilev, TV host and presenter, BNT</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rosen Jeliaskov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria ● Teresa Ribera, Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition, EC ● Manol Genov, Minister of Environment and Water, Bulgaria ● Dan Nica, Member of the European Parliament, ITRE ● Irena Tsakova, General Manager, Dundee Precious Metals ● Vedrana Lemor, Head of Corporate Sustainability, Aurubis AG ● Konstantin Bojinov, Head of ANRAV, Heidelberg Materials, Devnya <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● European Clean Industrial Deal ● Implementation of the Affordable Energy Action Plan to reduce energy costs for industries and households. ● Fast-tracking the Critical Raw Materials Act to secure access to essential materials and reduce dependency on imports. ● Enhancing productivity and boosting trade and supply chain resilience ● Initiatives to reduce emissions and make industries more sustainable
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break and Family Photo
11:00 - 12:30 Beta Hall	<p>The Role of Black Sea Region in the Global Water Geopolitical Landscape High-level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Tonya Dimitrova, World News Editor, Bulgarian National Television</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manol Genov, Minister of Environment and Water, Bulgaria ● Mircea Fechet, Minister of Environment, Water and Forests, Romania ● Sergiu Lazarencu, Minister of Environment, Moldova ● Svitlana Grynychuk, Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charlina Vitcheva, Director General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, EC ● Sofian Jaupaj, Deputy Minister for Tourism and Environment, Albania <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthening national and regional strategies for water protection ● The Blue Deal in CEE: Challenges and Opportunities ● Policy frameworks for tackling drought and water scarcity ● Innovative technologies and investment strategies for water efficiency and conservation
11:00 - 12:15 Alpha 2+3	<p>Roundtable discussion: The Road Map to Net Zero: Decarbonizing Industry in CEE (Invitation only)</p> <p>Moderator: Julian Popov, Minister of Environment and Water, Bulgaria (2023-2024), Senior Fellow, Strategic Perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EVP Teresa Ribera, Executive Vice-President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition, EC ● Industry stakeholders <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Roadmaps for decarbonization of Bulgarian heavy industry ● State Aid Framework, CBAM, ETS 1
12:15 - 13:00 Alpha 2+3	<p>Interactive discussion: From Policy to Practice: Industrial Decarbonization and CleanTech - Challenges and Opportunities</p> <p>Moderator: Julian Popov, Minister of Environment and Water, Bulgaria (2023-2024), Senior Fellow, Strategic Perspectives</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Petar Dilov, Minister of Economy and Industry, Bulgaria ● Kumi Kitamori, Deputy Director of the Environment Directorate, OECD ● Radan Kanev, Member of the European Parliament, ENVI ● Linda Kalcher, Executive Director, Strategic Perspectives ● Phuc-Vinh Nguyen, Head of Jacques Delors Energy Center, JDI ● Assoc. Prof. Dr. Atanas Georgiev, Dean of FEBA, Sofia University ● Industry stakeholders
12:30 - 13:00	Lunch Break & Networking
Parallel Sessions	
13:00 - 14:30	The Agri-Food Sector: How will the new Common Agricultural Policy ensure

Beta Hall	<p>sustainability and resilience? High-level panel</p> <p>Moderator: Svetlana Boyanova, Executive Director, Bulgarian Agrarian Chamber</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Georgi Tahov, Minister of Agriculture and Food, Bulgaria ● Florin Barbu, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Romania, tbc ● Kostantinos Tsiaras, Minister of Rural Development and Food, Hellenic Republic, tbc ● Eric Sargiacomo, <i>Vice-Chair, Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, European Parliament</i> ● Gijs Schilthuis, Director for Sustainability, DG AGRI ● Stephan Schraff, Head of Public Affairs European Union, Bayer <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vision for agriculture and food, and the three aspects of sustainability of the agri-food sector ● Tailored Strategies for CEE Agriculture: Addressing Unique Challenges and Unlocking Opportunities ● Advancing Climate-Resilient Irrigation and Water-Efficient Farming Practices ● Innovation in agriculture as a driver for sustainable development and system resilience
<p>13:00 - 14:30 Alpha 2+3</p>	<p>Progressive Discussions: Beyond Survival: Rethinking Resilience in a Changing Climate</p> <p>Moderator: Svetlana Zhekova, Member of the Expert Advisory Board to the EU Mission for Climate Change Adaptation, Minister of Environment and Water (2014)</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr Philippe Tulkens, <i>Head of Unit at DG Research & Innovation, EU Focal Point for IPCC, Deputy Manager of the EU Mission for Adaptation to Climate Change</i> ● Joanna Masic, Lead Urban Specialist for Cities and Climate Change, World Bank ● Richard Smithers, Director of the Mission Implementation Platform for Adaptation to Climate Change (MIP4Adapt), Ricardo Energy & Environment ● Stephan Krastev, Deputy Mayor of Pernik, tbc ● Magladelna Maleeva, Founder, Gorichka.bg ● Climate Coalition, tbc <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are our adaptation and risk reduction efforts truly future-proof? ● Exploring strategies to unlock and scale up financing for climate adaptation, including public-private partnerships and innovative funding mechanisms. ● Emphasizing the importance of accessible and accurate climate data to inform

	<p>policy and decision-making at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunities for cities and collaborative initiatives for resilient urban planning • Highlighting the role of communities and local stakeholders in co-creating effective adaptation and risk reduction strategies. • Exploring how coordinated action across local, regional, national, and international levels can drive innovative policies and technologies, ensuring resilience and equitable outcomes in the face of climate challenges.
14:30 - 15:00	Coffee Break
Parallel Sessions	
15:00 - 16:30 Beta Hall	<p>Transforming the Agri-Food Sector: Ensuring Sustainability and Resilience in Food Production</p> <p>Moderator: Mariya Hristova, Founder, AgriVentures</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giannis Balakakis, Chair of Organizing Committee, AgriBusiness Forum • Georgios Karakatsanis, Founder and Director, EVOTROPIA Ecological Finance Architectures • Eleonora Markova, Regional Manager Central & Eastern Europe, UPL Corp, tbc • Sonsoles Jiménez, Director, Alberizas My Greens • Jivko Djamiarov, Co-Founder, Ancestral Superfoods • Angel Hristov, Co-Founder, Enthela • Ivan Stanev, Co-Founder, Bulgarian Food Exchange • Georgi Toskov, Associate Professor, University of Food Technologies – Plovdiv <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing sustainable farming practices and innovations in food supply chains • Circular solutions in agriculture: Waste-to-resource models and food production sustainability • The role of technology and AI in transforming food production for greener outcomes

<p>15:00 - 16:30 Alpha 2+3</p>	<p>Blue Economy and Sustainable Development: Balancing Growth, Biodiversity, and Environmental Protection in the Black Sea</p> <p>Moderator: Gayane Minasyan, Practice Manager, World Bank</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prof. Hristo Pimpirev, Scientist, Polar Explorer ● Dr. Lene Buhl-Mortensen, Principal Investigator at the Institute of Marine Research in Norway ● Dr. Nikolay Georgiev, CEO, Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture, tbc ● Yavor Dimitrov, Director, Black Sea Basin Directorate - Varna ● Tania Marinova, PhD, Director General, National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology ● Flotilla admiral, prof. Kalin Kalinov, Naval Academy Nikola Vaptsarov <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adapting to Climate and Environmental Challenges ● Innovations in sustainable fisheries and aquaculture ● Harmonizing economic growth with marine biodiversity conservation ● Strategies for coastal resilience and disaster risk reduction ● The role of marine protected areas in economic sustainability ● Climate adaptation policies for maritime industries ● Sustainable tourism and its impact on coastal communities ● Regulatory approaches to ensuring long-term environmental sustainability
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Day 5, June 20th, Friday:

Spotlight Topics for Day 5:

SCALING UP INNOVATIONS, NAVIGATING STARTUP SUCCESS, FUNDRAISING SECRETS, SCIENCE FOR INDUSTRY, DIGITALISATION, CYBERSECURITY AND AI, TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION, EUROPEAN FEMALE FOUNDERS AND INVESTORS SUMMIT

08:30 - 09:00	Registration & Welcome Coffee
09:00 - 10:30 Beta Hall	<p>Innovation as the Cornerstone of EU and CEE Competitiveness High-Level Panel</p> <p>Moderator: Svetoslav Ivanov, Journalist, Author, and Host of "120 minutes", bTV Media Group</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation ● Tomislav Donchev, Deputy PM, Minister of Innovation and Growth, Bulgaria ● Dimitrios Papastergiou, Minister for Digital Governance, Hellenic Republic, tbc ● Svetoslav Tsenov, Senior Executive and Global Transformation Lead, Astellas Pharma ● Anastasios Dzikas, President, International Exhibition of Thessaloniki, tbc ● Maria Fátima Lucas, Co-founder and CEO, ZYMVOL ● David Reeser, Founder and CEO, OpiAld ● Sasha Bezuhanova, Founder, MOVE.BG <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The impact of the EU Competitiveness Compass on innovation-driven growth ● Insight into the European Commission's strategic direction for Horizon Europe and other R&I frameworks supporting higher education and digital transformation ● Scaling up startups and deep tech in CEE: success stories and lessons learned ● Leveraging technology, R&D, and AI to position the region as a tech hub
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break & Networking

10:45 - 12:00 Beta Hall	<p>From Policy to Practice: What Europe's Innovators Need Navigating startup success in Europe: speed, strategy, and the single market Ask me anything session</p> <p>Moderator: Irina Obushtarova, Co-founder & CEO, The Recursive</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation • Vincent van Steensel, Mandate Management Director, EIF • Svetoslava Georgieva, Chair, EIC Fund Board • VC and Startup Ecosystem stakeholders <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How EU innovation policies are evolving in 2025 and beyond; startup-friendly regulations: What's working, what's not, GDPR, AI Act, and Digital Markets Act: Impact on startups • Bridging early-stage funding gaps in emerging EU ecosystems, encouraging pension funds and institutional capital to back startups, access to public funding and navigating EU grant programs • Tech, digital, entrepreneurial skills, Attracting and retaining top talent in the region, University spin-offs and tech transfer improvements
10:30 - 12:00 Alpha 2+3	<p>From Campus to Cloud: Transforming Higher Education Through Innovation and Research High-Level Conversation</p> <p>Moderator: Neli Koleva, Ph.D., Policy and Communications Executive</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miglena Temelkova, Ph.D., Chairwoman, Council of Rectors, Bulgaria • Corr. Memb. Prof. Evelina Slavcheva, President, Bulgarian Academy of Science • Milena Stoycheva, Minister of Innovation (2023 - 2024), CEO, JA Bulgaria • Elena Radeva, Professor of Business Administration, AUBG • Momtchil Karpouzanov, Ph.D., Academic Director of Graduate Programs, AUBG • Georgi, Georgiev, Program Director, Elevate Accelerator • Council of Rectors, Bulgaria <p>Key Discussion Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimagining the Role of Universities in the Digital Age • Strategies for building dynamic partnerships between universities, research institutes, and the startup ecosystem

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking the potential of EdTech in CEE and removing barriers to scaling EdTech solutions. • Empowering the next generation of innovators, engaging young entrepreneurs and students as co-creators in educational reform, R&D agendas, and sustainability-driven innovation. • Fostering an Entrepreneurial Mindset in Higher Education
12:00 - 12:30	Lunch Break & Networking
Parallel Sessions	
12:30 - 14:00 Beta Hall	Digitalizing Industries and Services Moderator: Natalia Miteva , Advisor to the Minister of Education and Science, Bulgaria, tbc Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valentin Mundrov, Minister of e-Government, Bulgaria • Petar Yonchev, Manager of ITR Services Ltd • Ilia Krastev, CEO, A Data Pro, Board Member, AIBEST, Board Member, BRAIT • Nesin Veli, CEO, Identrics • Nikolay Lavrov, Co-Founder and CEO, Autoware lab • Information Services, tbc Key Discussion Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerating smart technology adoption to enhance productivity and modernization
12:30 - 15:00 Alpha 1	Inauguration event of the EIT Community Hub in Bulgaria <i>Support for Innovations and Deep Tech Talents</i> <i>Side Event</i>

12:30 - 14:00 Alpha 2+3	European Female Founders Summit Part 1
12:00 – 12:30	Check-In & Coffee Moderator: Opening Remarks from the EFF Founders: The Future is Female-Led (For Real) An inspiring session on how women-led businesses drive social and economic progress — and how the EFF can make a real, practical difference in helping them grow and succeed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational Opening • Host welcome and institutional address • The European Female Founders Association: Who, What, Why
13:20 – 13:40	Fireside Chat: Breaking Barriers & Making Big Moves Discussion with women who’ve built, scaled, and struggled along the way. The real story behind the headlines—what worked, what didn’t, and what they wish they knew earlier.
13:40 – 14:00	Coffee Break and Networking
14:00 – 14:15	Funding the Female Future: The Business Case for Investing in Women Keynote by Gerd Bommer, plus a panel with investors who <i>actually</i> fund women-led businesses. Get the inside scoop on what they look for, how to pitch them, and where to find the right funding.
14:15 – 14:45	Investors panel Fast, powerful insights from female founders on how they turned an idea into a real, profitable business—without following the “rules.”
14:45 – 15:45	Lunch & Matchmaking (Without the Cringe Factor) (No dull networking here—just great food and a chance to meet like-minded female founders, investors, mentors, you’ve been looking for)
14:00 - 15:00 Beta Hall	Emerging Futures: Opportunities and Threats AI and Augmented Reality Moderator: Monika Manolova , Innovation Expert, DNA Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariagrazia Squicciarini, Chief of Executive Office, Social and Human Sciences Sector at UNESCO • Melodena Stephens, Professor, Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government • Joel Mayers, IEEE Smart Cities, Italy, UK, US, Mexico, IT engineer, Entrepreneur, Founder • Caroline Gans Combe, Associate Professor & Senior Research Fellow AI, Data,

	<p>Ethics, Economics, INSEEC Business School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● David Kvaternik, Founder of Tvornica.Tech (T.T), 3D and XR expert tbc ● Andreas Windisch, Theoretical Physicist, AI specialist, Head of Research Unit, Joanneum Research
<p>15:00 - 16:00 Beta Hall</p>	<p>Emerging Futures: Opportunities and Threats</p> <p>Cyber Security and Convergent Technologies</p> <p>Moderator: Anton Puliyski, Chairman, Emerging Technologies Integration Cluster</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deniz Turgout, Founder and Managing Director of PriorityZero ● Alexander Klasanov, Cyber Club Community ● Krasimir Traykov, Security Awareness Trainer & Information/Corporate Security Specialist ● Yanko Spasov, Digital Transformation & Cyber Security Consultant, tbc ● Boris Goncharov, Security Architect, Amatas, tbc



15:45 - 18:00 Alpha 2+3	European Female Founders Summit Part 2
15:45 – 16:00	Golden Sponsors Speaker Opportunity
16:00 – 16:30	Masterclass: The Perfect Pitch with David Reeser <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Got a killer idea? Now make people believe in it. This session covers exactly how to pitch so investors want to say yes. ● Fundraising Secrets: The Comprehensive Masterplan for Winning Investors and Building Lasting Relationships
16:30- 17:30	Moderator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentorship Circles: Ask Anything, Learn Everything Small, honest conversations with women who've been where you are. Walk away with real answers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How to scale without burning out ● How to pitch without sounding like everyone else ● How to lead with confidence and build a business that people remember
17:30 – 17:45	EFF Awards: Recognizing Women Who Are Changing the Game Big news! EFF is teaming up with Nordic Women in Tech Awards to launch the EFF Awards, celebrating female founders who are shaking things up across Europe.
17:45 – 18:00	Closing Remarks from the Hosts
18:00 - 20:00	Female Founders and Investors Open Mic Cocktail