



Monday October 26, 2026
Ballroom, Sofia Balkan Palace

Discussion Topics

European Unity at a Crossroads: Nationalism vs. a Common Strategy

With major European elections on the horizon in 2027, the debate over national interests versus collective EU foreign and security policy is intensifying. This panel will address whether the EU should re-evaluate its approach to member states to counter rising nationalism and strengthen European cohesion.

A New Chapter in Transatlantic Relations: U.S. Engagement in the Black Sea

Following the recent agreement for the stationing of U.S. tanker aircraft despite external warnings, this panel will explore the evolving strategic partnership between Bulgaria and the United States. Experts will discuss the implications for regional security, NATO's eastern flank, and how this collaboration positions Bulgaria within the broader geopolitical landscape.

The First Year of the Euro in Bulgaria: Early Impacts and Future Prospects

Having officially adopted the single currency, Bulgaria is navigating its first year fully integrated into the Eurozone core. This panel will analyze the initial economic impacts of this milestone, the opportunities it presents for trade, how it can attract high-value Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and the steps needed to boost the country's overall economic competitiveness in the single market.

Economic Development and Defence: Investing in Security

In an era of shifting geopolitical landscapes, this session will explore the critical intersection of national security and economic growth. Discussions will focus on how increased defence spending and investments in the domestic defence industry can act as catalysts for technological innovation, economic development, and broader regional stability.



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Energy Resilience: Nuclear Power Stability and the Vertical Gas Corridor

While extreme heatwaves and historic low water levels in the Danube threaten regional power generation in neighboring countries, Bulgaria's nuclear plant stands as a pillar of operational resilience. This panel will address the ongoing need to maintain regional grid stability, balance the green transition, and highlight the strategic importance of the Vertical Gas Corridor in ensuring energy security and supply diversification across Southeast Europe.

The Demographic Dilemma: Addressing Population Decline in Bulgaria and Europe

Bulgaria and many other European nations are facing a severe demographic crisis characterized by aging populations and declining birth rates. This session will explore the socio-economic impacts of this trend and discuss potential strategies and policy interventions to mitigate its long-term consequences on the workforce, social security systems, and economic growth.

Circular Economy as the New Economic Driver

Transitioning to a circular economy is essential for building sustainable and resilient societies. This panel will explore the broader shift from traditional economic models towards resource efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable production. Discussions will focus on how businesses and governments can collaborate to integrate sustainable practices, foster green innovation, and unlock new economic opportunities while minimizing environmental impact.

Hardwiring the Region: Strategic Infrastructure and Connectivity in Southeast Europe

Developing robust and modern infrastructure is critical for the economic integration and long-term competitiveness of Southeast Europe. This panel will explore the expansion and modernization of regional transport networks, including key rail, road, and logistics connections. Stakeholders and experts will discuss the challenges of funding large-scale projects, accelerating cross-border cooperation, and building resilient infrastructure that can support sustainable economic development and stronger regional cohesion.

The AI Transformation: Driving Productivity and Economic Competitiveness

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming industries, redefining operational efficiency, and reshaping the global economic landscape. This panel will explore how businesses and economies in Southeast Europe can leverage AI technologies to drive innovation, optimize productivity, and unlock new growth potential. Discussions will focus on the integration of AI in traditional sectors, the critical need for workforce upskilling, and how embracing this technological shift is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in global markets.