



Labour Migration in Serbia

How to make the most of it?

Agenda¹

29 June 2022

10:00-12:30

Metropol Palace

Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra 69,
11000 Belgrade, Serbia

Hybrid meeting - Zoom registration: bit.ly/ZoomSRB



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OECD Global Relations
South East Europe

¹ This conference is not a meeting of an official OECD body.



The [OECD](#) is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practices and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

Since 2000, the [OECD South East Europe Regional Programme](#) has been closely collaborating with economies of the region to foster growth, investment and employment through reforms that support competitiveness and private sector development. The programme addresses regional and national needs, capacities and reform priorities while translating OECD standards and best practices into actionable advice for South East European (SEE) economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo* Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia).

■ WHAT IS THE MEETING ABOUT?

The Western Balkan Six (WB6) economies all have a long history of emigration. In 2020, more than one in five citizens born in the region lived abroad, mainly in a handful of OECD countries. This trend is set to continue, as more than one-third of WB6 citizens surveyed in 2021 considered emigrating.

High levels of labour emigration can pose a severe development challenge for the Western Balkans. However, the region's large and growing diaspora also provides opportunities, which remain largely untapped.

The [High-Level Conference on South East Europe: Human Capital Flight – Shaping The Future Together](#) was organised on 17 May 2022, bringing together more than 250 participants, including high-level representatives of SEE economies. It provided the occasion to discuss how the SEE governments can manage labour migration and offer better prospects for their citizens and businesses. The high-level stakeholders reflected on current challenges and shared insights and best practices on reversing the human capital flight and overcoming technological challenges in SEE through talent transformation.

The new OECD report [Labour Migration in The Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits](#), prepared between spring 2021 and January 2022, was launched at the High-Level Conference. The report provides analytical insights on WB6 economies' labour migration, with economy-specific policy recommendations to address its root causes and reap benefits of migration and the diaspora. This report, conducted under the auspices of the OECD SEE Regional Programme, was prepared in co-operation with the OECD International Migration Division and co-funded by Austria (ADA) and Switzerland (SDC).

A series of meetings in the Western Balkan Six economies will open up the chance for deepening the discussions that took place during the High-Level Conference and explore ways to continue and strengthen the work on labour migration and skills. In particular, this meeting will provide the opportunity to discuss key findings of the report and pathways to support Serbia in better capitalising on its diasporas for its own development.

■ WHO WILL BE THERE?

The meeting will bring together policy-makers from Serbia, OECD and international experts, representatives from Austria, Switzerland, and the European Union, as well as representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, Diaspora Associations and other non-governmental and international organisations present in Serbia.

*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on Kosovo's declaration of independence

29 June 2022

Metropol Palace, Belgrade, and on Zoom

09:30-10:00 **REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE**

10:00-10:15 **OPENING REMARKS**

- **Mr Urs Schmid**, Ambassador of Switzerland to Serbia and to Montenegro, Embassy of Switzerland
- **Ms Anita Richter**, Acting Head, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Ms Katarina Obradović Jovanović**, Assistant Minister for SME Development, Ministry of Economy, Serbia
- **Ms Karin Traunmüller**, Chargée d'Affaires, Embassy of Austria in Serbia

10:15-10:35 **PRESENTATION OF THE OECD REPORT**

Labour Migration in the Western Balkans: Mapping Patterns, Addressing Challenges and Reaping Benefits

This session will present the report's main findings for Serbia. It will also explore policy approaches for maximising the benefits from migration while mitigating its negative consequences.

- **Mr Martin Kohtze**, Policy Analyst/Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

Questions and answers

10:35-11:50 **PANEL DISCUSSION – Maximising the benefits from migration for Serbia**

This panel will discuss how Serbia can improve its policies to reduce the strength of potential push factors behind labour emigration and maximise the development benefits from migration and the diaspora.

MODERATOR:

- **Ms Jovana Mihajlović**, National Program Officer, Embassy of Switzerland

PANELISTS:

- **Ms Katarina Denčić**, Independent Advisor, Department of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Serbia
- **Mr Ivan Brkljač**, Director, Tačka Povratka (Returning Point)
- **Mr Martin Klaucke**, Head of Operations, Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
- **Ms Jovana Stamenković**, Project Manager - Program Migration and Diaspora, GIZ

Questions and answers

11:50-12:00

CLOSING REMARKS

- **Ms Anita Richter**, Acting Head, OECD South East Europe Division

12:00-12:30

NETWORKING COFFEE

Contacts

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