



SIGMA
Creating Change Together



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SIGMA Ministerial Conference

Good public administration for better lives in the Western Balkans

22 February 2022

AGENDA

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1. OBJECTIVE AND LEVEL OF DISCUSSION

The overall objective of the conference is to **help to give stronger political steer to the ongoing public governance reforms in the Western Balkans¹ that would help accelerate economic development, enhance wellbeing of citizens and provide support in overcoming the long-term health crisis.**

The conference will provide a **platform for ministers co-ordinating public governance reforms in the Western Balkans** to learn from experiences, exchange views and good practices at the regional level.

The conference provides an opportunity to disseminate and discuss the results and recommendations of the **SIGMA 2021 assessment** of public administrations in the Western Balkans.

The **high-level opening** session will include the participation of the **OECD Secretary-General** and the **European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement**.

2. OVERALL CONCEPT

Good public governance is widely recognised to play a **crucial role in economic and social development. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further emphasised the importance of a well-functioning and agile government and public administration.** Countries with strong institutions, a professional civil service and user-centric public services are better at managing a crisis, and they also create an environment that facilitates private sector growth, reduces poverty and delivers for citizens.

This conference launches the **SIGMA 2021 Monitoring Reports** on public administrations in the Western Balkans and its results show how public administration reforms have advanced over the past years. Building on the country specific reports, it focuses on the **key messages and lessons learned at the regional level and provides a platform for ministers to discuss what is behind the successes and challenges for implementing public administration reforms** in practice, as well as what can be learned from the crisis.

The 2020 EU Enlargement methodology established the rule of law and public governance among its fundamental components. This conference also allows for a timely discussion on the importance of public administration reforms for getting the fundamentals right in order to achieve sectoral policy objectives for the benefit of the citizens of the region.

3. CONTENT

The conference is planned for 2.5 hours and will include:

- Opening by the Secretary General of the OECD and the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement to deliver political messages on the importance of good public governance for economic development, overcoming crisis and achieving strategic policy objectives in the EU enlargement context.
- Presentation of the SIGMA 2021 assessment results in the Western Balkans.
- Ministerial-level discussion on how public governance reforms can improve the business environment and thus contribute to competitiveness and general wellbeing in the Western Balkan region.

Only minister-level speakers will participate at the ministerial plenary discussion, although wider audiences from the Western Balkan administration, civil society, media, OECD, EC and other international organisations are invited to follow the discussion.

The working language will be English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in Albanian, Bosnian/Montenegrin/Serbian and Macedonian.

¹ EU candidate countries and potential candidates: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, 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.*

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Time	Session	Speakers
09.30-09.50	Opening speeches: Good public governance matters for lives in the Western Balkans	Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General, OECD Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement (video message)
09.50-10.25	SIGMA 2021 assessment reports launch	Setting the scene by Andreas Schaal, Director of Global Relations Secretariat, OECD Introduction by Elsa Pilichowski, Director for Public Governance, OECD Presentation by SIGMA
10.30-11.45	Ministerial Discussion Ministers responsible for public administration from the Western Balkans Moderated by Gregor Virant Head of SIGMA OECD	Deputy Prime Minister, Albania Arben Ahmetaj
		Minister of Justice, Bosnia and Herzegovina Josip Grubeša
		Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs, Kosovo* Bardhyl Dobra
		Minister of Public Administration, Digital Society and Media, Montenegro Tamara Srzentić
		Minister of Information Society and Administration, North Macedonia Admirim Aliti
		Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Serbia Marija Obradović
11.45-12.00	Closing of the Conference	Allan Jones, Acting Director, Thematic Support Coordination of Policy and Financial Instruments, EC Gregor Virant, Head of SIGMA, OECD

Information for registration:

Please register for the event in advance of the meeting [HERE](#)