



CONFERENCE

BRIEF

KOSOVO PEACE AND DEMOCRACY SUMMIT (KPDS)

After the success of the first and second edition of the Kosovo Peace and Democracy Summit (KPDS) held in Pristina in 2022 and 2023, we are proud to announce that **the third edition of KPDS** will take place between **25th and 26th of September 2024 at Hotel Emerald in Pristina**.

KPDS is the only recurring international event focusing on regional democracy and stability in Kosovo. It expresses the organizer's readiness to contribute to social and political processes shaping Kosovo's and the region's future.

The Inaugural Kosovo Peace and Democracy Summit (KPDS) took place on September 15-16, 2022. Organized by the New Social Initiative (NSI), Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) and Sbunker, the summit gathered a diverse group of participants, including international, regional, and local experts, to discuss critical issues affecting peace and democracy in the Western Balkans. The summit #1 aimed to build momentum for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Keynote speeches included Manuel Sarrazin, Special Representative for the Western Balkans in the German government, who linked the region's future to European integration. Cynthia Cook from the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo noted the new urgency created by the Ukraine conflict, while Damon Wilson from NED called for bold moves to secure the future of Western Balkan societies.

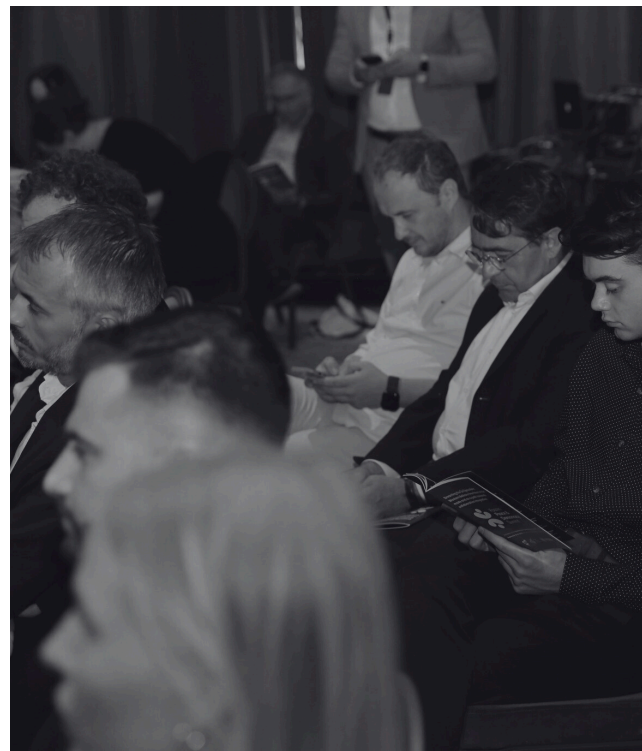
Key messages from the summit underscored the importance of dialogue and cooperation, the pivotal role of civil society in conflict resolution, and the need for collaborative efforts to advance peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

The 2nd Kosovo Peace and Democracy Summit (KPDS) was co-funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), the event attracted around 200 participants.

The 2nd Kosovo Peace and Democracy Summit (KPDS) took place on September 20-21, 2023, at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Pristina. Organized by New Social Initiative (NSI), Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS) and Sbunker.

The summit began with opening remarks from **Jeffrey M. Hovenier, the U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo**, who emphasized the Western Balkans' strategic importance in achieving a Europe that is "whole, free, and at peace." Ambassador Hovenier also highlighted the need for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia as a critical step for regional advancement.

The first panel discussion focused on the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. **Damon Wilson, President and CEO of NED**, opened the session, followed by contributions from **Alex Roinishvili Grigorev of the Council for Inclusive Governance, Engjellushe Morina from the European Council on Foreign Relations, and Dragisa Mijacic**. Discussions centered on the territorial issues in northern Kosovo, the need for effective power-sharing mechanisms, and the Importance of reducing ethnic tensions. The panelists also underscored the necessity of communicating the benefits of normalization to the public.





Following this, a conversation took place between **Cynthia Cook** from the **U.S. Embassy** and **Christian Ramet** from the **office of the EUSR for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue**, moderated by **Ramadan Ilazi**. They discussed the challenges and opportunities within the normalization dialogue, emphasizing the importance of Kosovo's aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration and the need for any agreements to align with Kosovo's constitution.



The second panel addressed the impact of the Ukraine war on EU enlargement policy. **Ambassador Szunyog from the EU Office to Kosovo** stressed that the current geopolitical climate presents a crucial moment for EU enlargement. Other panelists, including **Agon Maliqi** and Ukrainian journalist **Daria Meshcheriakova**, discussed the EU's containment versus enlargement policy, the importance of regional collaboration, and the need for a unified strategy for European integration.



The day's final panel focused on regional cooperation in the Western Balkans. **Stephen Heintz, President and CEO of the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation**, delivered the keynote address, emphasizing the importance of building on past experiences to improve regional cooperation. Panelists discussed the impediments to cooperation caused by bilateral issues, the potential for informal coalitions, and the necessity of preparing younger generations for future leadership roles.

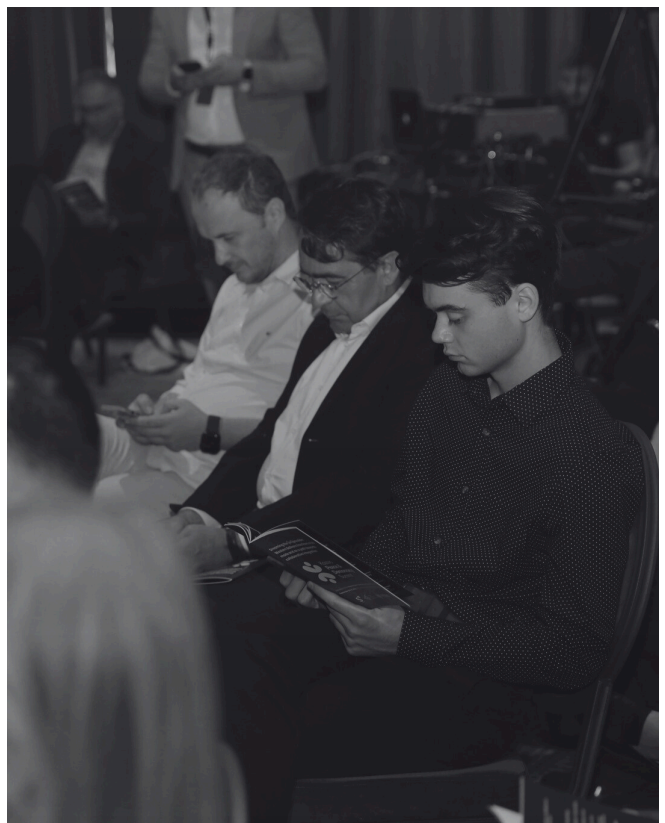
The second day of the KPDS began with remarks from Matthias Conrad, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Kosovo, who highlighted the global challenge of illiberal practices and the crucial role of civil society. The first panel of the day discussed addressing backsliding and illiberal practices in the Western Balkans. Panelists, including **Nermina Kuloglija-Zolj from BIRN-Sarajevo** and **Misha Popovikj**, explored the erosion of trust in public institutions, the impact of governmental failures, and the suppression of dissent.

The concluding panel of the summit focused on combating malign foreign influence and disinformation. **Bardhyl Jashari from the Metamorphosis Foundation** and **Darko Brkan from Zasto Ne** highlighted the recent rise of foreign malign influence and disinformation as a profit-driven business model. Discussions also stressed the importance of media transparency and effective communication, especially to the Kosovo Serb community.

Overall, the 2nd KPDS underscored several key messages: the critical need for normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, the Importance of EU enlargement and regional collaboration, the erosion of trust in public institutions, and the rising challenge of disinformation. Effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders, as well as preparing younger generations for leadership, were identified as essential steps towards achieving peace and democracy in the Western Balkans.



KPDS provides a unique national platform for international, regional, and local experts to collaboratively address and rethink solutions for the pressing issues of peace, democracy, and stability in Kosovo and the Western Balkans.



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**Kosovo Peace and
Democracy Summit**



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