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## Tuesday 29 June 2021, 11:00-12:15 (CET) Panel Discussion

The debate on the future of Europe has gained a new momentum due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related recovery measures adopted by the EU. Regarding the Western Balkans, the EU and the European Investment Bank have mobilized over EUR 3.3 billion to support the region in tackling the coronavirus health crisis and post-pandemic socio-economic recovery.

Across the Western Balkans, support for the EU enlargement process remain relatively high among citizens, but recent challenges have also empowered Eurosceptic voices. Moreover, in many EU Member States there has been a strong debate about the proposed enlargement, but the slow process of negotiations with countries in the region, and constant use of veto powers in the European Council against continuing accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia, have also caused fatigue in the accession debate. Consequently, it is crucial to discuss not only the future of the EU and EU solidarity inside its borders, but also in its closest neighbourhood.

What is the relation between EU solidarity, recovery packages and the enlargement process in the Western Balkans? Can this process help to tip the scales away from Euroscepticism?

In the framework of the upcoming publication of TEPSA's new book *Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals*, TEPSA organised a virtual panel discussion on **Tuesday, 29 June 2021, at 11:00-12:15 (CET)**. Contributors to the book from Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia discussed the topic of EU Solidarity in the context of the Western Balkans.

- **Alfonc Rakaj**, Researcher at [Institute for Political Studies](#), Albania,
- **Donika Emini**, Executive Director of the [Civikos Platform](#), Kosovo,
- **Irena Rajchinovska Pandeva**, Associate Professor at [Faculty of Law Justinianus Primus](#), "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University in Skopje, North Macedonia.

The discussion was moderated by **Johannes Pollak**, Director of and Professor of Political Science at the [Webster Vienna Private University](#), Austria, and co-editor of TEPSA's book series "[The Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals](#)".

This event took place in the framework of the upcoming publication of TEPSA's new book: "Solidarity in Action and the Future of Europe: Views from the Capitals", which will focus on solidarity in action and is edited by Michael Kaeding, Johannes Pollak, and Paul Schmidt. Coming soon via [Springer](#).