



# NEW REALITY



Bled  
Strategic  
Forum  
2017

4 – 5 September 2017  
Bled, Slovenia  
[www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)

## Leaders' panel

The world is rapidly changing, with globalisation and digitalisation significantly increasing the pace of our lives and bringing us closer together than ever before, as well as presenting profound challenges to our self-perception, politics, the economy, security, and society.

Established political, economic and social elites are losing ground. Populist, nationalist and extremist movements are on the rise. It is difficult to keep up with the vast amount of information that bombards us daily, let alone evaluate its true value or meaning and put it in a proper context.

Wars and conflicts in Europe's immediate neighbourhood and in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia challenge our views on morality, norms, and values. Terrorist attacks fuel fear in our lives and societies, and the fact that there are millions of refugees worldwide deepens our sense of insecurity.

With the world order possibly at breaking point, we need a strategic vision, strong democratic leadership, and perseverance. We need to adapt to the new reality, but always remember the foundations on which our modern societies were built. It is vital to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law continue to be respected, as well as everything else we have built through the decades.

## The future according to Tanja Fajon and Jacques Rupnik

What drives Europe and the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Can we overcome the current atmosphere of fear, helplessness and hopelessness?

In an informal chat with the two thinkers we will 'pick their brain' about big societal issues that are the EU's key challenges for the next decade. We will ask them how the move towards a society of change and innovation is reshaping Europe's economic model. Will everything in the future really be completely digital? On the issues of global social and democratic revolution, how can Europe deal with growing economic (and political) inequalities within the EU and beyond, and how can we restore trust in democracy, especially among the younger generation? Also, we will tackle issues of global geopolitical revolution, and ask them how they see the role of Europe in the new fragile and unpredictable world order.

## Special panel – A new vision for a new reality

Instability, poor development, environmental changes and conflict situations cause grave human suffering and result in violations of basic human dignity, social stability, peace and international law. To avoid this, people need to be put first. Long-term global peace, stability and sustainable development can be achieved only through result-oriented and enduring dialogue, taking into account the basic values, norms and principles enshrined in the UN Charter. Everybody deserves a better future.

## Conversation with the President-elect for the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic

The conversation will revolve around the priorities of the forthcoming presidency of the UN General Assembly, as well as the issues currently at the top of both United Nations and international agenda.

## Night Owl Session – Fake news, and do the media still need editors?

The growing use of the Internet and social media platforms, where anyone can share their version of the truth and spread misinformation, has fragmented the commonly agreed basis for reality and led to the polarisation of public opinion.

While the ‘fake news’ phenomenon is not at all new, the alternative facts phenomenon, along with media hacking, the changed rules of the political game, and the role of the media, is now in the forefront of mainstream debates.

Until we find an effective way of detecting manipulated versions of the same content and protecting ourselves from them, the truth, contrary to public interest, will continue to be tailor-made for and by every user, every company, and every government.

Organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Administration, the American Chamber of Commerce in Slovenia (AmCham Slovenia), and the German-Slovene Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AHK Slovenien), the 2017 Business BSF will focus on the role of innovations.

The world is changing rapidly. It no longer suffices to understand these changes solely on the basis of past experience and to adapt to a new reality with traditional approaches. We need to create and implement new business, economic and social concepts and new approaches in order to successfully address the challenges of our new reality. The future is not something that will happen tomorrow; it is happening today. So innovation may also be understood as an act of adapting to an already changed reality. To successfully adapt, transform, and reap benefits, the business sector first needs to be aware of global developments. What are the key disruptors, and who will be the winners in the transformational race?

## Global nuclear governance: Quo vadis?

The global security situation is more unstable and unpredictable than at the end of the Cold War. The increased tensions are further aggravated by public statements about the possible use and modernisation of nuclear weapons, as well as military exercises that simulate their deployment, including unannounced drills. Developments in other regions around the globe are also a cause for concern.

This new reality calls for more attention to global nuclear governance, and highlights the importance of preserving the integrity of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and achieving its universality and full implementation. It also shows the need for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as an important pillar of global security.

Furthermore, efforts to make the world safer and more protected from the nuclear threat are important for the continued peaceful use of atomic energy, while global governance should also be strengthened to keep pace with evolving challenges and threats, including the possibility of cyber attacks against nuclear installations.

## Water for peace and security

The uneven distribution of freshwater in the world, its vital importance for life and development, as well as factors such as population growth, urbanisation, and climate change, all determine the relationship between water and peace, as well as increase its relevance. Some states have already demonstrated their commitment to preserving this vital natural resource for future generations; nevertheless, global awareness of the importance of the nexus between water and peace still lags behind current pressing trends.

The protection of water in armed conflict, the mechanisms of hydro-diplomacy, and the role of water as an instrument in reconstruction and reconciliation processes in post-conflict situations have not been extensively explored. International institutions lack effective instruments to prevent water-related armed conflict and to use water-related mechanisms for maintaining sustainable peace.

The success of international initiatives will depend on continued and comprehensive awareness of the urgent need to address the challenges that water poses for peace and security. Furthermore, commitment and progress in dealing with security-related questions regarding water scarcity will also help address other water challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

## Digital diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: To Tweet or not to Tweet in foreign affairs?

Never before in the history of foreign affairs or diplomacy have heads of state had a method of such immediate and uncensored communication at their disposal as they have today with social media tools such as Twitter.

We saw social media play an important part in the Arab Spring, and recently in Turkey during an attempted coup. However, political leaders nowadays bypass traditional forms of communication and conduct foreign policy in 140 characters or less via Twitter, without reflecting on their action or its consequences.

Some argue that foreign policy should not be conducted via Twitter, while others feel that Twitter and the vast array of social media tools available today could launch a new form of public diplomacy, called Public Diplomacy 2.0. To Tweet or not to Tweet in foreign affairs, that is the question.

This panel discussion will be held in cooperation with the Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL), an initiative by the German Federal Foreign Office and several private foundations and an international cross-sectoral platform for exploring a more inclusive diplomacy which goes beyond traditional politics.

## The European Union in a changed world

The economic and financial crisis, unstable eastern and southern neighbourhoods, migration pressures, and a generally deteriorating security situation, combined with an upsurge in terrorist acts in Europe, have in recent years eroded trust between the Member States and caused a shift in relations between EU institutions. Such developments are occurring at a time when major global players are turning away from multilateralism and considering economic protectionism.

Some Member States advocate the full implementation of the single market, while others shy away from the liberalisation of the single market in services. Developments accompanying the conclusion of agreements with the United States and Canada (i.e. TTIP and CETA, respectively) have spotlighted a plethora of reservations among politicians and the public in various Member States alike.

The world is on the brink of rampant protectionism. Will the European Union be able to consolidate from within and re-establish itself on the global stage as a bastion of multilateralism and free and fair trade?

## Realistic hope – How transformation happens faster than one thinks

We are polluting our water; robots will take our jobs; we are eating ourselves to an early death; the old-age pension and health systems are making governments bankrupt, and the immigration crisis is affecting the European integration project. A growing list of nightmares, perfect storms, and global catastrophes fuel fear of the future.

But there is another way of looking at the future. We do not have to be pessimistic or optimistic; we can simply have realistic hope, like future-oriented thinkers and doers who do not ignore reality, but take these challenges into account when exploring the possibility of making a better future for many more generations.

## Southern Mediterranean

Countries on all the shores of the Mediterranean today face the same serious challenges: external pressures, internal divisions, economic uncertainty, a lack of prospects for young people, migration, extremism and radicalisation. In this context of global instability, and yet of immense regional opportunities, the value of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership is at its highest.

There is scope and a need for more multilateralism and, even more importantly, for more integration in the South. At the moment, for example, only 1% of trade in the Euro-Mediterranean region flows between the Southern partners. How can meaningful regional cooperation be bolstered? Which good practices can we build on? And, above all, is the South ready?

There is growing consensus that security and stability – prerequisites of progress – can only be dealt with by addressing ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ security issues in parallel: a positive agenda for youth; intercultural and interfaith dialogue; human rights education; academic mobility, joint research, and job creation. Which lessons learned could be applied and what are their limitations?

## Human rights in times of change

Changes, rising insecurity, or the heightened perception of insecurity, coupled with the fear of the unknown, often give rise to human rights violations.

History teaches us that protecting human rights and dignity helps prevent conflict, dispel ignorance, instil respect for others, and build better societies that are more resilient to threats from within and from without. So in times of change and insecurity, we should seek to strengthen respect for human rights, not the opposite.

What is the role of human rights in today’s society, why do we need them, and how they can help us face the insecurities of modern times? These questions will be answered in a conversation with the person responsible for human rights protection at the global level, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein.

## InvestTalk Slovenia

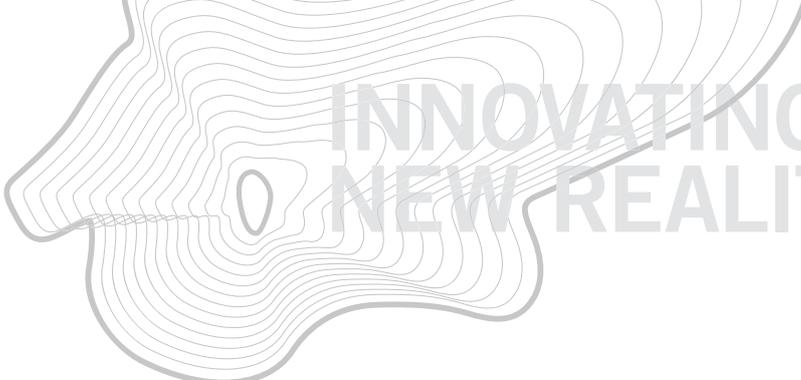
The session will present opportunities for investment and the business climate in Slovenia. Presentations will be held by representatives of SPIRIT Slovenia, Public Agency for Entrepreneurship, Internationalization, Foreign Investments and Technology, as well as by representatives of the Bank Assets Management Company, who will present concrete business cases and investment opportunities.

## Western Balkans: EU enlargement – Is pretending the name of the game?

It should have been clear by now that it is in the EU’s strategic interest that the enlargement process has no alternative, as the Western Balkan countries are surrounded by EU Member States. The European Union must be the actor in the region, setting an example, offering opportunities, cooperation, connectivity, support and, when necessary, facilitation.

Last December, the Union failed to agree on the Council’s traditional conclusions on enlargement. Additionally, this year, the European Commission will not publish its annual enlargement reports. Such inaction could easily be interpreted as a reflection of the lack of the EU’s interest in continuing the enlargement dynamics.

Despite the engagement of many experts and many regional processes and initiatives, we are witnessing a lack of implementation of agreements. This may be a consequence of the fractured relations in the region, the internal political situation in individual countries, the situation in the EU, and the slow pace of the enlargement process.



# INNOVATING NEW REALITY



Business BSF

5 September 2017

Bled, Slovenia

[www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)

## **AmCham Business Breakfast – A Changing World: How Do We Feel and Co-create the New Reality?**

A panoramic view: What is the role of the individual, business, politics and society in the new world?

The world is changing rapidly. How will this affect the reality of the individual, business, politics and society? How can the gap between reality (awareness) and the near future (new reality) be bridged? Are we ready for the challenges of the future? How can we co-shape it, rather than just adapt to it?

## **Red Monkey Innovation Management: Organizations and regions in search of a new balance**

The world is changing faster and faster. Organizations, companies, schools and regions have to adapt to a world that is flooded with information and need to increase their power to learn and innovate dramatically. However, today's organizations and companies are not able to create the right learning and working environment that enables and energizes disruptive innovation by using passion for talents. Talented adults and children have been unintentionally transformed into passionless sheep. We have to rethink the organization of work and learning. We have to boldly go for disruptive business innovation powered by disruptive culture innovation. This session is a plea for a dramatic change in the organization of work and education. After this session, 2D, 3D, Sheep and Red Monkeys will be branded in your brain. You will have been disrupted.

## **The role of innovation in a new reality**

The panel will address the role of innovation in its broadest sense. The innovation movement is growing and acquiring global dimensions, and the new reality requires genuine efforts to achieve sustainability. Technological innovations are the most visible and disruptive, but they are insufficient to drive the overall change. However, they can act as a trigger. Transformation in its broadest and real sense entails changing both the mind-set and culture in a particular organisation or society as a whole. For this, social innovations are needed.

What role does innovation play in the new reality and how does it manifest itself? How and to what extent are organisations embracing innovation, and what is the impact of innovation in the light of competitiveness? What are the catalysts for shifting the mind-set from focusing on stability/certainty to experimentation as a constant learning process and recognising the importance of the culture of failure? How can we establish and nurture partnerships between various fields, organisations, and countries? How can we build trust as a prerequisite for successful social innovations and forward-looking optimism? Do we have the ability and courage to step out of our comfort zone and deliver better and more?

## **Musical leadership strategy – For a European identity in a multipolar world**

The social innovation brand of Miha Pogacnik is known as the “resonance platform”. By using the disruptive method, he empowers business and political leaders to experience the genius of classical music masterpieces as a specific European strategy for vision, the mobilisation of total human potential and action. Pogacnik is a bridge builder of the transfer and dynamic balance between disciplines, cultures and generations. He inspires people to transcend political positions and the opposition to composition, and his latest project of cultural diplomacy creatively unites the passionate qualities of the Balkans and the pragmatic approach of the European North-West – with Slovenia acting as a bridge – titled: “Europa unfinished masterpiece: The journey towards polyphonic European identity”.

## **Innovative Europe – Opportunities for a new breakthrough**

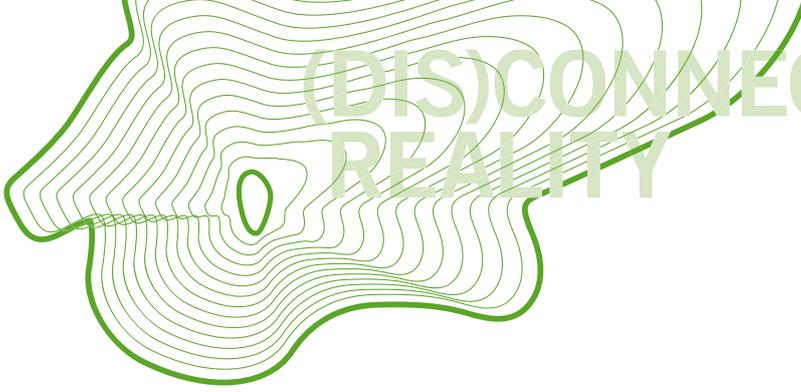
The rapid ongoing digitalisation and technological transformation of the economy and society holds many promises, but also brings disruptions, transforms our societies and the way we live and work, and opens new issues on regulation.

What opportunities arise for Europe in the context of a single digital market and innovation? What are the main obstacles to, and/or catalysts for, a new breakthrough in the field? How does the business sector perceive these opportunities for Europe as a whole? How can we speed up the process of transformation, and what is the role of smaller countries in it?

## **Tourism panel – Collaborative economy: sharing, cooperation or simply business?**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is dawning, bringing change to us all. Consumer behaviour already depends heavily on access to online networks and data, compelling the tourism industry to operate in the context of a new reality, while global supply and demand are more interconnected now than at any other point in human history. The modern technology platforms that connect supply and demand now serve as accommodation providers, tour operators, taxi drivers, tour guides, and restaurants.

This collaborative economy is causing profound shifts in tourism. The needs, wishes, and motivations of consumers, which are at the centre of attention in designing and marketing tourist products, have changed considerably. In cooperation with experts in this field and partners from the tourism industry, we will address the question of what the fair rules of the game are for all tourism stakeholders in the existing system and how to establish effective cooperation to the benefit of all, and we will also take stock of some solutions and adaptations proposed at the national level.



# (DIS)CONNECTED REALITY



Young BSF

1 – 3 September 2017

Ljubljana, Slovenia

[www.bledstrategicforum.org](http://www.bledstrategicforum.org)

We live in interesting and turbulent times, which seem to reflect a quotation from *Alamut*, a novel by Slovenian writer Vladimir Bartol: “nothing is real and everything is allowed”. In this sense, the different ‘realities’ of our physical world seem completely disconnected from the reality that our societies actually live.

For the first time in human history, we are facing the phenomenon of ‘mixed reality’. Are people losing touch with material reality at the expense of actually living in a virtual one? Is life without virtual ‘connectedness’ even possible in our post-modern world? Can ‘modern humanity’ exist without (dis) connected realities in the realms of electronics, the environment, and the economy (the 3Es)? Is any reality even possible without a ‘connected’ reality?

The 2017 Young BSF will give visionary young leaders an opportunity to form real, connected, or virtual partnerships and networks. This goal-oriented forum will seek to prompt discussions and create synergies between different ideas, turning them into connected or disconnected realities of, and for, everyone.

## Bled Strategic Forum in brief

The Bled Strategic Forum (BSF) is a leading conference in Central and South East Europe that provides the needed high-level platform for discussing pressing regional and global issues. Attracting some one thousand participants, including heads of state and government, ministers, diplomats, businesspeople, scholars and the media from around the world, the Forum is also a unique opportunity for bilateral and multilateral meetings with the foremost regional and global stakeholders and offers the possibility of extensive networking among political and business leaders of today.

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