

CALL FOR PAPERS

**Regional Conference**

**Religion in Western Balkan Societies #ReligionWB**

Tirana, 11 and 12 June 2019

*Deadline for proposals: 20 January 2019*

*Deadline for full papers: 25 March 2019*

The conference on Religion in Society is organised by the *Institute for Democracy and Mediation, Belgrade Open School, Analitika Center for Social Research* and the *Institute for Social Sciences and Humanities*, with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Religion plays a dynamic role in the society. For many people it formulates human conduct, behaviour, social sense and morality, deeply affecting their lives and their interactions at the community level. The Western Balkans as a region has been at the crossroads between West and East for centuries, as foreign powers competed for influence, leading to numerous occupations that ruled over its territories. Each of these powers had vastly different cultures and religions, thus shaping much of the region's diverse history, culture and societal traditions.

As one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse regions in Europe, Western Balkans is a rich source of insights of relevance for the global debate on religion in societies, due to its experience with religion, religious coexistence and interfaith dialogue. More importantly, a dialogue on religion in the Western Balkans, allows the countries in the region to explore the dimensions, threats and opportunities of the role of religion in modern secular societies. This helps preserve and advance the added value of religion and its contribution to the wellbeing, development and prosperity of Western Balkan countries on their path towards EU membership.

**This regional conference aims to explore threats and opportunities for the role of religion in Western Balkan societies and to contribute to enhancing societal and policy mechanisms to better respond to future challenges in this regard.**

Researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field are invited to contribute paper proposals for the conference. Selected papers will be published in the Religion in Society Research Conference volume and the websites of the organisers. Authors will present their paper during the conference in Tirana and will be asked to ensure their availability to participate. The conference provides a unique opportunity for authors to share their findings and engage with fellow academics, practitioners in the field and other stakeholders (state, religious, non-state, internationals etc.) at the panel discussions. Authors will be compensated for their contribution and the travel expenses to attend the conference will be covered by the organisers.

### ***We invite papers on the following topics***

**Religion and democracy** - This topic will explore the role of religion in modern Western Balkan societies. Over the course of almost 30 years, Western Balkan countries have slowly transitioned from communism to more modern democratic societies. What are the countries' experiences with religion and advancing democratic values in the democratization processes? Topics include, but are not limited to:

- *Religion and democratic participation;*
- *Secularism and modern societies;*
- *Religion and human rights (incl. issues like freedom of expression, gender, equality, non-discrimination, etc.);*
- *Religion in multiethnic and multi-confessional societies.*

**Religion, states and security** - This topic opens the discussion from state level towards regional perspectives and challenges within the Western Balkans. Under this topic, general the conference explores the general question of what are the implications of religion on, and potential contribution to, peace, regional cooperation and security. Topics include, but are not limited to:

- *Religion and security;*
- *Role of religion in regional cooperation (good neighbourhood relations);*
- *Religion and foreign influences in the region;*
- *Nationalism, populism and religion;*
- *Religious extremism*
- *Interfaith/ interethnic relations and reconciliation.*

### ***Guidelines for submission***

Please submit the following documents by 20 January 2019 (23:59 CET) to [religioninsociety@idmalbania.org](mailto:religioninsociety@idmalbania.org). Late submissions will not be accepted.

- Abstract indicating main topic, arguments and references (max. 800 words);
- Publication list (this may be a selection)  
OR two writing samples (1000-2000 words each, preferably unedited);
- CV or short bio.

Selected authors will be invited to prepare full papers. Papers should be drafted in English (+/-3500 words) and must address contemporary issues related to the region of the Western Balkans or one of the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro or Serbia). We particularly encourage topics that would appeal to a regional audience.

Selecting Committee

- Sotirag Hroni, Executive Director, [Institute for Democracy and Mediation](#)
- Katerina Kolozova PhD, Director, [ISSH Skopje](#)
- Edin Hodžić PhD, Deputy Director and Head of the Public Law Program, [Analitika Center for Social Research](#)

- Milorad Bjeletić, Executive Director, [Belgrade Open School](#)

For more information, please contact Leonie Vrugtman via email at [lvrugtman@idmalbania.org](mailto:lvrugtman@idmalbania.org)