

The 13th Student Balkan Conference

The 13th Student Conference on the Balkans, organized by the Czech Council on Foreign Relations, the Institute of International Relations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **will be held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (Czernin Palace, Loretánské náměstí 5, Prague 1) **on October 8, 2020 from 9:00 AM**. It convenes on the sidelines of the 12th International Symposium “Czech Foreign Policy.”

The founder of the student conference is Jiří Dienstbier Sr., a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, an expert on the Balkans, a journalist and the founder of the Czech Council on Foreign Relations. The conference is being held to commemorate his and other experts' life-long work concerning the Balkans and to support the continuous interest in and growing expertise on the region in the Czech Republic, especially among young scholars.

After the 12 previous successful editions of the conference, with the first one held already in 2007, we have the pleasure of seeing that people focusing on the Balkan region, including scholars, students, and Czech and foreign diplomats, are still interested in participating at this event. The main goal of the conference is to support expertise on, and interest in the Balkans among the younger generation by inviting students to present their current, or planned research pertaining to the region. The conference is unique as it creates a platform for students to practice their presentation skills at official premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The participants also gain an opportunity to meet with experts and other students who share their interest in the region, debate their research and receive feedback from experts, senior scholars, and practitioners, which is an experience that is otherwise hardly attainable.

We are very pleased that many of the winners/attendees of the conference are still interested in the Balkan region; some of them have even established themselves as scholars, experts, or diplomats. More information about the conference and its outcomes will soon be available on the websites of the Institute of International Relations and the Czech Council on Foreign Relations: www.iir.cz and www.rmv.cz.

The conference is based on the idea of a competition. Participants may contribute with a presentation of research devoted to a topic related to any of the Balkan countries or the whole region (dealing, for example, with the political and economic situation, important historical moments or regional and international relations related to the Balkan Peninsula). All contributions are assessed by a professional jury consisting of diplomats, academics, and expert practitioners. Taking into account the relevance and originality of the presented research projects, the feasibility of the proposed research methodology, the presentation and the participant's language skills, the jury will select the best contributions from bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree students. **The author with the most valuable, interesting, and persuasive contribution will receive a reward in the amount of 15 000 CZK (approximately 600 EURO) that is intended to fund their research stay in the region.**

The deadline for sending in the abstract (200-300 words) is September 28, 2020 via email to bozkova@iir.cz. Please concisely summarize your aims, methods, results and conclusions. The presentation should last 10 minutes.

The opportunity to present research in front of a jury at official premises and to win financial support has always been highly motivational for the students. In 2020, the conference introduces **two further innovations** that will increase its impact and visibility. **First, the conference will be held in English** so that it would be open to non-



Czech speaking participants, give the Czech participants the valuable experience of presenting in English and give to the conference's outputs a global reach. **Second, the winner of the conference's competition will receive an individual mentorship from the editorial team of the Czech Journal of International Relations** that will aim to prepare a manuscript for peer review in a scholarly journal. We believe that this experience will elevate the attractiveness of the conference among prospective young authors.

For further information please contact us via e-mail bozkova@iir.cz.

We are looking forward to your contributions.

The organizers