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## wiiw Spring Seminar 2020

### **Entering a storm? The economic and political challenges facing Eastern Europe in the 2020s**

Much of Central, East and Southeast Europe (CESEE) is currently the bright spot in the global economy. However, at the start of a new decade, the region faces many serious challenges. In this context, wiiw is organising its 2020 Spring Seminar, gathering some of the leading experts in the field to explore the potential difficulties facing CESEE in the next decade and come up with proposals for how to meet them.

At the global level, the US and China are de-coupling technologically and engaged in a trade conflict. The US has thrown both the global economic order and Western security architecture that it created after 1945 into doubt. It is clear that the US unipolar moment is over, and that we are in a new era of great power conflicts, most visible in tensions between the US and China and the West and Russia. CESEE is particularly exposed to these developments, both because of its high reliance on foreign trade to drive growth, and because of its history as a geopolitically contested zone.

Closer to home, the euro area economy—by far CESEE’s most important trading partner and source of capital inflows—is barely growing. The single currency is only half-finished and is vulnerable to the next crisis. Franco-German tensions over the future of the European project have become more visible. Meanwhile a decade of extraordinary increases in dollar, euro and yen liquidity has seen foreign investors pile in to CESEE asset markets in search of yields. Worrying signs of potential bubbles are everywhere.

Politically, negative trends in Europe been visible for some time, but may become even more acute in the next decade. In CESEE, population decline, automation and digitalisation are set to fundamentally alter economic and social life. All around the borders of the EU instability is apparent, including Brexit, migration pressures in Africa, the war in Ukraine and the simmering refugee crisis in the Western Balkans. EU enlargement looks to be many years away, which could have highly unfavourable effects in Southeast Europe. In EU member states in CESEE, independent institutions are facing their most serious threat since the collapse of communism. Meanwhile the prospects for EU-Russia rapprochement look remote.

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**Thursday, 26 March 2020**

Venue: Oesterreichische Nationalbank  
1090 Vienna, Otto-Wagner-Platz 3, Kassensaal

**Programme**

- 09:00 – 9:30 **Welcome Addresses**  
*Robert Holzmann*, Governor, Oesterreichische Nationalbank  
*Hannes Swoboda*, President, wiiw  
*Robert Stehrer*, Scientific Director, wiiw
- 9:30 – 10:45 **Keynote Address: Geoeconomic Challenges and the Future of Europe: What it will take to make the EU and the euro stronger players in the age of global power competition.**  
*Daniela Schwarzer*, Director of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
- 10:45 – 11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15 – 12:00 **Economic Forecasts and Risk Outlook for Eastern Europe**  
*Olga Pindyuk* Economist and *Richard Grieveson*, Deputy Director, wiiw
- 12:00 – 13:00 Buffet luncheon
- 13:00 – 14:00 **Keynote Address: The Future of Eastern Europe: New decade, new challenges and opportunities**  
*Ivan Vejvoda*, Permanent Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM)
- 14:00 – 14:30 **New Migration Patterns in Europe: What can be learned from the integration experience in Austria?**  
*Sandra Leitner*, Economist, wiiw
- 14:30 – 15:00 **New Global Trade Order: How to handle the biggest threat to globalisation for several decades?**  
*Roman Stöllinger*, Economist, wiiw

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 16:30 **Panel Discussion: How the EU should engage with its neighbouring regions in the 2020s**

Moderator: **Mario Holzner**, Executive Director, wiiw

**Valerie Hopkins**, South-East Europe Correspondent, Financial Times

**Velina Tchakarova**, Head of Institute, Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy (AIES)

**Stefan Lehne**, Visiting Scholar, Carnegie Europe

**Vladimir Gligorov**, Senior Research Associate, wiiw

16:30 End of seminar

17:30 **Informal gathering at a Viennese 'Heurigen' by invitation of wiiw**

Address: 10er Marie, Ottakringer Straße 222, 1160 Vienna

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