

International Scientific Conference

THE CHANGING MIGRATION IN THE BALKANS

Organised under the implementation of Scientific Project

“Regional Dynamics and Interconnections between the Balkan Economies”

Department “International Economics”

ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT THE BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Thursday, 16 April 2026 / Sofia, Bulgaria / 13:00 – 19:00 EET (Sofia Time)

Hybrid (in person & online)

Working language: English

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

The history of the Balkans has long been marked by significant interstate conflicts and socio-economic transformations, which have repeatedly triggered large-scale population movements. Since the late 1980s, the region has become one of the major sources of emigration flows to the European Union and beyond, driven by political instability, weak economies, and fragile labour markets.

Over the past decade, however, the migration landscape has shifted. Outward migration has slowed, while Balkan countries face new challenges:

- large refugee flows transiting through or settling in the region
- slow economic growth
- the war in Ukraine and the resulting inflow of Ukrainian citizens
- labour shortages and uneven economic development
- intensified intra-regional mobility linked to cross-border property ownership, business activity, infrastructure, and energy connectivity

At the same time, the growing regional economy has increased demand for mobile labour and created new patterns of movement of goods, services, and people.

The aim of the conference is to trace the evolution of migration processes in the Balkan countries over the past decade, outline emerging migration flows within and beyond the region, and analyse the long-term effects of decades of intensive emigration. The event will highlight the key drivers of contemporary migration and explore future perspectives for the region.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Have some Balkan countries shifted from emigration to immigration profiles?
- Which migration flows are the largest and most dynamic?
- What has changed in Balkan migration over the past ten years?
- Which are the factors that drive cross-border mobility - political, economic, and social?
- How does cross-border migration affect price convergence, FDI, and real estate markets?

- Do remittances influence the balance of payments — both inflows and outflows?
- How do wars in neighbouring regions affect migration to the Balkans, and how resilient is the region to such shocks?
- What is the potential for creating a regional labour market, similar to the existing regional energy market?
- What are the trends in attracting highly skilled workers from outside the region?
- What are the factors for cross border citizenship tendencies?
- What are the prospects for project-based labour employment in the Balkans?
- Is there “migration fatigue”?

Despite the strong academic interest in Balkan migration at the end of the 20th century, recent research on the changing migration paths, drivers, and consequences remains limited. This conference aims to fill that gap.

The event will bring together scholars from across the region, experts from national research institutes, and representatives of international organisations.

All presented papers will be published in a Conference Proceedings Book in *Springer publishing*.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Atanas Pavlov at: a.pavlov@iki.bas.bg.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. **Daniela Bobeva-Filipova**, Economic Research Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences – Chairman

Prof. Dr. **Alla Kirova**, Economic Research Institute, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

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