

ONLINE DISCUSSION

SECURITY IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

– VIEWS FROM EUROPE AND PAKISTAN

25 October 2021

13.00 – 15.00 (EET) // 15.00 – 17.00 (PKT)

The Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan and its possible consequences for the regional and global security has become one of the main topics in world politics for analysts and researchers, and has triggered an intense debate on the region.

Despite its economic interests and heightened security concerns in South-Central Asia, the European Union has yet to develop a coherent approach towards the region. It is crucial for the EU and its member states to have a comprehensive overview of the strategic challenges that Europe faces in various zones of the Asia-Pacific region, and on a range of relevant issues. A better understanding of the region and its individual components, as well as of megatrends, can be achieved through joint work and cooperation between think tanks from Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

Pakistan has profound understanding of the general situation and tendencies in the South-Central Asia. At the same time being a neighboring country, Pakistan has a lot at stake and deep knowledge of the developments in Afghanistan.

This is why the Sofia Security Forum, SEECAPS and the Embassy of Pakistan in Sofia have taken the initiative to hold an online discussion between European and Pakistani think tanks, to exchange analyses and assessments on a broad set of related issues.

The discussion will start with initial statements on each of the above topics by speakers from renowned European and Pakistani think-tanks followed by a general discussion.

Representatives of think tanks from Europe and Pakistan, diplomats and the academia have been invited to take part in the event.

PROGRAM:

13.00 – 13.15 - Opening remarks

- **Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**, *Director General ISSI*
- **Mr. Yordan Bozhilov**, *President of Sofia Security Forum*
- **H.E. Mariam Aftab**, *Ambassador of Pakistan to Bulgaria*
- **Elena Atanasova-Cornelis**, *Founding Member of SEECAPS*

13.15 – 14.15 – Presentations

Moderator: Mr. Yordan Bozhilov, President of Sofia Security Forum

Topic 1: Dynamics in the South and Central Asia region. Factors, trends and directions of likely future developments in the region

- **Dr. Antoine Bondaz**, *Research Fellow, Director of the Korea Program and Taiwan Program, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS)*
- **Ambassador Asif Durrani**, *Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran*

Topic 2: Current Set-Up in Afghanistan – Role of Pakistan & Other Regional Actors

- **Krzysztof Iwanek**, *Contributor to "The Diplomat", Warsaw, Poland*
- **Ms. Amina Khan**, *Director Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA), Islamabad*

Topic 3: Policies of the EU and Pakistan towards Afghanistan and the wider region

- **Mr. Plamen Tonchev**, *MERICs European China Policy Fellow and Head of Asia Unit, Institute of International Economic Relations (IIER), Greece, Executive Director of SEECAPS*
- **Dr Talat Shabbir**, *Director China Pakistan Study Center (CPSC), Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad*

14.15 – 15.00 – Discussion / Q & A

Please, register for participation at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqfu-trjwsGtJh8yEHcrnp0vI4Kb1U59_5

After the registration you will receive a link to the event.

Live stream on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/qYT95LXHm3k>