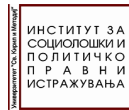


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**International Scientific Conference**  
**Political Clientelism**  
**in the Western Balkans**  
**9-11 December 2020**

organized by



supported by



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**DECLARATION**  
of researchers on combating political clientelism  
in the Western Balkans\*

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**WE,** the social scientists and researchers, working on the Western Balkan region, call upon the governments, parliaments and the judicial institutions in the Western Balkans, the political parties, the international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the national and the local civil sector and the citizens, to raise their efforts and activities in direction of combating political clientelism.

Political clientelism is widespread in our region of study. It is practiced through different means and forms, and it is visible during elections as well as between them. Clientelist practices have strong negative consequences: they are detrimental to the political, economic, and social development; contribute to the weakening of the democratic institutions (often leading to state capture) and to sub-optimal economic performance; they impede democratic accountability and cancel the benefits of the public administration reforms. Given its exclusionary nature, political clientelism raises the possibility for political and social conflicts in the Western Balkan societies.

We believe that it is about time for all social actors to put the public interest first and resist the temptation to enter into clientelist transactions.

We call on governments, parliaments, and judicial institutions in the region to design and fully implement policies and legislation that will eventually curb political clientelism in the region. We understand that this is a very challenging task that would demand a sound strategic approach and long-term planning, but we believe that the time to begin these actions is long due.

We call all political parties in the region to stop nurturing clientelist linkages with the population and to foster genuine democratic political mobilization and participation through their activities. Genuine democratic political mobilization and participation cannot take root in our region as long as clientelist linkages are present. We propose to political parties to publicly oblige that they will work on curbing political clientelism for the sake of the wellbeing of the whole region.

We call on the EU institutions to implement rigorous monitoring over the practicing of political clientelism in the region and to utilize the principle of conditionality more decisively in relation to the curbing of political clientelism. Likewise, we call on all international governmental and non-governmental actors to include the curbing of political clientelism as an important point in their action agendas.

We recognize the watchdog efforts directed at political clientelism from the civil society in the region and we call all policy-oriented civil society organizations to continue their work in this area.

We call all relevant national and international institutions to direct more funds towards scientific and research projects directed at political clientelism in the region. Successful policies for combating political clientelism cannot be designed without proper scientific input, and scientific and research findings can be of great use to decision-makers and policy-makers in creating a proper response against political clientelism.

Finally, we call all citizens of the Western Balkans to resist the temptation to enter clientelist transactions. While political clientelism might bring an instant material benefit, its long-term consequences are detrimental not just for the present society, but also for the future generations of Western Balkan citizens.

[Sign this declaration](#)

[List of signatories](#)

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