COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

EMPLOYEE POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

☐ *Original* ☐ *Amendment*

This form is for disclosing the receipt of travel expenses from private sources for travel taken in connection with official duties. This form does not eliminate the need to report privately-funded travel on the annual *Financial Disclosure Statements* of those employees required to file them. In accordance with House Rule 25, clause 5, **you must complete this form and *file it with the Clerk of the House by email at* gifttravelreports@mail.house.gov, within 15 days after travel is completed.** Please ***do not*** file this form with the Committee on Ethics.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Name of Traveler: Victoria Rivas
2. a. Name of Accompanying Relative: _____ ***OR*** ☒ None
   b. Relationship to Traveler: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child ☐ Other (specify): _____
3. a. Dates: Departure: September 6, 2026 Return: September 12, 2026
   b. Dates at Personal Expense, if any: N/A ***OR*** ☐ None
4. Departure City: Washington, D.C. Destination: Belgrade, Serbia Return City: Washington, D.C.
5. Sponsor(s), Who Paid for the Trip: Atlantic Council of the United States
6. Describe Meetings and Events Attended: See attached final agenda.
7. Attached to this form are ***each*** of the following, *signify that each item is attached by checking the corresponding box*:
   a. ☒ a completed *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form*;
   b. ☒ the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* completed by the trip sponsor ***prior*** to the trip, ***including all*** attachments ***and*** the *Additional Sponsor Form(s)*;
   c. ☒ page 2 of the completed *Traveler Form* submitted by the employee; ***and***
   d. ☒ the letter from the Committee on Ethics approving my participation on this trip.
8. a. ☒ I represent that I participated in each of the activities reflected in the attached sponsor's agenda. *Signify statement is true by checking the box.*
   b. If not, explain: _____

I certify that the information contained on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Traveler: [signature] **Date:** 9/23/26

I authorized this travel in advance. I have determined that all of the expenses listed on the attached *Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form* were necessary and that the travel was in connection with the employee's official duties and would not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Name of Supervising Member: Rep. Pete Aguilar **Date:** 9/23/26

Signature of Supervising Member: [signature]

last updated 7/2023

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

SPONSOR POST-TRAVEL DISCLOSURE FORM

☒ *Original* ☐ *Amendment*

This form must be completed by an officer of any organization that served as the primary trip sponsor in providing travel expenses or reimbursement for travel expenses to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. **A completed copy of the form must be provided to each House Member, officer, or employee who participated in the trip *within 10 days of their return.*** You must answer all questions, and check all boxes, on this form for your submission to comply with House Rules and the Committee's Travel Regulations. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the denial of future requests to sponsor trips and/or subject the current traveler to disciplinary action or a requirement to repay the trip expenses.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

1. Sponsor(s) who paid or provided in-kind support for the trip: Atlantic Council of the United States, Inc.'s Europe Center
2. Travel Destination(s): Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania
3. Date of Departure: Sunday, September 6, 2026 Date of Return: Saturday, September 12, 2026
4. Name(s) of Traveler(s): Joshua Adams, Lee Norton, Victoria Rivas, Erin Scanlon, Michelle Schein

   Note: You may list more than one traveler on a form only if ***all*** information is ***identical*** for each person listed.
5. **Actual amount** of expenses paid on behalf of, or reimbursed to, each individual named in Question 4:

	Total **Transportation** Expenses	Total **Lodging** Expenses	Total **Meal** Expenses	Total **Other** Expenses (dollar amount per item and description)
Traveler	$1938	$781	$459	N/A
Accompanying Family Member	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

6. ☒ All expenses connected to the trip were for actual costs incurred and not a *per diem* or lump sum payment. *Signify statement is true by checking box.*

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: DocuSigned by: Julie Varghese 97BADA8C38194F8... **Date:** 9/21/2026

Name: Julie Varghese **Title:** Chief Operating Officer

Organization: Atlantic Council of the United States

☒ ***I am an officer of the above-named organization. Signify statement is true by checking box.***

Address: 1400 L Street NW, 11th Floor

Telephone: (202) 778 - 4952 **Email:** JVarghese@AtlanticCouncil.org

Committee staff may contact the above-named individual if additional information is required.

If you have questions regarding your completion of this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103.

last updated 7/2023

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

TRAVELER FORM

1. Name of Traveler: Victoria Rivas
2. Sponsor(s) who will be paying or providing in-kind support for the trip: Atlantic Council of the United States
3. City and State **OR** Foreign Country of Travel: Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, Albania
4. a. Date of Departure: Sunday, September 6, 2026 Date of Return: Saturday, September 12, 2026

   b. Yes ☐ No ☒ Will you be extending the trip at your personal expense?

   If yes, list dates at personal expense: _____

5. a. Yes ☐ No ☒ Will you be accompanied by a family member at the sponsor's expense? **If yes:**

   (1) Name of Accompanying Family Member: _____

   (2) Relationship to Traveler: ☐ Spouse ☐ Child ☐ Other (specify): _____

   (3) Yes ☐ No ☐ Accompanying Family Member is at least 18 years of age?

6. a. Yes ☐ No ☒ Did the trip sponsor answer "Yes" to Question 8(c) on the *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* (i.e., travel is sponsored by an entity that employs a registered federal lobbyist or a foreign agent)?

   b. **If yes**, and you are requesting lodging for two nights, explain why the second night is warranted:

7. Yes ☒ No ☐ *Primary Trip Sponsor Form* is attached, including agenda, invitation, invitee list, and any other attachments and Additional Sponsor Forms.

   NOTE: The agenda should show the traveler's individual schedule, including departure and arrival times and identify the specific events in which the traveler will be participating.

8. Explain why participation in the trip is connected to the traveler's individual official or representational duties. **Staff should include their job title and how the activities on the itinerary relate to their duties.**

   This staff delegation trip aims to promote U.S. engagement in the Western Balkans and support multilateral cooperation through meetings with civil society organizations, diplomats, and foreign leaders. As the National Security Advisor for House Democratic Chair Pete Aguilar, who is also a Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense,, Victoria will be able to leverage insight from these meetings to advise the Chair and the broader Democratic Caucus on foreign policy and defense policies in the region.

9. **Yes ☐ No ☒ Is the traveler aware of any registered federal lobbyists or foreign agents involved in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip?**
10. For staff travelers, to be completed by your employing Member:

ADVANCED AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL

I hereby authorize the individual named above, an employee of the U.S. House of Representatives who works under my direct supervision, to accept expenses for the trip described in this request. I have determined that the above-described travel is in connection with my employee's official duties and that acceptance of these expenses will not create the appearance that the employee is using public office for private gain.

Signature of Employing Member: Pete Aguilar **Date:** 8/6/2026

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

PRIMARY TRIP SPONSOR FORM

This form should be completed by private entities offering to provide travel or reimbursement for travel to House Members, officers, or employees under House Rule 25, clause 5. A completed copy of the form (and any attachments) should be provided to each invited House Member, officer, or employee, who will then forward it to the Committee together with a *Traveler Form* **at least 30 days before the start date of the trip**. The trip sponsor should *NOT* submit the form directly to the Committee. The Committee's website (ethics.house.gov) provides detailed instructions for filling out the form. The Committee will notify the House invitees directly of its decision and will not notify the trip sponsors.

NOTE: Willful or knowing misrepresentations on this form may be subject to criminal prosecution pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001. Failure to comply with the Committee's Travel Regulations may also lead to the denial of permission to sponsor future trips. Signatures must comply with section 104(bb) of the Travel Regulations.

1. Sponsor who will be paying for the trip:

   Atlantic Council of the United States, Inc.'s Europe Center

2. ☒ I represent that the trip will not be financed, in whole or in part, by a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent. *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

3. ***Check only one.*** I represent that:
   a. ☒ The primary trip sponsor has not accepted from any other source, funds intended directly or indirectly to finance any aspect of the trip; **OR**
   b. ☐ The trip is arranged without regard to congressional participation and the primary trip sponsor has accepted funds only from entities that will receive a tangible benefit in exchange for those funds; **OR**
   c. ☐ The primary trip sponsor has accepted funds, services, or in-kind assistance from other source(s) intended directly or indirectly to finance all or part of this trip and has enclosed disclosure forms from each of those entities.

   If "c" is checked, list the names of the additional sponsors: _____

4. Provide names and titles of **ALL** House Members *and* employees you are inviting. **For each House invitee, provide an explanation of why the individual was invited** (include additional pages if necessary):

   see list of staffers and corresponding explanation on attached supplemental document

5. Yes ☐ No ☒ Is travel being offered to an accompanying family member of the House invitee(s)?
6. Date of Departure: Sunday, September 6, 2026 Date of Return: Saturday, September 12, 2026
7. a. City of departure: Washington, DC, USA
   b. Destination(s): Belgrade, Serbia; Skopje, North Macedonia; Pristina, Kosovo; Tirana, Albania
   c. City of return: Washington, DC, USA
8. ***Check only one.*** I represent that
   a. ☐ The sponsor of the trip is an institution of higher education within the meaning of section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965; **OR**
   b. ☒ The sponsor of the trip does not retain or employ a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent; **OR**
   c. ☐ The sponsor employs or retains a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent, but the trip is for attendance at a one-day event *and* lobbyist / foreign agent involvement in planning, organizing, requesting, or arranging the trip was *de minimis* under the Committee's travel regulations.

9. ***Check only one of the following.***
   a. ☐ I checked 8(a) or (b) above; **OR**
   b. ☐ I checked 8(c) above but am not offering any lodging; **OR**
   c. ☐ I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for one night; **OR**
   d. ☐ I checked 8(c) above and am offering lodging and meals for two nights. If you checked this box, explain why the second night of lodging is warranted. _____

10. ☐ Attached is a detailed agenda of the activities House invitees will be participating in during the travel (i.e., an hourly description of planned activities for trip invitees). *Indicate agenda is attached by checking box.*

11. ***Check only one of the following.***
   a. ☐ I represent that a registered federal lobbyist or foreign agent will not accompany House Members or employees on any segment of the trip. *Signify the statement is true by clicking the box;* **OR**
   b. ☐ *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is a U.S. institution of higher education.

12. For ***each*** sponsor required to submit a sponsor form, describe the sponsor's interest in the subject matter of the trip ***and*** its role in organizing and/or conducting the trip:

   The Council's Europe Center aims to enhance transatlantic cooperation and generate awareness about the region. The Atlantic Council's Europe Center is home to the Balkans Forward Initiative, which is a unique, coordinated effort to foster a democratic, secure, and prosperous Western Balkans firmly integrated into the transatlantic community. Its work seeks to reinvigorate US engagement in the region, promote more effective US-European cooperation on issues impacting the Western Balkans, foster dialogue among key actors across the region, and cultivate a new generation of decision-makers and experts. The Atlantic Council is the full sponsor of the trip and is organizing and conducting all aspects of the trip.

13. ***Answer parts a and b. Answer part c if necessary***:
   a. Mode of travel: Air ☐ Rail ☐ Bus ☐ Car ☐ Other ☐ (specify: transatlantic and regional flights)
   b. Class of travel: Coach ☐ Business ☐ First ☐ Charter ☐ Other ☐ (specify: private bus transfer)
   c. If travel will be first class, or by chartered or private aircraft, explain why such travel is warranted:

14. ☐ I represent that the expenditures related to local area travel during the trip will be unrelated to personal or recreational activities of the invitee(s). *Signify that the statement is true by checking box.*

15. ***Check only one.*** I represent that either:
   a. ☐ The trip involves an event that is arranged or organized *without regard* to congressional participation and that meals provided to congressional participants are similar to those provided to or purchased by other event attendees; **OR**
   b. ☐ The trip involves events that are arranged specifically *with regard* to congressional participation. If "b" is checked:
      1) Detail the cost *per day* of meals (approximate cost may be provided): Belgrade $100; Skopje 97; Pristina $64; Tirana $122 (for each: maximum, approximate).
      2) Provide the reason for selecting the location of the event or trip: Included in attached supplemental documentation

16. Name, nightly cost, and reasons for selecting each hotel or other lodging facility:

   Hotel Name: Moxy Belgrade City: Belgrade, Serbia Cost Per Night: $149
   Reason(s) for Selecting: Location, rate, availability, prior experience with the hotel

   Hotel Name: Skopje Marriott Hotel City: Skopje, North Macedonia Cost Per Night: $152
   Reason(s) for Selecting: Location, rate, availability, prior experience with the hotel

   Hotel Name: Hotel Sirius Pristina City: Pristina, Kosovo Cost Per Night: $95
   Reason(s) for Selecting: Location, rate, availability, prior experience with the hotel (Final hotel: Arte Boutique Hotel, Tirana, Albania; $196/night, same rationale)

17. ☒ I represent that all expenses connected to the trip will be for actual costs incurred and not a per diem or lump sum payment. *Signify that the statement is true by checking the box.*

18. **Total Expenses for each Participant:**

☐ Actual Amounts ☒ Good Faith Estimates	Total **Transportation** Expenses per Participant	Total **Lodging** Expenses per Participant	Total **Meal** Expenses per Participant
For each Member, Officer, or Employee	$2450	$788	$507
For each Accompanying Family Member			

	Other Expenses (dollar amount per item)	Identify Specific Nature of "Other" Expenses (e.g., taxi, parking, registration fee, etc.)
For each Member, Officer, or Employee		
For each Accompanying Family Member		

19. ***Check only one:***
   a. ☒ I certify that I am an officer of the organization listed below; **OR**
   b. ☐ *Not Applicable.* Trip sponsor is an individual or a U.S. institution of higher education.

20. **I certify by my signature that**
   a. **I read and understand the Committee's Travel Regulations;**
   b. **I am not a registered federal lobbyist or registered foreign agent; and**
   c. **The information on this form is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Signature: DocuSigned by: Julie Varghese 97BADA8C38194F8... Date: 7/16/2026

Name: Julie Varghese Title: Chief Operating Officer

Organization: Atlantic Council of the United States

Address: 1400 L Street NW, 11th Floor

Email: JVarghese@AtlanticCouncil.org Telephone: (202) 778-4952

If there are questions regarding this form, please contact the Committee on Ethics at 202-225-7103 or travel.requests@mail.house.gov.

Michael Guest, Mississippi
Chairman
Mark DeSaulnier, California
Ranking Member

Andrew R. Garbarino, New York
Ashley Hinson, Iowa
Nathaniel Moran, Texas
Brad Knott, North Carolina

Deborah K. Ross, North Carolina
Glenn F. Ivey, Maryland
Sylvia R. Garcia, Texas
Suhas Subramanyam, Virginia

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

Thomas A. Rust
Staff Director and Chief Counsel

Jordan Downs
Chief of Staff to the Chairman

David Arrojo
Counsel to the Ranking Member

1015 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515–6328
Telephone: (202) 225–7103
https://Ethics.House.gov

September 3, 2026

Ms. Victoria Rivas
Office of the Honorable Pete Aguilar
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. Rivas:

Pursuant to House Rule 25, clause 5(d)(2), the Committee on Ethics hereby approves your proposed trip to Serbia, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania,[1] scheduled for September 6 to 12, 2026, sponsored by Atlantic Council of the United States, Inc.

You must complete an Employee Post-Travel Disclosure Form (which your employing Member must also sign) and file it, together with a Sponsor Post-Travel Disclosure Form completed by the trip sponsor, with the Clerk of the House within 15 days after your return from travel. As part of that filing, you are also required to attach a copy of this letter and both the Traveler and Primary Trip Sponsor Forms (including attachments) you previously submitted to the Committee in seeking pre-approval for this trip. If you are required to file an annual Financial Disclosure Statement, you must also report all travel expenses totaling more than $525 from a single source on the "Travel" schedule of your annual Financial Disclosure Statement covering this calendar year. Finally, Travel Regulation § 404(d) also requires you to keep a copy of all request forms and supporting information provided to the Committee for three subsequent Congresses from the date of travel.

Because the trip may involve meetings with foreign government representatives, we note that House employees may accept, under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act (FGDA), gifts "of minimal value [currently $525] tendered as a souvenir or mark of courtesy" by a foreign government. Any tangible gifts valued in excess of minimal value received from a foreign government must, within 60 days of acceptance, be disclosed on a Form for Disclosing Gifts from Foreign Governments and either turned over to the Clerk of the House, or, with the written approval of the Committee, retained for official use.

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[1] Please be aware that the Committee's review of the proposed trip does not extend to either the security situation in the destination country or security related to foreign travel in general. We recommend you contact the Office of House Security (OHS) for a safety and security briefing prior to your departure. OHS may be reached at (202) 226-2044 or ohsstaff@mail.house.gov. House travelers should also register for the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at https://step.state.gov.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Committee's Office of Advice and Education at extension 5-7103.

Sincerely,

Michael Guest
Chairman

Mark DeSaulnier
Ranking Member

MG/MD:tn

(INDICATIVE) ITINERARY

Balkans Forward Congressional Fellowship Study Tour

September 6 -12, 2026

(INDICATIVE) ITINERARY

Sunday, September 6 – Departure

5:45 p.m. – 8:10 a.m. +1 **Delegation flies Washington IAD – Vienna VIE on Austrian airlines OS 42**

Monday, September 7 – Belgrade

9:20 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. **Delegation flies Vienna VIE – Belgrade BEG on Austrian airlines OS 721**

10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Transfer to Belgrade city center and check in to hotel**
Location: Moxy Belgrade
Address: Njegoševa 2, Beograd 11000, Serbia

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Trip itinerary briefing lunch with Atlantic Council team**
Location: Iva New Balkan Cuisine
Address: Kneginje Ljubice 11, Beograd 11000, Serbia

2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Private briefings (TBC)**

- **Belgrade briefing with local experts**

  As a first scene-setting meeting in Serbia we will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation, so they have a broad overview of relevant historical and political developments in Serbia as they head into the rest of the Belgrade itinerary.

- **Alexander Titolo**, *Chargés d'affaires a.i.*, US Embassy Belgrade

  Alexander Titolo is currently serving as the Chargés d'affaires at the US Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia. As the highest-ranking US official at US Embassy Belgrade, he will help staffers form a better understanding of US policy perspectives in the region.

- **Representatives of Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA)**

  The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), is a Serbian non-partisan civil society organization focused on pushing for the development of a robust democratic culture through civic activism. Notably the CRTA has observed elections in Serbia on both the local and national level. Meeting with representative with the CRTA would give staffers insights into efforts to create civic engagement in Serbia as well as allow staffers to better understand the conduct of elections in the country.

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6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Welcome dinner and trip orientation with civil society briefing
Location: Klub Književnika
Address: Francuska 7, Beograd 11000, Serbia

Meeting with representatives from Civil Society in Serbia will offer the staffers a unique, on-the-ground perspective of the realities of living in Serbia's political landscape, particularly given the significant recent protests across the country.

- **Ivanka Popovic**, *Founder*, ProGlas movement

  Professor Ivanka Popovic is a professor at, and the former rector of, University of Belgrade as well as the founder of the ProGlas movement. The ProGlas movement advocates for increased civic engagement and democratic reforms to government in Serbia. Meeting with Professor Popovic would allow staffers on the ground insight into efforts to implement democratic reform to Serbia's institutions and better understand the role that civil society can play in that process.

Tuesday, September 8 – Belgrade, Skopje

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Private meetings (TBC)

- **H.E. Aleksandar Vučić**, *President of the Republic of Serbia*

Aleksandar Vučić has served as the President of the Republic of Serbia since 2017 and is highly significant to the Serbian political landscape. He can provide an invaluable insight into Serbia's domestic and foreign political priorities. Meeting with him will give staffers an important perspective into the Western Balkans' largest economy and one of the region's most influential leaders before he steps down from the Presidency in the coming weeks.

- **H.E. Marko Đurić**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia*

Marko Đurić is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. This is his second time serving in this position. As foreign minister, Đurić has an important perspective on the state of Serbia's foreign policy. He will help convey this perspective to staffers and help them understand where the policy priorities of Serbia and United States overlap. This meeting will be particularly interesting given the understanding the Minister has of the Washington landscape given his previous role as Ambassador of Serbia to the United States.

- **Ana Draskovic**, *President*, AmCham Board of Governors

Ms. Draskovic is the President of the board of Governors of AmCham Serbia as well as the VP and Regional General Manager for Southern and Eastern Europe at Visa, giving her an unparalleled perspective on private

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sector operations and market conditions in Serbia. This meeting will provide staffers with a deep understanding of both the broad business environment for US investment in Serbia, as well as allow them to benefit from her direct experience operating in Serbia.

11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Hotel check out and transfer to airport**

1:20 p.m. – 2:35 p.m. **Delegation flies Belgrade BEG – Skopje SKP on Air Serbia flight JU 792**

2:45 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. **Transfer to Skopje city center and check-in to Skopje hotel**
Location: Skopje Marriott Hotel
Address: Plostad Makedonija 7, 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Skopje briefing dinner with think tank and local experts**
Location: Restaurant Skopski Merak
Address: Debarca St 51, 1000, Skopje 1000, North Macedonia

As a first scene-setting meeting in North Macedonia we will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation so they have a broad overview of relevant historical and political developments in North Macedonia as they head into the rest of the Skopje itinerary.

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Cultural activity – Skopje Independence Day**
September 8th marks the anniversary of North Macedonia's 1991 referendum on independence from the former Yugoslavia, a peaceful transition that stands in stark contrast to the violent breakups experienced elsewhere in the region. For a young democracy whose statehood and national identity have been repeatedly contested by its neighbors, Independence Day functions as a barometer of the country's resilience and its citizens' continued commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration process. Direct engagement with Macedonian officials and civil society on the ground offers the Staff Delegation first-hand insight of this significant for this Western Balkan country and NATO Ally.

Wednesday, September 9 – Skopje, Pristina

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **H.E. Hristijan Mickoski,** *Prime Minister of North Macedonia*

Hristijan Mickoski has served as the Prime Minister of North Macedonia since 2024 and leads North Macedonia's ruling party. This meeting can provide staffers with important insights into both the domestic and foreign policy priorities of North Macedonia, as well as provide a better understanding of the overall political landscape in the country.

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- **H.E. Timčo Mucunski**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of the Republic of North Macedonia*

  Timčo Mucunski is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of the Republic of North Macedonia. Mucunski has a valuable perspective on North Macedonia's foreign policy goals, specifically about strategic and economic cooperation with the United States and North Macedonia's 2026 bilateral trade agreement with Washington. This meeting can also provide insights into North Macedonia's role as a security partner to the US in the Western Balkans.

- **Nicole Varnes**, *Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy North Macedonia*

  Nicole Varnes is currently serving as the Chargés d'affaires at the US Embassy in Skopje, North Macedonia. She is currently the highest-ranking US official at US Embassy Skopje, having previously served as the Deputy Chief of Mission since August 2024. Meeting with Ms. Varnes will provide high-level perspective into the U.S.'s current policy priorities and engagement in North Macedonia.

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Hotel check-out and drive Skopje – Pristina**

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Check-into Pristina Hotel**
Location: Hotel Sirius
Address: Agim Ramadani, Pristina 10000

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Briefing over lunch with Kosovo Serb and Kosovo Albanian Civil Society Representatives (TBC)**
Location: Liburnia
Address: 10 Meto Bajraktari, Prishtinë 10000

- **Agon Maliqi**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council

  Agon Maliqi is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Europe Center. He is an important representative of the Albanian ethnic group in Kosovo and will provide the Albanian perspective in this balanced discussion on relations on-the-ground in the north of Kosovo.

- **Ramadan Ilazi**, *Head of Research*, Kosovar Centre for Security Studies

  Ramadan Ilazi is the Head of Research at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, which is an independent policy research group founded in Kosovo. The center focuses on promoting good governance and developing security in Kosovo. As an expert in the region and a former deputy minister for European integration in Kosovo, Ilazi will help staffers to better understand the role of groups like the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies in the region and will also highlight the Kosovo Albanian perspective in the north of Kosovo.

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- **Tatjana Lazarević,** *Editor-in-Chief*, KoSSev

  Tatjana Lazarević is the Editor-in-Chief of KoSSev, one of the leading Serbian-language media outlets in Kosovo and a widely referenced source on developments in Kosovo. She has authored numerous articles focusing on political developments in Kosovo, particularly on issues affecting the Kosovo Serb community, and can help staffers better understand these issues. This meeting will can provide context for staffers about the media and civil society landscape in the region.

- **Milica Radovanović**, *Project Manager*, New Social Initiative

  Milica Radovanović is a Project Manager at the New Social Initiative, which is a civil society organization located in Kosovo. The group promotes the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia. As an expert on these and other issues, Radovanović can give staffers insights into the work done by civil society organizations in the region and issues affecting the Kosovo Serb minority community.

3:00 pm. – 6:00 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **H.E. Albin Kurti**, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo*

  Albin Kurti is serving as the current Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. Kurti has an invaluable perspective to impart to staffers, as the leader of the largest political party in the nation and the prominent figurehead in the ongoing Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue. Meeting with PM Kurti will complement the Belgrade meeting with President Vucic and offer a necessary second perspective.

- **Lumir Abdixhiku**, *Leader*, Democratic League

  Lumir Abdixhiku is the leader of the Democratic League, which is a prominent opposition political party in Kosovo. As an important political figure, Abdixhiku has a unique and important perspective on the political dynamics in the country and can share with staffers more about the Democratic League's priorities and offer a useful alternative perspective to the other political positions shared in the day's meetings.

- **Anu Prattipati**, *Chargé d'affaires, U.S. Embassy Pristina*

  Anu Prattipati currently serves as the Chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Pristina, previously serving as the Deputy Chief of Mission. Ms. Prattipati is a member of the Senior Foreign Service and brings deep experience supporting U.S foreign policy abroad. She has an invaluable perspective on American engagement in Kosovo and through this meeting staffers will better understand U.S policy in Kosovo.

Last Updated: 7/28/2026

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6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **Pristina briefing dinner with think tank experts**
Location: SALT Prishtina
Address: Rruga, nr 2 Fehmi Agani, Prishtina 10000

We will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation that will provide an overview of relevant historical and political developments in Kosovo. This will best prepare staffers before the rest of the Pristina programming.

Thursday, September 10 – Pristina, Tirana

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **H.E. Albulena Haxhiu**, *Acting President of the Republic of Kosovo*

  Albulena Haxhiu is the Acting President of the Republic of Kosovo. Through this exchange, staffers will gain a more thorough understanding of the global outlook of Kosovo and understand the nuances in political opinions between the president and prime minister.

- **Major General Özkan Ulutaş**, *Commander of Kosovo Force* (KFOR)

  Major General Özkan Ulutaş is the Commander of Kosovo Force (KFOR), which is a NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo. KFOR has been deployed in the region since 1999, and it plays an important role in maintaining security in the area. This meeting will allow staffers to learn more about the realities of the security situation in Kosovo and the importance of the EU presence there.

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Hotel check-out and drive Pristina – Tirana**

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Hotel check-in**
Location: Arte Boutique Hotel
Address: Rruga Ibrahim Rugova 32, Tiranë, Albania

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Meeting over lunch with Ms. Françeska Korançe, PhD, *EIT Community Officer*, Albania**
Location: LIFT Restaurant
Address: St 1010, ABA Business Center, 4th Floor, Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II, Tiranë, Albania

Françeska Korançe is the Albania community officer of the EU-organized European Institute of Innovation and Technology Hub in Albania and will highlight for staffers the tremendous growth and economic development potential in Albania as an example of the forward-looking potential of the region.

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3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **H.E. Edi Rama**, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania*

  Edi Rama is the Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, a role he has served in since 2013. With over a decade of leadership in Albania and significant experience advancing Albania's progress towards EU membership, Meeting Prime Minister Rama will be an invaluable opportunity to hear from one of the most established leaders in the region.

- **H.E. Ferit Hoxha**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania*

  Ferit Hoxha is the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prior to this role, he had a decades long career in Albania's foreign service. The meeting will give staffers a better understanding of Albania's foreign policy priorities and how they compare to those of the other countries visited on this trip.

- **H.E. Sofia Moreira de Sousa**, *Ambassador designate of the European Union to Albania*

  Amb. Moreira de Sousa is the incoming Ambassador of the European Union to Albania. She has invaluable insight into Albania's EU accession process, which is one of the frontrunners among the other five Western Balkan nations. Amb. Moreira de Sousa will provide the EU perspective on Albania's reforms and what the remaining obstacles towards accession are.

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. **Tirana briefing dinner with think tank experts**
Location: Pireu
Address: Rruga Qemal Guranjaku 12, Tiranë 1000, Albania

As a first scene-setting dinner in Tirana, we will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation so they have a broad overview of relevant historical and political developments in Albania as they head into the rest of the Tirana itinerary. Having not been a member of the Former Yugoslavia, Albania has a unique history within the region which will be explained in this setting.

Friday, September 11 – Tirana

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **Martin Mata and Aleksander Sarapuli**, *Co-Chief Executive Officers*, Albanian American Development Fund

  Mr. Mata and Mr. Sarapuli are Co-CEOs of the Albanian American Development Fund, an organization aiming to promoting sustainable economic investment as well as democratic governance in Albania. The AADF aims to contribute to sustainable growth in Albania through three pillars: education/leadership, entrepreneurship and cultural

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heritage/eco-tourism. Meeting with Mr. Mata and Mr. Sarapuli will provide staffers with a unique insight into the potential for responsible and sustainable US investment in the region.

- **Samir Mane**, *President*, BALFIN Group

  Mr. Mane is the President of the BALFIN Group, an Albanian Private Investment group and one of the largest investment groups in the Western Balkans. The BALFIN group operates across various sectors including areas such as retail, real estate and mining. This cross-regional and cross-sectoral expertise would offer staffers unparalleled insights into the investment environment in the region, as well as giving them greater insight into potential areas for US investment in the region.

- **Klodian Braho**, *Head*, Albanian Special Anti-corruption Body (SPAK)

  Mr. Braho is the new head of SPAK, the independent Albanian agency focusing on anti-corruption and anti-organized crime efforts in the country. Mr. Braho is recognized as one of the most important figures in the Albanian political landscape for his efforts to combat corruption. Meeting with Mr. Braho will give staffers unparalleled access to one of the most significant figures playing a role in fighting the organized crime and corruption that is necessary for Albania to advance on its path to join the EU.

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Working lunch with Grant Van Cleve, *President*, American Chamber of Commerce in Albania**

Location: Noah Garden Tirane Restaurant
Address: Park Gate, Rruga Dritan Mezini, Tiranë 1001, Albania

As the President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Albania, meeting with Mr. Van Cleve will highlight for the staffers the relevance of the region for American business and provide an economic perspective to understanding Albania and the broader region.

2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Private meetings (TBC)**

- **Nancy Van Horn**, *Deputy Chief of Mission*, US Embassy Tirana

  Ms. Van Horn is a career diplomat, serving since 2007 and with deep experience representing the United States and its interests abroad. Meeting with Ms. Van Horn, the top-ranking US diplomat in Albania, will give staffers key insights into how Washington assesses the state of Albanian politics, the view from Washington on US-Albanian and EU-Albanian relations, especially considering Albania's role as a frontrunner in the EU accession process and a model for the rest of the region.

- **Representatives of BIRN Albania (Reporter.al)**

  BIRN Albania is the country's leading investigative journalism and media-freedom watchdog, publishing on corruption, organized crime,

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and rule-of-law issues. This meeting with BIRN will give staffers the independent civil-society and press-freedom perspective on these issues which are increasingly relevant given domestic protests in Albania.

- **Representatives of the Office of the Mayor of Tirana**

  Staffers will meet with the Acting Mayor of Tirana to gain a better understanding of Tirana city priorities. Tirana is a hub for economic development in the region and home to numerous entrepreneurial and tech initiatives that highlight the forward-looking potential of the region.

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. **Farewell dinner and debrief**
Location: Tribe
Address: Rr. Murat Toptani, Pedonale Tirana AL, 1001, Albania

Atlantic Council experts will participate in a conversation with the Staff Delegation to debrief takeaways from the trip, answer lingering questions, and help highlight the relevance and common themes from the meetings of the days' prior.

Saturday, September 12 – Return to Washington

6:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. **Delegation flies Tirana TIA – Vienna VIE on Austrian airlines flight OS 760**

10:50 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Delegation flies Vienna VIE – Washington IAD on Austrian airlines flight OS 41**

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US House of Representatives

Committee on Ethics

Atlantic Council of the US, Inc.

Europe Center Study Tour to the Western Balkans

September 6 – 12, 2026

Primary Trip Sponsor Form supplemental documentation

Question 4: House employees invited:

1. **Adams, Joshua**
    a. *Senior Legislative Assistant*, Office of Rep. Office of Rep. Keith Self (TX-03)
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Mr. Adams's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, given his Member's role as the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe.

2. **Norton, Lee**
    a. *Professional Policy Staff Member,* Republican Study Committee
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Mr. Norton's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, due to his involvement with the Armed Services, Intelligence, and Foreign Affairs committees for the Republican Study Committee.

3. **Rivas, Victoria**
    a. *National Security Advisor,* Office of Rep. Pete Aguilar (CA-33)
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Rivas's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, given her focus on national security and foreign affairs, and her Member's role as the House Democratic Caucus chair.

4. **Scanlon, Erin**
    a. *National Security Advisor,* Office of Rep. Sam Graves (MO-06)
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Scanlon's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, given her Member's role as the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and as a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

5. **Schein, Michelle**
    a. *Deputy Chief of Staff, Policy and Advocacy/Legislative Director,* Office of Rep. Greg Stanton (AZ-4)
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Ms. Schein's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, given her Member's role on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Invited but not attending:

1. **Nigro, Gianluca**
    a. *Deputy Chief of Staff & Legislative Director*, Office of Rep. Brendan F. Boyle (PA-02)
    b. Reason for inviting: The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance to the United States and Europe which are both committed to keeping the region aligned on a Euro-Atlantic trajectory. These individual countries and the Western Balkans region as a whole are relevant to Mr. Nigro's official professional portfolio in the House of Representatives, given his Member's role as the co-Chair of Congressional Macedonian Caucus and the EU Caucus.

ITINERARY

Balkans Forward Congressional Fellowship Study Tour

September 6 -12, 2026

ITINERARY

Sunday, September 6 – Departure

5:45 p.m. – 8:10 a.m. +1 **Delegation flies Washington IAD – Vienna VIE on Austrian airlines OS 42**

Monday, September 7 – Belgrade

9:20 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. **Delegation flies Vienna VIE – Belgrade BEG on Austrian airlines OS 721**

10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Transfer to Belgrade city center and check in to hotel**
Location: Belgrade Hilton Hotel
Address: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade, 11000, Serbia

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Lunch with Belgrade political scientists**
Location: Belgrade Hilton Hotel
Address: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade, 11000, Serbia

This meeting will pair a leading Serbian political sociologist with a veteran former Serbian government foreign policy advisor and transatlantic think tank leader, giving staffers both a grounded academic read on civil society and public opinion and a seasoned, long-view perspective on Serbia's democratic trajectory and its place in the broader European order.

- **Dr. Gazela Pudar Draško**, *Director at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory*, University of Belgrade
- **Stefan Jovanović**, *Student representative, Faculty of Political Science*, Studenti u blokadi
- **Ivan Vejvoda**, *Senior Researcher*, Austrian Institute for International Affairs

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Private meeting**

Branko Milutinović, *CEO*, Nordeus

Branko Milutinović co-founded Nordeus in 2010, growing it from a small Belgrade startup into a globally recognized mobile gaming company. As a leading voice in Serbia's tech ecosystem and a board member of the Digital Serbia Initiative, Milutinović offers staffers a firsthand look at Serbia's homegrown tech and innovation economy, an important counterpoint to the region's usual security- and geopolitics-heavy narrative. His experience building a globally competitive company out of Belgrade and now operating as part of a major US-based parent company, speaks directly to opportunities and challenges facing Serbia's next generation of digital talent.

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Private meeting**

H.E. Andreas von Beckerath, *Ambassador of the European Union to Serbia*

Andreas von Beckerath, a career diplomat who previously served as Ambassador to Ukraine, took up his post as EU Ambassador to Serbia in August 2025. He offers staffers a candid, on-the-ground read of where Serbia's political crisis and reform pressures stand relative to Brussels' benchmarks.

5:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m. **Private meeting**

Alex Kostic, *President*, MKGroup

Alex Kostić leads MK Group, Serbia's largest privately-owned conglomerate, spanning agriculture, banking, energy, and real estate, and also chairs the board of AIK Bank following its regional expansion into Slovenia and Croatia. He offers staffers a window into Serbian big business's perspective on the investment climate, EU market integration, and the private sector's stake in the country's political and economic trajectory.

6:30 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. **Welcome dinner and trip orientation with civil society briefing**
Location: Madera
Address: Bulevar kralja Aleksandra 43, Beograd 11000, Serbia

Meeting with representatives from Civil Society in Serbia will offer the staffers a unique, on-the-ground perspective of the realities of living in Serbia's political landscape, particularly given the significant recent protests across the country.

- **Srđan Majstorović**, *Chairman of the Governing Board*, European Policy Centre
- **Igor Novaković**, *Senior Associate*, International and Security Affairs Centre – ISAC Fund
- **Dr Marko Savković**, *Senior Advisor*, International and Security Affairs Centre – ISAC Fund
- **Bojana Selaković**, *Coordinator*, National Convention on the European Union
- **Ivan Vujacic**, *President of the Forum for International Relations*, European Movement in Serbia
- **Dimitrije Milic**, *Program Director and Founder*, Novi Treci Put

Overnight **Belgrade, Serbia**
Location: Belgrade Hilton Hotel
Address: Kralja Milana 35, Belgrade, 11000, Serbia

Tuesday, September 8 – Belgrade, Skopje

7:45 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. **Breakfast with CRTA experts**
Location: Madera
Address: Bulevar kralja Aleksandra 43, Beograd 11000, Serbia

The Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), is a Serbian non-partisan civil society organization focused on pushing for the development of a robust democratic culture through civic activism. Notably the CRTA has observed elections in Serbia on both the local and national level. Meeting with representative with the CRTA would give staffers insights into efforts to create civic engagement in Serbia as well as allow staffers to better understand the conduct of elections in the country.

- **Raša Nedeljkov**, *Program Director*, CRTA
- **Vukosava Crnjanski**, *Founder and Director*, CRTA

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Marko Đurić**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia*

Marko Đurić is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. This is his second time serving in this position. As foreign minister, Đurić has an important perspective on the state of Serbia's foreign policy. He will help convey this perspective to staffers and help them understand where the policy priorities of Serbia and United States overlap. This meeting will be particularly interesting given the understanding the Minister has of the Washington landscape given his previous role as Ambassador of Serbia to the United States.

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Ana Brnabić**, *President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia*

Ana Brnabić is the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, a position she has held since March 2024, having previously served as Prime Minister of Serbia from 2017 to 2024. As the head of Serbia's parliament and a former head of government, Brnabić offers staffers a unique perspective spanning both the executive and legislative dimensions of Serbian politics, including how the country's ongoing political crisis and protest movement are shaping the parliamentary agenda and EU accession reforms.

12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Hotel check out and drive Belgrade - Skopje**

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **North Macedonia expert briefing**

This briefing will provide the fellows with a better understanding of the current political dynamics shaping North Macedonia, preparing them for upcoming meetings. Local experts can provide insights on North Macedonia's civil society landscape, public perceptions of key issues, and foreign policy priorities.

- **Jörn Fleck**, *Senior Director, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council

5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Check-in to Skopje hotel
Location: Skopje Marriott Hotel
Address: Plostad Makedonija 7, 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Private meeting

- **Jelena Arsovska**, *Executive Director*, AmCham North Macedonia

Jelena Arsovska is the Executive Director of the AmCham North Macedonia. Meeting with Ms. Arsovska will provide an opportunity to discuss North Macedonia's economic growth prospects and challenges and the economic relationship with the United States.

6:45 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Skopje briefing dinner with think tank and local experts
Location: Restaurant Vodenica Mulino
Address: Mitropolit Teodosij Gologanov 69, Skopje 1000

As a first scene-setting meeting in North Macedonia we will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation so they have a broad overview of relevant historical and political developments in North Macedonia as they head into the rest of the Skopje itinerary.

- **Simonida Kacarska**, *Director*, European Policy Institute
- **Bujar Osmani**, *Former Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of North Macedonia*
- **Nikola Dimitrov**, *President and Co-founder of the Balkan Center for Constructive Policies*

8:15 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Expert briefing on Skopje Independence Day
September 8th marks the anniversary of North Macedonia's 1991 referendum on independence from the former Yugoslavia, a peaceful transition that stands in stark contrast to the violent breakups experienced elsewhere in the region. For a young democracy whose statehood and national identity have been repeatedly contested by its neighbors, Independence Day functions as a barometer of the country's resilience and its citizens' continued commitment to the Euro-Atlantic integration process. Direct engagement with Macedonian officials and civil society on the ground offers the Staff Delegation first-hand insight of this significant for this Western Balkan country and NATO Ally.

- **Nikola Dimitrov**, *President and Co-founder of the Balkan Center for Constructive Policies*

Overnight

Skopje, North Macedonia
Location: Skopje Marriott Hotel
Address: Plostad Makedonija 7, 1000 Skopje, North Macedonia

Wednesday, September 9 – Skopje, Pristina

8:15 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. **Breakfast meeting**

- **Nicole Varnes**, *Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy North Macedonia*

  Nicole Varnes is currently serving as the Chargés d'affaires at the US Embassy in Skopje, North Macedonia. She is currently the highest-ranking US official at US Embassy Skopje, having previously served as the Deputy Chief of Mission since August 2024. Meeting with Ms. Varnes will provide high-level perspective into the U.S.'s current policy priorities and engagement in North Macedonia.

9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **Private meeting**

- **Admir Shabani**, *Deputy Minister of Defense of the Republic of North Macedonia*

  Vlado Misajlovski has served as North Macedonia's Minister of Defense since June 2024, overseeing the country's contributions to NATO's eastern flank deterrence efforts and its participation in Alliance and EU peacekeeping missions. As a senior defense official from one of the region's newest NATO members, he offers staffers a firsthand view of North Macedonia's security priorities, its role in regional stability, and the practical challenges and opportunities of Alliance burden-sharing on the Balkans' front line.

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Timčo Mucunski**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of the Republic of North Macedonia*

  Timčo Mucunski is the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of the Republic of North Macedonia. Mucunski has a valuable perspective on North Macedonia's foreign policy goals, specifically about strategic and economic cooperation with the United States and North Macedonia's 2026 bilateral trade agreement with Washington. This meeting can also provide insights into North Macedonia's role as a security partner to the US in the Western Balkans.

11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Michalis Rokas**, *Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of North Macedonia*

  A career EU diplomat with prior postings in Malaysia and New Zealand, Rokas gives staffers a candid read on where North Macedonia's constitutional reform standoff and accession negotiations actually stand.

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Hotel check-out and drive Skopje – Pristina**

1:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Briefing over lunch with Civil Society Representatives

Location: Hotel Sirius
Address: Agim Ramadani, Pristina 10000

This lunch brings together a cross-section of Kosovo's civil society, including Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb voices alongside other independent experts, giving staffers a multi-perspective view of on-the-ground dynamics, media freedom, and inter-ethnic relations rather than a single-sided account. With this range of viewpoints at the table, staffers can pressure-test assumptions and come away with a fuller, more balanced picture of Kosovo's political and social landscape than any one meeting could provide.

- **Agon Maliqi**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council
- **Lura Limani**, *Team leader – EU integration and regional cooperation program*, Open Society Foundations
- **Tatjana Lazarević,** *Editor-in-Chief*, KoSSev
- **Adriatik Kelmendi**, *Research Fellow*, Klan Kosova
- **Milica Radovanović**, *Project Manager*, New Social Initiative

3:00 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

Private meeting

– **Ramush Haradinaj**, *Founder,* Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK)

Ramush Haradinaj is the founder of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and served twice as Kosovo's Prime Minister, most recently from 2017 to 2020. Though he stepped down as AAK leader in May 2026, Haradinaj remains an influential political figure and possible presidential contender, and his perspective on Kosovo's political landscape and party dynamics offers staffers a useful complement to the other political positions shared in the day's meetings.

4:00 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

Private meeting

– **Lumir Abdixhiku**, *Leader*, Democratic League

Lumir Abdixhiku is the leader of the Democratic League, which is a prominent opposition political party in Kosovo. As an important political figure, Abdixhiku has a unique and important perspective on the political dynamics in the country and can share with staffers more about the Democratic League's priorities and offer a useful alternative perspective to the other political positions shared in the day's meetings.

5:00 pm. – 6:00 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Albin Kurti**, *Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo*

  Albin Kurti is serving as the current Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo. Kurti has an invaluable perspective to impart to staffers, as the leader of the largest political party in the nation and the prominent figurehead in the ongoing Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue. Meeting with PM Kurti will complement the Belgrade meeting with President Vucic and offer a necessary second perspective.

6:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **Valon Kurhasani**, *Senior Deputy Country Director*, NDI Kosovo
- **Arber Gorani**, *Senior Program Manager*, IRI Kosovo

  Valon Kurhasani and Arber Gorani lead democracy and governance programming in Kosovo for NDI and IRI, respectively, the two flagship US party institutes running political party development, youth and women's political participation, and disinformation-resilience work on the ground. Together they can walk staffers through the practical state of Kosovo's democratic institutions and political culture, and how US-funded programming is helping shape the country's next generation of political leadership.

7:20 p.m. – 9:45 p.m. **Pristina briefing dinner with Arian Zeka**

Location: SALT Prishtina
Address: Rruga, nr 2 Fehmi Agani, Prishtina 10000

- **Arian Zeka**, *Executive Director*, AmCham Kosovo

Arian Zeka has led AmCham Kosovo since 2012, growing it into one of the most active American Chambers in Europe and a key liaison between US companies, Kosovo's business community, and the government. He can give staffers a business-community perspective on Kosovo's investment climate, US-Kosovo commercial ties, and the private sector's stake in the country's economic and political trajectory.

Overnight Pristina, Kosovo
Location: Hotel Sirius
Address: Agim Ramadani, Pristina 10000

Thursday, September 10 – Pristina, Tirana

7:45 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. **Private meeting**

- **Patrick Gan,** *Economic Unit Chief,* US Embassy in Pristina

- **Amy Reichert,** *Political and Economic Counselor,* US Embassy in Pristina
- **Becky Satterfield,** *Acting Public Affairs Officer,* US Embassy in Pristina
- **Bridget Trazoff,** *Political Unit Chief,* US Embassy in Pristina

This meeting will bring together representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Pristina.. These individuals can provide perspective on American engagement in Kosovo and through this meeting staffers will better understand U.S policy in Kosovo, and US priorities spanning politics, economics, and public affairs.

9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Private briefing in Mitrovica on the political dynamics in the north of Kosovo

This meeting will give staffers an opportunity to engage with representatives from international institutions, civil society, and local authorities to understand the perspectives shaping one of the most significant regions within the Western Balkans.

- **Nikolaos Kavallaris-Ladis**, OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- **Caleb Arboit Waugh,** OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- **Maid Konjhodzic,** OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- **Tatjana Lazarevic**, KosSev News Service
- **Milica Radovanovic,** New Social Initiative
- **Milan Radojevic**, *Mayor of North Mitrovica*

12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Private briefing on KFOR followed by meeting at Camp Film City

- **Brigadier General Chad Daniels,** , *Chief of Staff,* Kosovo Force (KFOR)
- **Thuruban Thuchchathanan,** *Special Advisor, Office of the Political Advisor,* Kosovo Force (KFOR)

Brigadier General Chad Daniels is the Chief of Staff of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), which is a NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo. KFOR has been deployed in the region since 1999, and it plays an important role in maintaining security in the area. This meeting will allow staffers to learn more about the realities of the security situation in Kosovo and the importance of the EU presence there.

2:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Drive Pristina – Tirana

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Expert briefing on Albania

As a first scene-setting ahead of Tirana meetings, we will organize an expert briefing for the Staff Delegation so they have a broad overview of relevant historical and political developments in Albania as they head into the rest of the Tirana itinerary. Having not been a member of the Former

Yugoslavia, Albania has a unique history within the region which will be explained in this setting.

- **Ilva Tare**, *Resident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council
- **Dr. Valbona Zeneli**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council

6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Hotel check-in
Location: Plaza Hotel
Address: Rruga Abdi Toptani 18, Tirana, Albania

6:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Private meeting

- **Nancy Van Horn**, *Deputy Chief of Mission*, US Embassy Tirana

  Ms. Van Horn is a career diplomat, serving since 2007 and with deep experience representing the United States and its interests abroad. Meeting with Ms. Van Horn, the top-ranking US diplomat in Albania, will give staffers key insights into how Washington assesses the state of Albanian politics, the view from Washington on US-Albanian and EU-Albanian relations, especially considering Albania's role as a frontrunner in the EU accession process and a model for the rest of the region.

7:15 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Tirana briefing dinner with think tank community
Location: Pireu
Address: Rruga Qemal Guranjaku 12, Tiranë 1000, Albania

This dinner brings together leading figures from Albania's university, think tank, and academic research institutions — spanning the University of Tirana, the Atlas Institute, SCiDEV, the Albanian Academy of Sciences' Institute of History, the Institute for Political Studies, and the Cooperation & Development Institute. Together they offer staffers a substantive, cross-disciplinary read on Albania's political and historical trajectory, EU integration prospects, and the state of independent research and policy analysis shaping the country's reform debates.

- **Blendi Çeka**¸*Lecturer*, University of Tirana, Governing Board of Atlas Institute
- **Blerjana Bino**, *Co-founder and Executive Director*, SCiDEV
- **Adri Nurellari**, *Analyst*, Institute of History, Albanian Academy of Sciences

Overnight

Tirana, Albania
Location: Plaza Hotel
Address: Rruga Abdi Toptani 18, Tirana, Albania

Friday, September 11 – Tirana

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Private meeting over breakfast

- **Jorida Tabaku MP**, *Member*, Parliament of Albania

  Jorida Tabaku is a senior Democratic Party MP and Deputy Chair of the party who previously served as Deputy Minister of European Integration and Deputy Mayor of Tirana. As one of the opposition's most vocal and visible voices on Albania's economy, emigration crisis, and stalled EU accession progress, she offers staffers a sharp counterpoint to the ruling Socialist Party's narrative and a window into the political dynamics shaping Albania's reform trajectory.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Ferit Hoxha**, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania*

  Ferit Hoxha is the Albanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Prior to this role, he had a decades long career in Albania's foreign service. The meeting will give staffers a better understanding of Albania's foreign policy priorities and how they compare to those of the other countries visited on this trip.

12:10 p.m. – 12:50 p.m. **Meeting with American Chamber of Commerce in Albania Team**

- **Neritan Mullaj,** *Executive Director,* American Chamber of Commerce in Albania

As the Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Albania, meeting with Mr. Mullaj will highlight for the staffers the relevance of the region for American business and provide an economic perspective to understanding Albania and the broader region.

1:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. **Working lunch with media experts**
Location: LIFT Restaurant
Address: St 1010, ABA Business Center, 4th Floor

This meeting brings together leaders from the Albania Media Institute and Transparency International Albania, two of the country's most established voices on press freedom, media literacy, and anti-corruption efforts. They can give staffers a candid, independent read on the state of media freedom, disinformation, and government accountability in Albania.

- **Remzi Lani**, *Director*, Albania Media Institute
- **Lutfi Dervishi**, Transparency International Albania

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **Klodian Braho**, *Head*, Albanian Special Anti-corruption Body (SPAK)

  Mr. Braho is the new head of SPAK, the independent Albanian agency focusing on anti-corruption and anti-organized crime efforts in the country. Mr. Braho is recognized as one of the most important figures

in the Albanian political landscape for his efforts to combat corruption. Meeting with Mr. Braho will give staffers unparalleled access to one of the most significant figures playing a role in fighting the organized crime and corruption that is necessary for Albania to advance on its path to join the EU.

4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m. **Private meeting**

- **H.E. Ermal Nufi**, *Minister of Defense of the Republic of Albania*

  Ermal Nufi has served as Albania's Minister of Defence since March 2026, leading the country's preparations for what he has called NATO's "3.0" era, including raising defense spending to 2.6% of GDP and hosting the next NATO Summit in Tirana. As the steward of Albania's growing NATO role and deepening defense partnership with the United States, he can give staffers a firsthand view of Albania's defense modernization priorities and its strategic value as an Alliance member on NATO's southeastern flank.

6:15 p.m. – 8:15 p.m. **Farewell dinner and debrief**
Location: Tribe
Address: Rr. Murat Toptani, Pedonale Tirana AL, 1001, Albania

Atlantic Council experts will participate in a conversation with the Staff Delegation to debrief takeaways from the trip, answer lingering questions, and help highlight the relevance and common themes from the meetings of the days' prior.

- **Ilva Tare**, *Resident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council
- **Dr. Valbona Zeneli**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council
- **Amanda Thorpe**, *Nonresident Senior Fellow, Europe Center*, Atlantic Council

Overnight **Tirana, Albania**
Location: Arte Boutique Hotel
Address: Rruga Ibrahim Rugova 32, Tiranë, Albania

Saturday, September 12 – Return to Washington

6:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. **Delegation flies Tirana TIA – Rome FCO on United flight UA 7776**

10:50 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Delegation flies Rome FCO – Washington IAD on United flight UA 885**