



**WESTERN BALKANS AT THE CROSSROADS:  
WAYS FORWARD IN ANALYZING  
EXTERNAL ACTORS' INFLUENCE**

THE PRAGUE SECURITY STUDIES INSTITUTE (PSSI)  
IS LAUNCHING NEW ROUND OF THE PROJECT

**WESTERN BALKANS AT THE CROSSROADS**

THIS TIME, UNDER THE TITLE  
**“WAYS FORWARD IN ANALYZING EXTERNAL ACTORS’  
INFLUENCE”**

**Project duration:** 10/2019 – 03/2021

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**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

*“Western Balkans at the Crossroads: Ways Forward in Analyzing External Actors' Influence,”* run by the PSSI, is a follow-up project that aims to build upon a knowledge base established in the preceding project *“Western Balkans at the Crossroads: Assessing Non-Democratic External Influence Activities,”* which mapped, analyzed and publicized Russian, Chinese, Turkish, and Gulf State influence activities in the region.

The innovative project focuses on in-depth socially rooted research and investigative journalism. Its design reflects our aim to go beyond conventional analytical frameworks, overcoming ideologically constructed stereotypes and methodological nationalism while combining a variety of methodological approaches from security studies to visual anthropology.

The principal research topics deals with issues of geopolitics and fading democracy – discourses and perceptions, policy making and business as well as illiberal leverage in the Western Balkan societies.

The project team consists of 15 junior and senior researchers from within the region and beyond with multidisciplinary scholarly backgrounds.



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### **PLANNED PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

Project outputs will consist of fifteen analytical studies and fifteen journalistic articles drawing on their findings. Major observations on external actors' influence gathered throughout the work on the project will be summarized in a final reflection paper. A collective monography presenting the studies in one publication shall also be issued. A concluding conference will be held in Prague to present major project findings and discuss ways forward in analyzing external actors' engagements in the Western Balkans among the expert and policy-making community dealing with the region.

### **ABOUT PSSI**

PSSI is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in early 2002 to advance the building of a just, secure, democratic, free market society in the Czech Republic and other post-communist states. PSSI's mission is to build an ever-growing group of informed and security-minded policy practitioners dedicated to the development of democratic institutions and values in the Central and South East Europe.