Identities are constructed on the basis of elements, which define individuals, people and groups. These defining elements can be religion, language, profession, educational background, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexuality and many other aspects, which either determine one’s individual identity or people’s social or group identity. Because people have multiple identities, individual identities exist along group identities and national identity. Our interpretation of who we are and how we are perceived by others is based on our “self-identity” and our “self-categorisation” into social groups. Identities dependent on the social, political and historical environment and on other people’s perception and because identity is socially constructed, it transforms and changes over time.

This conference wants to focus on the multiple identities, which define the people of the Western Balkans and explore how political culture, minorities and gender are impacting on peoples’ identities. What is a typical political culture in the Western Balkans? By understanding the way political culture functions can help us understand how and why the Western Balkans governments are organized in a certain way, why democracies succeed or fail in the region. Deepening this matter can provide clues to some other elements that define identity, such as minorities and gender. Are minorities a more powerful identity-marker than nationality or ethnicity? What are the main parameters of gender in the region? Is there a relationship between gender and conflict? Does the Western Balkans remain a region dominated by patriarchal gender norms? Hence, the aim of this conference is to discuss how the three elements, political culture, minorities and gender, define people’s identity and how they influence the people living in the Western Balkans.
Conference program

09:00  Registration

09:30  Welcome and introductory remarks

Péter Balázs, Director of CEU’s Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS), former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary
Regina Rusz, Director, Austrian Cultural Forum, Budapest, Hungary
Christina Griessler, Research Fellow for netPOL, Andrássy University Budapest

09:45  Panel I. – Political culture
Chair: Suzana Jurin, Professor, University of Rijeka, Croatia

Speakers:
Elona Dhembo, Fellow at the Department of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Tirana, Albania
Oliver Vujović, Secretary General, South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), Vienna, Austria
Martina Mirković, PhD candidate, Andrássy University Budapest

11:00  Panel II. – Minorities
Chair: Christina Griessler, Research Fellow for netPOL, Andrássy University Budapest

Speakers:
Antonija Petričušić, Professor, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Damjan Zdravev, Programme Officer, Civil Rights Defenders, Belgrade, Serbia
Jovana Radosavljević, Executive Director, New Social Initiative, North Mitrovica, Kosovo

12:15  Coffee Break

12:45  Panel III. – Gender
Chair: Hana Semanić, Research Fellow, Center for European Neighborhood Studies (CENS), Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

Speakers:
Elissa Helms, Associate Professor, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
Anamarija Batista, Research Associate, University of Vienna, Austria
Marsela Dauti, Associate Professor, University of Tirana, Albania

14:00  Networking Lunch