



## Balkan Cybersecurity Days – Speakers biographies

### Introduction from the hosts



#### **Franziska Klopfer, DCAF**

Franziska Klopfer. Franziska has been engaged in institutional reform in the security sector, with a specific focus on cybersecurity at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) since 2011. Previously, she had worked for over seven years for intergovernmental committees and working groups on Internet governance at the Council of Europe and the United Nations. In her work at DCAF, Franziska implements reform and capacity building projects and leads research on cybersecurity governance. She has specific expertise on Internet governance, human rights and public policy, cybersecurity and the privatisation of security.

Franziska holds an MA in Human Rights from University College London and an LLM in Public International Law from Queen Mary University of London.



#### **Serge Droz, Board of Directors, FIRST**

Serge Droz is a senior IT-Security expert and seasoned incident responder. After more than twenty years work in different CSIRTs he now works as a senior adviser for the Swiss FDFA. He studied physics at ETH Zurich and the University of Alberta, Canada and holds a PhD in theoretical astrophysics. He has worked in private industry and academia in Switzerland and Canada in different security roles as well as at the national CERT in Switzerland.

Serge is a member of the board of directors of FIRST (Forum for Incident Response and Security Teams), the premier organisation of recognised global leaders in incident response. In this role he actively participates in discussion relating to cyber security at various policy bodies, in particular related to norm building.



#### **Saimir Kapllani, Director, AKSK**

Saimir Kapllani is a senior cybersecurity leader with over 15 years of experience in national cyber governance, strategic risk management, and digital resilience. He currently serves as Acting Director General of the National Cyber Security Authority of Albania, where he leads the institution's strategic direction and





coordinates national efforts to strengthen cybersecurity across critical sectors and public institutions.

He has played a key role in shaping Albania's national cybersecurity governance, contributing to the development of strategic policies, regulatory frameworks, and risk management programs aimed at enhancing national cyber resilience and protecting critical information infrastructures. His work focuses on aligning Albania's cybersecurity ecosystem with international standards and best practices, including ISO/IEC 27001, COBIT, NIST, and ENISA frameworks.

Saimir also serves as an Alternate Member of the Data Protection Supervisory Board at EUROCONTROL, contributing to regulatory compliance and privacy oversight at the European level. He holds several professional certifications, including ISO/IEC 27001 Senior Lead Auditor, SIM3 Certified Auditor, GCMC Alumni, and CompTIA Security+.

With a multidisciplinary background spanning law, finance, and cybersecurity, Saimir actively contributes to strengthening international cyber cooperation and advancing Albania's engagement with key partners and institutions such as OSCE, ENISA, and the Council of Europe.



**Rudin Beka, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Shkodrim**  
**er**

Rudin Beka is the Deputy Mayor of Shkodër, Albania, where he focuses on economic development, tourism strategy, and innovation-driven urban projects. With a background in entrepreneurship and international business, he brings a practical, private-sector perspective to public leadership. His work centers on promoting sustainable tourism, attracting investment, and supporting cultural and creative industries that strengthen the city's long-term growth.

## Keynote Speech



**Elena Kaiser, EU Cybersecurity Strategy and Policies Division, Italian Cybersecurity Agency**

Elena Kaiser works as Deputy Head of EU Cybersecurity Strategy and Policies Division at the Italian National Cybersecurity Agency.

In her role, she contributes to the development and analysis of EU policies in the cybersecurity and artificial intelligence field, ensuring alignment with national





interests and regulations, and she represents the Agency in relevant EU working groups.

Before that, she was the Legal Advisor of the Cybersecurity Agency of the Ministry of Economy of Luxembourg.

Elena holds a Ph.D. in Public, International and European Law and is qualified to practice law in Italy.

## Panel: Digital Sovereignty – European best practices



### **Ambassador Arben Cici, Albania – Moderator**

Ambassador Arben Cici is currently Pro-Rector of the Mediterranean University of Albania with over 30 years of experience in diplomacy and international leadership. He has served as Albania's Ambassador to Denmark, Croatia, and Russia, and held senior roles including Foreign Policy Advisor to two Presidents, Director of State Protocol, and Chief of Staff to the President and the Speaker of Parliament. He also leads the Albanian Diplomatic Forum and is recognized with several national and international awards for his contributions to diplomacy and global cooperation.



### **Isabella Brunner, Assistant Professor, Institute of Security and Global Affairs**

Dr. Isabella Brunner is assistant professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs at Leiden University. Having obtained her PhD in international law, her research focuses on questions of how international law applies to cyber operations. At Leiden University, Isabella teaches on aspects of sovereignty in cyberspace, cybersecurity governance and cyber diplomacy. With a background as a legal officer at the Austrian Foreign Ministry, she has consulted the MFA on legal aspects of cyber issues since 2017, and has negotiated on behalf of Austria at the UN OEWG. Most recently, she drafted the Austrian position on international law applicable to cyber activities.



**Ms Esmeralda Kazia, Director at Directorate of Monitoring and Incident Response, Operations Center SOC, C-SIRT, AKSK**

Esmeralda Kazia is the Director of Monitoring and Incident Response at the Security Operations Center (SOC) and C-SIRT within Albania's National Cyber Security Authority (NCSA). She leads national efforts in cyber threat monitoring, incident response, and the protection of critical information infrastructure. With over a decade of experience in cybersecurity and IT, she has contributed to national and international initiatives aimed at strengthening cyber resilience. Esmeralda holds an MSc in Computer Engineering and is currently pursuing a PhD in Artificial Intelligence.



**Julia Kramer, Cybersecurity Management Researcher , Germany**

Julia Kramer is a researcher in Cybersecurity Management and holds a Master's degree in this field. Alongside her studies, she conducted research in two complementary environments: the Konrad Adenauer Foundation — a political, policy-oriented foundation engaged in legislative advisory work — and the Cybercrime Research Group at CyberCampus North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany cooperating with the Attorney General's Office. Her work ranged from analyzing darknet marketplace dynamics for digital goods to advising on cybersecurity regulation, including the German implementation of the European NIS2-directive and broader questions of digital sovereignty. In 2025, she published her first peer-reviewed academic paper on darknet vendor characteristics at the International Conference on Availability, Reliability and Security (ARES).

Since early 2026, she has been working for the Federal Office for Information Security Germany. In her position, she oversees critical infrastructures. Nevertheless, in this panel she participates in a private capacity, bringing her research-driven insights into European cyber resilience and digital sovereignty.



**Miloš Vukelić, Research Associate, Faculty of Political Science, Belgrade**

Miloš Vukelić, PhD, is a Research Associate at the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Political Science (UB-FPN), where he has worked in research and teaching roles since 2015. He is one of the founders and a Director of the Center for Cyberspace Policy at the UB-FPN. In 2022-2023, he was a Fulbright Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Cincinnati's School of Public and International Affairs and Center for Cyber Strategy and Policy. In 2024, he published a book in Serbian titled Post-digital Culture Wars in the West, which



examines the interplay between political polarization and technological innovation.

## Plenary Sessions



### **Aleksandar Acev (MK)**

FIRST Liaison, Aleksandar Acev is a senior cybersecurity expert with more than 20 years of experience in national, sectoral, and regional cyber resilience. He previously served as Head of the National CSIRT (MKD-CIRT) in North Macedonia, where he established national incident response capabilities, information-sharing networks, and large-scale cybersecurity monitoring and training programs.

He has led the development of national cybersecurity strategies, NIS2-aligned legislation, and sector-specific rulebooks, and has delivered incident response exercises, trainings, and capacity-building programs across the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. He currently works on regional cybersecurity initiatives (EU funded eGA implemented Cyber Balkans Project) focused on practical incident readiness, governance, and resilience for public institutions and regulated entities.



### **Levis Ahmetaga (CoreStudio, AL)**

Levis Ahmetaga is the founder of CoreStudio, a managed security services provider based in Shkodër, Albania, serving businesses across the Western Balkans with cybersecurity, disaster recovery, and IT automation services.

He has 14+ years of experience in information security, including roles at GIZ Albania and the Albanian State Police. He has published articles on ransomware and regional cyber threats through BIRN Albania.

### **Cristina Jovmir (The Shadowserver Foundation, US)**

Cristina Jovmir is the CEE Liaison at The Shadowserver Foundation for the Critical Community Infrastructure, where she helps bring people together across Central and Eastern Europe's cybersecurity ecosystem.

She supports partner coordination and information-sharing, with an emphasis on practical outcomes and trusted relationships.





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### **Erblind Morina (IBM X-Force)**

Principal Incident Response Consultant at IBM X-Force, with 7 years of experience in Security Operations, specialising in Incident Response and Threat Intelligence. Extensive experience in the banking sector, having served as an Incident Responder, Detection Engineer, and Manager within a Global SOC.

Successfully led and supported initiatives focused on building incident response capabilities, developing threat intelligence platforms, delivering technical training, and strengthening proactive security services.

Holds industry-recognised certifications including GCTI, GCFA, and GCFR. Holds a Bachelor's degree in Security Studies, is currently pursuing a Master's in Cybersecurity, and is a Chevening Fellow (UK Defence Academy)



### **Kire Jakimoski (Institute of Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics, Military Academy "General Mihailo Apostolski", MK)**

With around 24 years of experience in the fields of Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics, and Computer Networks, Kire Jakimoski has worked in state and private organisations and universities as Signals Officer, Advisor for Accreditation of CIS, Advisor for Cryptographic Systems, Research Assistant, University Professor, Expert Witness and Cybersecurity Consultant. He is currently Full Professor and Head of Sector for Advanced Technologies in the Institute of Cybersecurity and Digital Forensics, Military Academy "General Mihailo Apostolski" - Skopje, Goce Delcev University, Stip. He is also an active IEEE Senior Member, Certified EC-Council Instructor, ThriveDX Instructor, and Cybersecurity Consultant in a firewall company.



### **Natalija Radoja (DCAF, Serbia)**

Natalija Radoja is the Head of the DCAF Belgrade Office. She graduated from the Faculty of Law at the University of Belgrade and has over a decade of experience in the field of cybersecurity, with a focus on legislative issues. She is one of the principal authors of Serbia's current Strategy for the Development of the Information Society and Cybersecurity.

Natalija was awarded a UK Government Chevening Fellowship and completed advanced training in cybersecurity at Cranfield University in the United Kingdom. Her professional experience spans work in public institutions, extensive





collaboration with a wide range of partners, and the implementation of UK FCDO and France -DCAF projects across the Western Balkans and Moldova.

**Blerim Jahiu (ICT Expert, KOS)**



Blerim Jahiu is a senior cybersecurity and computer networking expert with over 30 years of international experience across industry, academia, and professional training. He holds a Master's degree in Informatics from the University of Zagreb, Croatia. In industry, he served as a Technical Solutions Architect at AT&T, where he contributed to the design and implementation of secure, large-scale network infrastructures with a strong focus on cybersecurity architecture and resilience. In academia and professional development, Blerim has lectured at RIT Kosovo (AUK) and Riinvest College, and currently delivers industry-focused ICT training through RIT Kosovo Training and Development Institute. He is a Certified Cisco Instructor Trainer, an EC-Council Certified Instructor, and a PECB Certified Trainer, delivering advanced programs to professionals across telecom, finance, government, and critical infrastructure sectors in Kosovo and internationally. He also coaches the Kosova Cyber Team, mentoring young talent for international cybersecurity competitions and contributing to the development of the next generation of cybersecurity professionals.

**Denise Schipani (Sibylline Ltd, GB)**



Denise is a cyber and geopolitical risk analyst at Sibylline, where they analyse global cyber trends with particular expertise in state-sponsored cyber operations. They have prior experience as a threat intelligence researcher, using OSINT techniques to identify and assess high-risk individuals, often affiliated with extremist groups. Denise also brings experience in providing technical advice on integrating cyber security solutions into customer environments, conducting log analysis and managing cyber incidents, which has greatly enriched their understanding of cyber techniques and subsequent risks. They hold a Master's degree in Security Studies from UCL and a BA in International Relations and Chinese from the School of Oriental and African Studies, during which they spent time at Beijing Normal University honing their Chinese language skills.





### **Orgito Leka (AL)**

Orgito Leka is a Cybersecurity Researcher specializing in offensive security, applied cryptography, and secure system architecture. His work focuses on vulnerability research, reverse engineering, network analysis, and the security assessment of real-world infrastructures. He actively participates in advanced Capture The Flag (CTF) competitions and complex security challenges involving cryptographic weaknesses, blockchain-based systems, and network exploitation techniques. Orgito is engaged in regional and international cybersecurity communities through technical research, knowledge sharing, and conference speaking, with a strong focus on bridging theoretical security concepts with practical, real-world implementation.



### **Blagica Danevska (Young Faces, MK)**

Education

-Bachelor's Degree - Military Academy  
"General Mihailo Apostolski - 2011-2015

Master's Degree in International Relations and Affairs, diplomacy, conflict resolution,  
2015-2016

- OSCE Scholarship in Peace and Security  
June 2023

- NATO Youth Summit 2025 - Participant

- DCAF Young Faces Programme 2025-2026



### **Saso Mickov (ASEE BSS MKD, MK)**

Over 20 years of professional experience and professional certifications give me appropriate technical and business knowledge how to address effectively IT risks and to align activities with business goals while effectively managing risks and meeting industry regulations.

I have a bachelor's degree in computer science from state university in Skopje ("Ss. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje) and Master (MSc) in E-Business Management, at Faculty of Economics ("Ss. Cyril and Methodius"- Skopje).

From formal education I have also certification for study program: Economics of Cybersecurity - on The Delft University of Technology, Netherlands.

- CIPM - Certified Information Privacy Manager - since 2020, IAPP
- CIA - Certified Internal Auditor, since 2014, the IIA





- CISA - Certified Information Systems Auditor, since 2008, ISACA
- ISO 27001 Lead Auditor BSI Management System



**Uveis Smajli (Young Faces, KOS)**

Everything starts with an idea.

Uveis Smajli serves as the Chief Operating Officer of Kit Center, where he works on the development of digital platforms and technology systems designed to support education and organizational operations. Among the platforms developed within this work are Bubble LMS, which enables institutions and instructors to deliver and manage online education, and SIMS, a system created to simplify and modernize university administration.

Alongside his work in technology, he is also developing the media initiative Zabbel, a platform dedicated to explaining complex topics from geopolitics and technology to history and human behavior, through storytelling and visual content.

His work is guided by the belief that every meaningful initiative starts with an idea.



**Alketa Hota (Deloitte, IE)**

Alketa is a Data Privacy Consultant at Deloitte Ireland, specialising in helping organisations navigate complex data protection challenges and implement privacy-by-design solutions. As a proud alumna of the DCAF Young Faces programme, Alketa combines practical experience with a strong commitment to advancing data privacy standards. Certified as a Information Privacy Professional/Europe (CIPP/E), Alketa brings expert knowledge of European data protection regulations and privacy-enhancing technologies to support clients in both the public and private sectors. Passionate about empowering the public sector, Alketa is dedicated to fostering trust through innovative privacy solutions and effective risk management.



**Mil Rajic (DynaRisk, GB)**

Cybersecurity expert with over 20 years of experience, specializing in dark web intelligence, cyber threat analysis, and predictive threat modeling. He leads the Threat Intelligence Team at DynaRisk, focusing on emerging threats, threat actor identification, and incident response.

Mil has helped secure companies in the banking, financial, insurance, and technology sectors. His expertise includes ransomware tracking, infostealer analysis, and deep web monitoring.

Recognized globally, his work has been featured in top publications, and he has received multiple awards as an ethical hacker. As a Liaison Member of FIRST, he actively contributes to strengthening cyber resilience worldwide.

**Oriana Coku (Institute of Aerospace and Telecommunications Law LUPS, DE)**

Researcher: 1. "AI enabled military satellite systems and the regulatory challenges they pose" 2. "Small nations in Space: Balkan integration in EU- wide space governance" at the Ludovika University of Public Service (LUPS) , Institute of Aerospace and Telecommunications Law ;Budapest Hungary.

Project development lead for mundialis providing customised geoinformation solutions using state-of-the-art remote sensing technologies in the fields of environment, finance and security; Bonn Germany.



**Samet Isufi (Hacker Simulations, US)**

Samet is the Founder and CEO of Hacker Simulations, where he leads security testing initiatives focused on API and application security. With over a decade of experience in cybersecurity, his work centers on identifying how real-world attackers exploit design flaws, business logic weaknesses, and trust assumptions in modern systems.

He has worked with FinTech, SaaS, and SMB and Enterprise organizations to assess security posture and support teams before and after security incidents, with a particular focus on API-driven architectures. Born in Shkodër and now based in the United States, he brings an international practitioner's perspective to discussions on how modern breaches unfold and what security teams need to prioritize in API-driven environments.





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### **Sercan Azizoglu (TR)**

Sercan Azizoglu is a professional in cybersecurity, risk management, and threat intelligence, specializing in cloud security, endpoint protection, incident detection, and external attack surface management. With hands-on experience in cybersecurity analysis, vendor risk assessment, and security hardening, he bridges technical expertise with strategic problem-solving across multi-tenant environments.

His certifications include Certified Cloud Security Professional Associate, Systems Security Certified Practitioner, Certified in Cybersecurity from ISC2 and Cybersecurity Analyst+ from CompTIA. His background spans national security, academia, and digital rights from military leadership roles to producing privacy-focused content. He leverages technical knowledge to explore emerging cyber threats, policy frameworks, and contribute national defense in cyberspace. He publishes his works at [sercanazizoglu.com](http://sercanazizoglu.com) website.



### **Farhan Sahito (Privanova, FR)**

Farhan Sahito is Director General at Privanova, a Paris-based company specializing in data protection, cybersecurity, and EU-funded security research programs. He works extensively on projects involving Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), CSIRTs, and public authorities across Europe, supporting cyber incident response, digital investigations, and cross-border operational cooperation.

He brings a professional background in policing and international law enforcement collaboration, including previous service with INTERPOL, where he contributed to global cybercrime and security initiatives. Through his work on European Commission projects, he continues to engage closely with LEAs, including stakeholders across the Balkan region, to strengthen coordinated cyber response and information sharing.

Farhan holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Graz University of Technology (Austria) and a Master's degree in Criminology from the University of Melbourne (Australia)





**Stefan Kukovski (Government of Republic of North Macedonia - General secretariat, MK)**

I have valuable working experience, obtained in 18 years in government administration and knowledge of several languages. I have participated in creating strategic frameworks and policies as high government official and have knowledge of administrative management at central level and interagency cooperation. My experience with Resilience, started with administrative roles and as part of National coordinating body for implementing NATO policy regarding resilience. Here is my working experience and results:

Feb 2024 -present Member of National coordinating body for implementing NATO policy regarding resilience. 2007-2024 Deputy Head of Sector for organizing Government sessions - I have organized more than 500 government sessions. 2009-2010-Member of Special Group for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire for harmonization of national laws with laws of EU 2011 - 2019 - Secretary of Housing Commission of the Government-I coordinated solving of apartment issue for 2,000 families.

## **Trainers: Training Track 1 - Workshop on (Automated) Threat Intelligence Handling with Open-Source Software**

**Sebastian Wagner, Institute for Common Good Technology**

Sebastian Wagner is a Free Software enthusiast, full-stack software developer, and project manager currently working for a small software firm, and is active in NGOs for the common good. He co-maintains IntelMQ for 11 years and previously worked at CERT.at for six years. Recently he also joined the Shadowserver Foundation.

## **Trainers: Training Track 2 - The source of networkforensics: Networkdata**

**Wim Biemolt, SURF.NL, Netherlands**

Wim Biemolt is part of the "team expert networking" at SURF. Responsible for the network of SURF, the national research and education network of the





Netherlands. He is also a member of SURFcert, the Computer Emergency Response Team for education & research institutions in the Netherlands.

**Jeffeny Hoogervorst, SURF.NL, Netherlands**

Jeffeny Hoogervorst is a cybersecurity expert with over 20 years of experience in the field. Throughout his career, he has held various roles in cybersecurity, including digital forensics, threat detection & response in CERT teams, security training and security officer. Since 2011, Jeffeny has been a core member of SURFcert, the Computer Emergency Response Team for education and research institutions in the Netherlands. At SURF, he is involved with the technical side of SURFsoc, the Security Operations Center that helps affiliated institutions with threat detection and incident response.

## Operational Incident Response for National SOCs and CSIRTs and Cyber Drill

**Adriano Lleshi**  
**DFIR / Threat Intelligence**

**Role:** Director of Cyber Security Analysis Directorate.

**Experience:** 7 years in Cyber Security, Incident Response of all CII in Albania, Digital Forensics and Threat Hunting.

**Certified by:** Comptia Security+, ISO 27001 Lead Implementor, ECIH, CHFI, TH200, Ethical Hacker, European Union Certifications against Ransomware attacks, White Hat Ethical Hacking, etc.

**Bio:** Adriano has dedicated his career to protecting CII of Albania from cyber threats. With a strong background in both offensive and defensive security tactics, Adriano leads the Purple Team, where he orchestrates simulated cyber attacks to test and enhance the organization's overall security posture. He has been instrumental in developing innovative techniques and tools for threat detection and mitigation. His leadership, technical prowess, and commitment to excellence make him a trusted advisor and invaluable asset in the ongoing battle of Cybersecurity. Purple Team adversary simulation exercises, and investigations in the dark web. Certified in ISO 27001 Lead Auditor, Threat hunting, and Ethical hacking, along with practical knowledge in SIEM, OSINT, and ICS security

**“ At the end of the day, the goals are simple: safety and security. ”**





# BALKAN CYBERSECURITY DAYS 2026



## Bledar Kacadej Network Security Engineer/Purple Team

“Cybersecurity heroes wear digital capes.”

**Role:** Head of Incident Investigation Unit, Incident Response & Digital Forensics.

**Experience:** 15 years in IT and Network Cybersecurity.

**Certified by:** Cisco, Fortinet, Oracle, Azure Cloud Tech, Ec-Council, Offsec, Immersive Labs etc.

**Bio:** With a solid background in network security engineering and a passion for tackling complex cybersecurity challenges. Bledar brings invaluable expertise to Incident Investigation Unit, Incident Response and Digital Forensics at AKSK (NCSA). His extensive experience in understanding, designing, implementing and maintaining secure network and system infrastructures. Ensures that the team's defensive capabilities are robust and effective. Bledar's proactive approach to identifying and mitigating threats, coupled with his dedication to staying current with the latest security trends and technologies, makes him a valuable asset in safeguarding the organization's digital assets.



## Kristian Josifi Software Engineer / Purple Team

“The quieter you become, the more you can hear!”

**Role:** Software Engineer - Part of Purple Team, Malware Analysis, Incident Investigation and Digital Forensics Unit.

**Experience:** 6 Years in Software Development.

**Certified by:** OSCP, OSCP+Java, Angular, Python etc.

**Bio:** With a rich background in diverse projects, Kristian adeptly utilizes programming languages such as C#, Java, Python, JavaScript, and TypeScript. His proficiency extends to working with frameworks like ASP.NET MVC, Unity, Springboot, Angular, Flask, and Django. Boasting significant experience in analyzing malicious programs and detecting security vulnerabilities in digital environments.

