

THE FIRST EUROPEAN CHEVENING REGIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN DUBROVNIK

From 12 until 14 March 2020, first European Chevening regional conference took place in Dubrovnik, Croatia. European Chevening Network was established in May 2019 during the Chevening conference in Warsaw, Poland by adopting a declaration endorsed by all present Chevening Alumni from Europe. One of the adopted conclusions from Warsaw Declaration was to hold the first regional conference in Croatia, Dubrovnik in 2020.

The two-day conference consisted of four panels:

- a) Cultural heritage and innovation,
- b) Bilateral relations of Great Britain with European countries in finance and business,
- c) Climate change and sustainability, and
- d) The panel on further steps, structure and activities of the European Chevening network.

At the conference, the Chevening participants from following countries were present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Russia, Serbia with several countries present via the video-link (Kosovo, Poland, Portugal).

The participants discussed how to connect cultural heritage, innovation, tourism and business in Europe 2020-2030, the financing of cultural projects, the impact of culture on society and the new ways of dealing with cultural heritage (digitalization of museums).

Further discussion concerned prospective financial and business relations of the UK with the EU, trade in goods and current state of financial services industry in the UK. The panel on climate change addressed sustainable finance, impact entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability.

One of the important ideas extracted was the formation of platforms or social media groups for certain topics such as culture or environment.

The participants exchanged ideas about the functioning of the European Chevening Network and its future activities which should be primarily set in the form of a platform.

At the end of the conference, Conclusions and Recommendations on further set up and activities of European Chevening alumni network were adopted (see below).

The next regional meeting of the European Chevening Network in Lisbon in 2021 was announced.

* The conference was successful despite of the significantly reduced number of participants at the conference due to unfortunate circumstances caused by COVID-19.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The European Chevening network shall continue its work in the form of the platform within the Chevening Connect site - new subgroup "European Chevening Alumni".
2. The European Chevening network platform should be based on the principles of sustainability and continuity.
3. The European Chevening network should serve as a place to exchange experience, knowledge and support to other Chevening alumni from Europe, especially for those who still lack structural organization.
4. The European Chevening network platform should develop topical based digital platforms (culture, environmental sustainability, digital markets etc.)
5. The European Chevening network shall keep its ties with the UK and cooperate with FCO especially in further professional relations between Europe and UK.
6. The coordination of the European Chevening network should be shared between countries who are in the steering committee for the respective year.
7. The national Chevening alumni associations should ensure distribution of relevant information and encourage their members to actively participate in the European Chevening network platform.
8. The European Chevening network shall hold annual conferences.
9. The next regional conference of European Chevening alumni network shall take place in Lisbon, Portugal in 2021.