

# **Aspen – GMF Bucharest Forum 2025**

**14th edition | October 22 – 24 | Bucharest**

## ***The Disintegration of the World Order: Survival of the Fittest***

*The Aspen – GMF Bucharest Forum is a strategic convening and a flagship public diplomacy event where global leaders engage with the Black Sea area and beyond, bridging Trans-Atlantic conversations and creating a process of reflection on the region and its impact within the international agendas. Situated at the crossroads of Europe, Bucharest offers a unique vantage point to examine the European dimension of global disruptions and to facilitate a broader, inclusive dialogue.*

### **Co-organizers:**

**Aspen Institute Romania, GMF, AIR - Chisinau Office**

***Under the High Patronage of the President of Romania***

### **Institutional Partners:**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Economy, Digitalization, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, Ministry of Investments and European Projects, Ministry of Energy, National Bank of Romania, EU Commission Representation in Romania, ANRE**

### **Strategic Partners:**

**The Aspen Institute US, Aspen Central Europe, Aspen Institute Kyiv, AIR Brussels Office**

### **Knowledge Partners:**

**ECESTR, DNSC, E-ARC, ECCC, EY, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung KAS, BRCC**

### **PLATINUM PARTNER:**

**QUALCOMM**

### **GOLD PARTNERS:**

**OMV Petrom, Meta, eMAG, Unicredit, Raiffeisen, Mastercard, Vodafone, Rompetrol**

### **SILVER PARTNERS:**

**UBER, Google, Enevo**

### **Supporting Partners:**

**Valvis, Cărturești, Foundation Conservation Carpathia**

**DAY 1 - October 22, 2025**

**13:00 – 14:00**                      **Registration & Welcome Lunch**

**14:00 – 14:25**                      **Introductory Remarks**

**14:25 – 14:45**                      **Keynote Speech**

**14:45 – 15:15**                      **De-globalization vs. Regionalization - A Conversation**  
***Winners and Losers in the New World Disorder***  
**Panel Session**

*In an era marked by the ascent of regional power centers, the situation in Ukraine unfolds with significant geopolitical implications. This panel will dissect the potential strategic calculus of the United States, which may see Ukraine's security posture (and its economic alignment) as a bargaining chip in a larger global game, potentially influencing its EU trajectory. We will also assess the enduring strength of the Russia-China relationship as a defining feature of this emerging world disorder and its impact on the winners and losers in this evolving global landscape.*

**15:15 – 15:45**                      **The Geopolitical Recession: A New Era of Global Instability?**  
**Spotlight Conversation**

*This session will identify the key factors driving this potential shift and assess its far-reaching impacts, analyzing the power vacuums emerging globally and identifying the novel actors, ideologies, and dynamics shaping the international arena.*

**15:50 – 16:30**                      **European Security & Priorities as seen through new lens**  
**Panel Session**

*Specifically addressing the unique security challenges facing Europe in the current context and **highlighting the significance of European collaborative formats such as Weimar+.***

**16:30 – 17:15**                      **Energy Security, Regional Cooperation & Supply Chain**  
**Panel Session**

*Exploring the shift towards sustainable economic models and the transition to cleaner energy sources, including opportunities and challenges for the region.*

**17:15 – 18:00**

**Strategic Capital: Innovation, Security, and Investment in the CEE Region**  
**Panel Session**

*The intersection of financial markets, transatlantic trade, and economic security is increasingly shaping the future of Central and Eastern Europe. This panel will explore how regional financial ecosystems are evolving in response to global trends, from the rise of capital markets and the growing role of private equity and venture capital, to the digital transformation of financial services. A special focus will be placed on sustainable finance as a driver of long-term growth and resilience. Discussions will also examine the region's deeper integration into global financial networks, the impact of geopolitical risks on investment flows, and how CEE economies are positioning themselves as emerging hubs for innovation and capital. By linking the transatlantic economic agenda with developments in the CEE financial landscape, the panel will assess both the opportunities and vulnerabilities that define the region's path forward.*

**18:00 – 18:20**

**Soft Diplomacy: Building a Nation's Brand**  
**Spotlight Conversation**

**18:30 – 20:00**

**Cocktail Reception**

**20:15 – 21:30**

**Night-Owl Session (By Invitation Only)**  
***Hosted by Cărturești***

**DAY 2 - October 23, 2025**

<b>09:00 – 09:30</b>	<b>Registration &amp; Welcome Coffee</b>
<b>09:30 – 09:45</b>	<b>Introductory Remarks</b>
<b>09:45 – 10:15</b>	<b>High-level Keynote Address</b>
<b>10:15 – 11:00</b>	<b>Building a Secure and Open Digital Future: Trade, Connectivity, and Innovation</b> <b><u>Panel Session</u> - powered by ECESTR</b>

*In a rapidly evolving geopolitical and technological landscape, the foundations of prosperity and security rely on resilient digital ecosystems. Rules-based trade and investment frameworks, secure cross-border connectivity, and collaborative research and innovation are essential to safeguarding both economic competitiveness and democratic resilience. This panel will bring together diverse stakeholders from leading global technology players, alongside policymakers, regulators, and experts from security and research communities. Discussions will explore how to align digital transformation with digital resilience and security imperatives, from AI innovation and dual-use technologies to next-generation telecom infrastructure, while also looking at the role of transatlantic cooperation in ensuring Europe's competitiveness while upholding democratic values and open markets.*

**11:00 – 11:45                      Competitiveness in the Digital Era**

*Europe stands at a critical juncture, as the Draghi report highlights the urgency of renewing competitiveness in the face of global competition. For Romania and the wider region, the digital economy offers a unique chance not just to catch up, but to leapfrog—transforming structural challenges into opportunities for growth, resilience, and integration into Europe's strategic value chains. This panel will explore how the digital economy can serve as a driver of competitiveness at both EU and regional levels, examining: policy and investment priorities Europe must pursue to remain globally competitive; how the digital transformation, AI, and next-generation connectivity can reshape regional economies; opportunities for Romania and the region to position themselves as hubs for innovation, digital services, and secure infrastructure.*

**11:45 – 12:30                      Sustainable Development and Smart Cities**  
**Panel Session - powered by City Innovation Program Aspen US**

*Examining integrated approaches to achieve long-term environmental, social, and economic well-being, with a focus on the role of smart technologies in urban environments.*

**12:30 – 14:00                      Lunch Break**

**14:00 – 14:45**

**IMEC Economic Corridor - *Expanding the Dialogue, engaging Key Global Players***  
**Panel Session**

*The Forum will include a panel focused on the strategic implications of initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and its potential to reshape global connectivity and influence power dynamics, integrating perspectives from Japan and India into the conversation, recognizing their growing geopolitical and economic significance.*

**15:00 – 17:00**

**EU Enlargement Path: from The Western Balkans to Moldova, and the extended Black Sea Region. Pro-European Future Amidst Geopolitical Challenges?**  
**Closed-door Roundtable Discussion**

**- powered by the Aspen Institute Romania Chişinău Office**

*What are the most pressing challenges and promising opportunities facing our neighbors aiming to integrate the EU? This panel will offer diverse perspectives on the region's current political, economic, and social realities. We will explore the key issues shaping its future and discuss potential pathways for greater stability, prosperity, and integration. The discussion will build upon the studies and presentations realized by Aspen Institute Romania, in partnership with the Association for Foreign Policy (APE) and Watchdog Moldova in the Republic of Moldova and in the region.*