



REGIONAL CONFERENCE:

Mediation – Where Are We and Where Are We Going?

**Slovenian Association of Mediators (SAM)
and Croatian Mediators Association (CMA)**
SEPTEMBER 23, 2025

We are pleased to invite you to the conference »**Mediation – Where Are We and Where Are We Going?**«, which will take place on September 23, 2025, at the Faculty of Law, University of Ljubljana (in the purple and blue lecture halls). With this conference, we will also celebrate the 19th anniversary of SAM. The event is organized in collaboration with CMA. You are also invited to the second part of the conference, organized by SAM and CMA. The second part will take place in Zagreb, at the Antunović Hotel, on October 2, 2025. The program and information regarding the organization of the second part in Zagreb will be announced later.

The registration fee is 110 EUR including VAT (90.16 EUR + 22% VAT) for registrations before June 30 and 139 EUR including VAT (113.93 + 22% VAT) for registrations after June 30. Participants will receive a certificate. The fee also includes lunch.

Members of SAM and CMA are entitled to a 20% discount. In case of cancellation less than eight days before the start of the conference, the fee is non-refundable.

We accept applications via the online form on the DMS website or by email registration: izobrazevanja.dms@gmail.com.

9.00 – 9.45

Registration

9. 45

Welcome address by SAM President Aleksander Jakobčič and CMA President Dr. Srdjan Šimac

10.00 – 11.30

Roundtable discussion led by Mag. Valerija Jelen Kosi titled: **»Mandatory Mediation Meeting – Is the Time Ripe?«** Participants: Aleksander Jakobčič, mag. Gordana Ristin, mag. Nina Betetto, Dr. Srdjan Šimac

11.30 – 12.00

Audience questions and comments

12.00 – 13.30

Lunch

13. 30 – 14.30

Workshop: »Trust as the Foundation of Successful Mediation: Skills That Make a Difference« Led by Dr. Srdjan Šimac (conducted in Croatian)

Trust is the core of the mediation process – without it, there is no open communication, willingness to cooperate, or long-term agreement. This interactive workshop focuses on the key skills that a mediator must develop to gain and maintain the trust of parties caught in a destructive conflict. Through practical examples and analysis of challenging situations, we will explore what is most important for a mediator to bring into mediation. Special emphasis will be placed on the skills and approaches of successful mediators – those »small secrets« and elements that often make a crucial difference in creating conditions for cooperation and reaching an agreement.

The workshop is intended for experienced mediators who want to deepen their knowledge and practical skills, those at the beginning of their mediation journey, and anyone interested in discovering whether mediation is the right profession for them.

13. 30 – 14. 30

Workshop: »The Mediator's Mindset«
Gulio Zanolla, Esq (conducted in English)

How can mediators respond to unpredictable challenges in mediation and achieve maximum effectiveness when unexpected circumstances arise? This workshop focuses on the foundations of effective mediation thinking and strategies for mediating in highly demanding situations. It is an interactive discussion based on real case studies, designed for experienced mediators who want to enhance their effectiveness in situations where reaching a resolution requires more than just well-developed mediation skills.

The workshop goes beyond techniques for overcoming impasses and delves into fundamental principles that can guide a mediator's thinking when navigating unexpected, unpredictable twists that may seem to threaten the entire process.

14.30 – 15.00

Break

15.00 – 16.30

Roundtable discussion led by Janez Starman, titled: **»Lawyers and Mediation – Opportunity or Challenge for the Profession?«** Participants: Mag. Luka Vižintin, Blažo Nedić, LL.M, Petar Petrić, and Andrej Razdrih

16.30 – 17.00

Audience questions and comments

17.00

Conclusion

MEET THE SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS!



MAG. VALERIJA JELEN KOSI

Senior Judge at the Higher Court in Ljubljana and Board Member of SAM. She has been a judge since 2004. From 2007 to 2011, she served as the Director of the District Court in Ljubljana, and from 2011 to 2014, she was assigned as a Senior Judge and Director of the Judicial Training Centre at the Ministry of Justice, where she was involved in conducting initial and advanced training for mediators. Since June 2014, she has been serving at the Higher Court in Ljubljana, specializing in commercial and insolvency disputes. Additionally, since 2016, she has been assigned to the Supreme Court as the leader of two project groups within the Judicial Quality Improvement Project, which received the Crystal Scales of Justice Award in October 2019, jointly awarded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission for the most successful projects among 47 member states. Since 2002, she has been actively engaged in mediation as a mediator, trainer, and member of the Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia. In 2002, she participated in a study visit to the Superior Court of Washington D.C., USA. As a trainer and mediator, she contributes to basic and advanced mediator training programs. She has published articles on mediation in professional journals such as *Pravna Praksa* and *Podjetje in Delo*, and she is a co-author of the book »Mediation in Theory and Practice«. She is registered on the list of mediators at the District and Local Courts in Ljubljana, where she also conducts mediations.

GULIO ZANOLLA, ESQ

Giulio Zanolla is a mediator specializing in commercial dispute resolution in the United States and internationally. With over two decades of mediation experience, he has established a successful practice, helping clients resolve thousands of cases involving complex legal issues. With dual legal education from the EU and the USA, and experience in civil law and common law jurisdictions, he is particularly skilled in assisting parties from different legal systems, cultures, and backgrounds to overcome their differences. Mr. Zanolla has mediated disputes involving contract interpretation and enforcement, construction disputes, intellectual property enforcement, insurance coverage, management liability, antitrust lawsuits, wage and hour class actions, employment disputes, and tort claims. He has also served as an adjunct professor at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, teaching and training student mediators at the Brooklyn Law School Mediation Clinic and The Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. He is actively involved in several organizations, including the International Institute for Conflict Prevention & Resolution (CPR) Distinguished Neutrals Panel, the Milan Chamber of Arbitration (CAM), the American Arbitration Association (AAA) Mediation Panel, and the International Mediation Panel of the Centre for Mediation and Law in Moscow.





ALEKSANDER JAKOBČIČ

Lawyer (England and Wales) specializing in peaceful dispute resolution (negotiation, mediation, and arbitration) and an expert in international relations and diplomacy (University of Ljubljana). He has enhanced his expertise at various professional and academic institutions across Europe, including the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and University of London – Law. Academically, he is currently engaged as a doctoral researcher in diplomacy at the University of Ljubljana. With 17 years of experience in international business, he has successfully resolved numerous mediation cases in international commercial and civil disputes, as well as cross-border conflicts. As a negotiator, he has represented clients in multiple international negotiations across the EU, United Kingdom, Russia, Western Balkans, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Turkey, and other regions. He is also the President of SAM a member of the Expert Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia, and a selected external mediator and negotiator for several major companies and organizations.

MAG. GORDANA RISTIN

A retired Senior Judge and former Head of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Department at the Higher Court in Ljubljana. She is also the Vice President of SAM and a member of the Expert Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia. She has been a mediator since 2001. She completed her basic mediator training in Boston, USA (2001), followed by advanced training in family and commercial mediation, as well as trainer education under the Phare program in Ljubljana and Bristol (ADR Group). She is a board member of EMNI and a member of GEMME. From 2006 to 2011, she was the first President of SAM and is now its Honorary President. Since 2001, she has actively mediated in court-annexed mediation programs. In 2008, she participated in a successful environmental mediation case in Tenetiše. Between 2000 and 2006, she completed training as a counselor in transactional analysis psychotherapy.





MAG. NINA BETETTO

Since 2006, she has been a Supreme Court Judge in the Civil Division of the Supreme Court of Slovenia and the President of the Expert Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Ministry of Justice of Slovenia. She is the author and co-author of numerous articles and books on civil law and alternative dispute resolution in Slovenia and abroad. She was also a member of the Council of Europe expert group, which, between 2007 and 2009, developed guidelines for better implementation of mediation in civil, commercial, administrative, and criminal matters. As a mediator, she participates in court-annexed mediation programs at the District Court in Ljubljana and the Higher Court in Ljubljana. Since 2005, when she became a trainer for mediator education, she has worked as a trainer and lecturer in Slovenia and internationally, including Croatia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Belgium, Lithuania, Romania, Italy, Bulgaria, and Turkey.

DR. SRDJAN ŠIMAC

Dr. Srđan Šimac is first and foremost a HUMAN. He is a judge at the High Commercial Court of the Republic of Croatia and a legal expert of the new era, the president of the Croatian Mediation Association (HUM), a mediator, mediation trainer, and peacemaker. He is highly experienced in conflict resolution and dispute management, early intervention, as well as leadership, management, and organizational skills. He has received education both in Croatia and abroad, continuously expanding his knowledge. He specializes in human skills: mediation, negotiation, communication skills, and managing internal and external conflicts, especially those in the workplace. A pioneer in mediation, he has served as a mediator in over 500 mediations. He has helped hundreds of individuals, companies, and organizations resolve conflicts and legal disputes outside of court. Internationally recognized, he is a certified mediation trainer and mediator listed in Washington (ICSID), London (CEDR and Prime Dispute), Vienna (VIAC), and Rome (ADR International). He is a member of several international organizations and serves as an expert and consultant on mediation globally. Dr. Šimac is a recipient of both domestic and international awards for his contributions to mediation. He has authored numerous professional articles and his doctoral dissertation, »Mediation as a Generator of Change in the Legal System and Legal Profession.« He regularly posts about mediation and human skills on LinkedIn and is the host of the Mediator show on the PoslovniFM podcast radio.





BLAŽO NEDIĆ, LL.M

Blažo Nedić is an internationally accredited mediator, facilitator, trainer, consultant, and lawyer based in Belgrade, Serbia, with 27 years of experience. He is the co-chair of the Mediation Committee of the International Bar Association (IBA), a senior fellow at the Weinstein International Foundation, and a member of the IMI Qualifying Assessment Program (QAP) evaluation committee. For 12 years, he was a regional mediator, facilitator, and conflict management trainer for the World Bank Group. He is now listed on the UN Global Mediation Panel. As a mediator, he holds accreditations and certifications from IMI, the American Bar Association (ABA), the Bar Council of England and Wales, ADR UK, ADR Centre Rome, and JAMS International. He has mediated and facilitated hundreds of commercial, employment, real estate, environmental, and discrimination disputes. Blažo Nedić holds a law degree from the University of Belgrade, a master's degree in international business law from London Metropolitan University, an LL.M. in dispute resolution from Pepperdine University, and an advanced negotiation certificate from Harvard Law School. He was the first president of the Serbian National Association of Mediators and is accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Justice to conduct basic and advanced mediation training. He is listed on the mediation panels of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and the Commissioner for Anti-Discrimination.

JANEZ STARMAN

Janez Starman is the President of the Slovenian Bar Association, a lawyer (partner) at the Starman/Velkaverh Law Firm, a Board Member of SAM, and a member of the Expert Council for Alternative Dispute Resolution at the Slovenian Ministry of Justice. He completed mediator training in 2003 and has since worked as a mediator at the District Court in Ljubljana and Koper, the Higher Court in Ljubljana, the Mediation Centre at the Bar Academy, and the Mediation Centre at the Municipality of Novo mesto. In 2009, he successfully completed mediator trainer education at SAM and is now a trainer for mediators within the Bar Academy at the Slovenian Bar Association (OZS).





MAG. LUKA VIŽINTIN

Luka Vižintin is a lawyer, Board Member of SAM, and lecturer. In 2017, he completed mediator training and began working as a mediator. He is listed on the mediation panels of the Slovenian Bar Association Mediation Centre, the District Court in Ljubljana, the Higher Court in Ljubljana, the Slovenian Mediators Association, and as an external mediator for Social Work Centres. He has participated in numerous successful mediation processes. He is a strong advocate for interdisciplinary learning and continuous education. After completing his legal studies, he pursued further education at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, where he earned a master's degree in economic sciences (2006).

PETAR PETRIĆ

Petar Petrić is a lawyer, founder, and partner at the Petrić & Kajić Law Firm, a member of the Croatian Bar Association (HOK-CBA) and the International Bar Association (IBA). He is a mediator and mediator trainer, as well as a member of CMA. For over 20 years, he has provided legal counsel and representation to domestic and foreign legal entities in Croatia and the EU, specializing in commercial and corporate law, contractual relations, property law, legal consulting, and support for investors and startups. All lawyers in his firm are registered mediators. His firm received the Mediation Law Firm of the Year Award (2016) from the Croatian Mediation Association. He lectures at the University of Zagreb on the role of lawyers in litigation and mediation. He is an active participant in international roundtables on mediation, a speaker at legal conferences in Europe and the USA, a panelist at discussions on the future of law and the legal profession, and a judge at Moot Court Croatia competitions. He has authored numerous articles on law, investments, and mediation in journals such as Poduzetnik, Diplomacy & Commerce, and Suvremena trgovina.





ANDREJ RAZDRIH

Andrej Razdrih is a lawyer and mediator, active in the Slovenian Bar Association, where he has worked on legal ethics and serves as an examiner for ethics in the bar exam. Since 2005, he has been a mediator trainer. He was one of the founders of the Mediation Centre at the Slovenian Bar Association (OZS) and regularly trains lawyers in mediation. He has lectured on mediation at the Medical Chamber, the State Attorney's Office, and the Judicial Training Centre. He is accredited as a mediator at the District Court in Ljubljana, the Higher Court in Ljubljana, the Slovenian Insurance Association, and the Slovenian Bar Association for disputes between lawyers and their employees. He has participated in hundreds of mediation sessions, including complex mediations involving the state. For his outstanding achievements in law, he received the Majaron Award (2018), the highest honor in Slovenian legal practice.

