

MEĐUNARODNI PROBLEMI INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS

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THEME:

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Geopolitical opportunities and challenges**

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for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia?*

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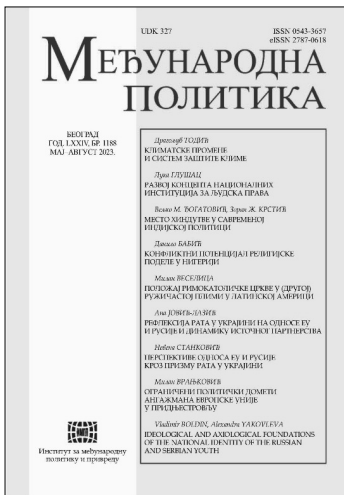
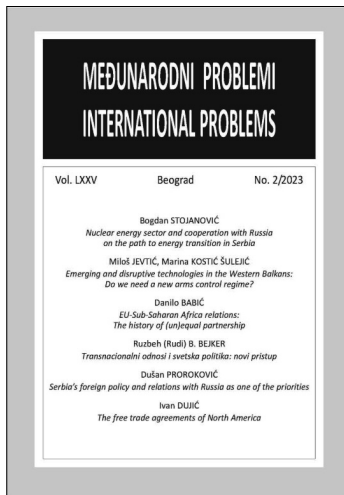
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and Europe's Global Neighbourhood*

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*Western Balkans-EU Relations
between the USA, Russia and Turkey*





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Guest Editorial

European Union's enlarged enlargement policy: geopolitical opportunities and challenges

Back in 2019, when the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen proclaimed the geopolitical character of her leadership, the term mostly designated the willingness to increasingly coordinate the external policies, considering the growing presence of power competition and international security elements in different EU policies (Haroche 2022). In such a context, over the last decade, the EU's quest for strategic autonomy has become an omnipresent thought, especially since the onset of the Ukrainian crisis. The pandemic confirmed that even the health and humanitarian domains contained geopolitical elements (Petrović and Jeremić 2021). Likewise, the approval of EU's Strategic Compass signalled an intention to move towards establishing a more ambitious security and defence strategy (IIPE 2022). This coincided with a profoundly unfavorable event in Europe's recent history.

The invasion of Ukraine provoked an unprecedented response from the European Union as Kyiv's chief strategic partner, as well as distancing from Russia in political, economic, diplomatic and other aspects. As Freudlsperger and Schimmelfennig (2023) argue, the Russian invasion constituted a boundary shock that challenged the EU political community's very identity, autonomy, and security, including the 'external rebordering' – the shutting down of external borders towards the attacker. Apart from EU's deep engagement in terms of military aid, humanitarian cooperation, economic assistance, and other areas, the 27 Member States agreed to recognize the membership prospects to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. This represented a significant political change, considering that Brussels has been avoiding the issue of potential EU membership of its eastern partners for many years. In their latest publication dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Thessaloniki summit, Petrović, Kovačević and Radić Milosavljević (2023) argue that the EU decision to recognize

membership prospects to the aforementioned countries may be perceived as coerced, considering numerous other deficiencies in terms of strategic outcomes for both Western Balkans (WB) and Eastern Partnership regions.

The enlargement of the enlargement policy, though logically sound and justified from a geopolitical standpoint, has elicited a range of emotions in Europe's southeastern capitals, who have grappled with the challenge of aligning with EU conditions since the turn of the 20th century. In addition to effectively integrating a number of Eastern partners into the EU accession plan in a fast-track fashion, the previous year has yielded noteworthy progress across the Western Balkans, at least administratively speaking. Notably, the first intergovernmental conferences between the EU and Albania and North Macedonia signalled the formal beginning of membership negotiation proceedings. However, by the beginning of September 2023, neither Skopje nor Tirana actually opened any negotiating clusters, which is also tied to the former's bilateral relations (identitarian disputes) with Sofia. Likewise, Sarajevo's EU membership application, filed six years ago, finally resulted in obtaining of candidate status. Conversely, the leading contenders, Serbia and Montenegro, have encountered roadblocks on their EU journey, each impeded by internal factors specific to their situations.

These developments, regardless of being relatively or somewhat favorable towards the WB, contrast to the speedy nature and 'generous' character of EU political decisions regarding the eastern partners since 2022. Petrov and Hillion (2022) discuss whether the moral or geopolitical character of the latest EU decisions concerning Ukraine and two other eastern partners would continue to be driven by the 'accession through war' approach, or whether it would ultimately be slowed down to the 'classic accession' track. Either way, the question arises: how would that reflect on the Western Balkans? Would their EU path be positively affected by the geopolitical considerations and decisions made in case of the eastern partners? Or would they become even more marginalized in the scope of the enlarged enlargement agenda? Should there be a precedence (for instance, chronological over the geopolitical, or perhaps vice versa), apart from the merits and democraticization accomplishments? Do the new developments contribute to the increased relevance of the entire enlargement agenda, or would the primary beneficiaries be some individual candidates, or some subregions over the others? Should there be a catch-all approach towards all EU candidates, considering the geostrategic urgency? If so, does the European Union have the necessary absorption, administrative, financial, institutional and other capacities in its current form, and are any major reforms in that regard certain?

Some of the authors for this journal issue have elaborated on these aspects during the UACES (University Association of Contemporary European Studies)

Conference held in early September of 2023 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.¹ It is a genuine pleasure to briefly present the content of those, and other, scientific articles in further text.

Christina Griessler assesses the inclusion and impact of additional prerequisites for Western Balkan (WB) countries to address conflicts, in relevant EU documents for the three most advanced eastern partners (Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia). While recognizing certain differences between the two regions in terms of size, population, and geopolitical context, conflict-related actions and reconciliation efforts are discernible in implementation reports, often tied to economic and security cooperation. Whereas the eastern partners' association agreements don't place explicit conflict-solving demands *vis-à-vis* Russia, peaceful regional resolution is urged. However, challenging circumstances regarding EU's deepened rivalry with Moscow constitute an aspect of concern. Despite the evolving geopolitical dynamics, the author considers that overarching need remains for the EU to maintain credibility and trust, leveraging its neighborhood strength and values.

Zhidas Daskalovski contends that the EU enlargement policy and conditionality principle appear to have reached a saturation point, compounded by EU enlargement fatigue and inconsistencies in dealing with regional governments, as observed in North Macedonia. Geopolitical variations in approach create issues; the EU's response differed starkly between Gruevski's regime and Zaev's administration in Macedonia. Corruption coupled with declining credibility of EU accession process not only undermine Europeanization efforts, but also pave the way for undemocratic influences. In addition, the author finds that third actors employ (dis)information campaigns and promote illiberal ideas, impeding democratization and Europeanization in Macedonia and the wider region. The potential spillover effects of the Russian attack on Ukraine further complicate matters.

Adam Bence Balazs examines the 'power of weakness' concept and considers Bertrand Badie's contributions, applying them to the context of Western Balkans as a vulnerable region. He contends the security motivation behind the need to integrate the EU candidate countries, while also reflecting on the anti-Western sentiments and the role of third actors in the region. Proper understanding of the WB beyond the conventional identitarian and Europeanization debates is required, taking into account the strategic and security implications and the power of weakness, could facilitate Europe in addressing its contemporary challenges more

¹ Research carried out by Dr. Christina Griessler and Dr. Adam Bence Balazs, respectively, constitute part of this journal issue. Other participants in the panel titled "Between the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans. The blurring of EU policies" included Dr. Spasimir Domaradzki, Dr. Ivana Radić-Milosavljević, and Dr. Miloš Petrović.

properly. The need for incorporation of the WB not only contributes to the unification of the continent and its overall harmonization, but should represent a security priority in the context of the ongoing invasion.

Yağmur Yetimoğlu and Gökhan Aksemsettinoğlu consider the WB-EU cooperation, aimed towards the former's full membership, in the context of overlapping interests of USA, Russia and Turkey. Whereas the American approach complements the EU efforts to preserve security and stability in the southeastern part of the continent, it is also aimed at preserving its global hegemonistic role. Conversely, Russia aims to counterbalance the EU and USA by capitalizing on its ties with Serbia. Meanwhile, Turkey employs a strategy of soft power and the perception of friendly neighborliness toward the WB to enhance connections with historical partners based on shared culture, heritage, and history. The authors examine the divergent national objectives of the USA, Russia, and Turkey and their manifestations in the context of the EU's normative power aims in the Western Balkans.

The aforementioned articles point out to the increasingly geopolitical nature of the Western Balkans' EU accession efforts, which, apart from numerous mentioned challenges, also might contain new opportunities. Considering that every round of EU enlargement has been geostrategically motivated, coupled with the deeply altered circumstances in the European political arena, as well as the 20th anniversary of the Thessaloniki promise, the need to introduce a greater credibility and dynamics into the troublesome Europeanization efforts in the Western Balkans (towards their accession) should, *inter alia*, be observed as a security-related strategic priority, rather than a possibility.

Given the points discussed above, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Institute of International Politics and Economics for granting me this opportunity once again. I also want to recognize the authors for their significant scholarly contributions to this issue of "Medjunarodni problemi" (*International Problems*) journal." I hope that this publication would constitute a good academic reference for further reflections on the converging (or perhaps diverging) status of the two neighbouring regions in the context of EU's accession plans and actions.

Respectfully,
Dr. Miloš Petrović
Guest Editor

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Good neighbourhood as an EU accession criterion for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia?

Christina Eva GRIESSLER¹

Abstract: For the new and future EU candidate countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the path to EU membership is based on the same “established criteria and conditions” as for the long-term candidates of the Western Balkans (WB). However, the WB’s EU accession process brought with it additional conditions, such as regional cooperation, reconciliation and good neighbourly relations. The EU’s objective at the time was to encourage the countries in the region to improve relations with their neighbours and to deal with the war legacies through regional cooperation initiatives. This raises the question of how, and to what extent, these additional criteria could become part of the EU integration process of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – all countries in conflict with neighbouring Russia. The theoretical background of the analysis is the EU’s actorhood and its policy of external governance, expanding its normative sphere of influence to non-EU members. The paper discusses the additional WB conditions and identifies similar preconditions in the relevant EU agreements and documents for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia since 2014. It shows that some of the WB preconditions are used in Eastern European Partner (EaP) countries but are, for now, seemingly less of a priority.

Keywords: EU enlargement, conditionality, conflict, neighbourhood, Western Balkans, Eastern European Partnership, Russia.

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This paper was presented during the panel ‘Between the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans. The blurring of EU policies’, as part of the UACES Conference held between 3-6 September 2023 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom.

Introduction

The EU's history of enlargement can be interpreted as a success story. It is testament to the EU's attractiveness, which reached its peak in 2004 with the "big bang" enlargement. EU accession for the WB countries was promised at the 2003 EU Summit in Thessaloniki, once all the preconditions for EU membership were fulfilled. At the time, the EU's attractiveness pulled those countries towards the union, but more than 20 years have passed since then and they are waiting for a clear commitment regarding whether and when accession will occur. Due to the unpredictability and perceived inconsistencies in the EU's accession strategy, resulting in delays and prolongation, the EU's credibility and attractiveness have waned in the Southeastern European countries, but seemingly still has some weight in countries of Eastern Europe such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. The first two received candidate status in June 2022 and Georgia is on its path to follow.

The WB countries were considered a special case in the EU integration process, as the region emerged from several brutal wars which resulted in the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia and the establishment of a number of new states in the 1990s. The region faced difficult political and economic transition processes, and simultaneously dealt with the impact of war on society. A decisive change occurred in the early 2000s when a new generation of political actors was able to take up political leadership positions. At the time, the EU took an optimistic view and supported these positive developments by providing the states with the perspective of EU membership in 2003. To obtain EU membership, WB countries were to apply the Copenhagen criteria, which were devised in 1993 and are based on the values of the EU as mentioned in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU); they require the countries to ensure stable political institutions, to maintain democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and to guarantee the protection of minorities. In the economic sphere, the countries are required to have a functioning market economy, which is able to keep up with the pressures of the market economy within the EU. Finally, the countries have to adapt their legal framework to the EU *acquis communautaire* (EUR-LEX, 1993).

The EU's main concern for the WB region was the stabilisation and rebuilding of the region. To achieve political stability, the WB states had to fulfil additional criteria, such as cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the implementation of regional cooperation, the establishment of good neighbourly relations and addressing the legacies of the wars through reconciliation initiatives. In 2003, all the stakeholders were

optimistic that the WBs would move speedily towards EU membership. In 2023, these countries are still trying to get closer to the EU, but the EU has, due to internal discussions, *de facto* stopped the accession process. Despite the awarding of the candidate status to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2022 and the signing of Kosovo*'s visa-free travel agreement with the EU in 2023, the enlargement process in the WBs is now at a standstill. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the EU was under pressure to act and show its support, awarding EU candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova, and providing an EU perspective to Georgia in June 2022.

The paper argues that different regions require a customised EU accession process, as the conditions set for the WBs are not transferable to states in Russia's neighbourhood. That would mean that regional specificities need to be taken into consideration. The starting assumption is that the EU will define similar criteria for the accession of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia for the enlargement process.

The EU's attractiveness and the effectiveness of its so-called "soft power" contributes to a positive integration process; therefore, the article introduces the concept of the EU's external governance and related concepts of "civil power", "normative power" and "soft power". The article provides a comparison of both regions, describes the additional EU accession requirements for the WBs and assesses if and to what extent these are relevant for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The EU's actorness in the context of enlargement

The EU's enlargement policy is considered to be one of the most successful EU policies targeting non-EU countries. By providing a clear and achievable accession perspective, the EU was able to motivate prospective member states to initiate reforms, adopt EU regulations, norms and laws. Political conditionality has been the EU's most effective tool to guide the "merit-based process", meaning that, as a reward for implementing reforms, the countries could expect a positive response in relation to their EU integration status. The enlargement policy worked well as long as the EU was perceived as an attractive and credible political actor in the

* The Regional representation agreement (2012) introduced the denomination that will also be used in this article: Kosovo* – This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. In relation to the Kosovo* terminology the author adhered to the opinions and data obtained during the manuscript review process.

region. Due to the “polycrisis”² faced by the EU and the lack of progress in the EU accession process since the mid-2000s, the EU’s image as an efficient, capable and credible international actor has waned. At the moment the EU is struggling to revive the credibility of its accession process for the WB states. In regard to the Eastern Partnership, the EU seems to have been able to maintain a certain level of attractivity or perhaps profits from the geopolitical circumstances and the current Russian war in the Ukraine, as the Eastern Partnership countries feel pressured to declare their allegiance to either the EU or to Russia. Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia were pushed towards the EU.

Both regions, the WB and the states of the EaP, which are the focus of this paper, are exposed to the EU’s external governance policy, and were until recently dealt with through two distinct strategies: the EU enlargement strategy and the Eastern Partnership strategy. The main difference between the strategies was that the WB states had an EU accession perspective and the EaP countries did not. Now, the political changes in Eastern Europe have caused an overlap between EU enlargement and the EU’s Eastern Partnership policy. According to Lavenex, the EU’s external governance can be categorised into five types depending on the regions: firstly, the *quasi-membership* approach, which refers to a very close relationship between the EU and the third countries, based on a number of bilateral agreements or associations (e.g., Switzerland, EEA-European Economic Area). Secondly, *accession association*, which relates to the framework of EU enlargement and accession negotiations, such as the Stabilisation and Accession Process (SAP) for the WBs. Thirdly, the *neighbourhood association* focusing on the EU’s Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, e.g., Eastern Partnership countries and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The fourth type of external governance targets the countries of the global south in the form of a *development co-operation* and finally the EU has established *transatlantic co-operation* with the US and Canada (Lavenex, 2004, 683). This article focuses on the two external government approaches of *accession association* and the *neighbouring association*.

The EU as a foreign political actor has extended its governance structures and mechanism to other regions and organisations by convincing them to import some of the EU’s rules, norms, values and regulations into their domestic legislation. EU

² The EU failed to award itself a constitution in 2005 due to negative referendums in some of the member states. The global financial crisis in 2008 severely affected a number of EU countries. During the 2015 “migrant crisis”, the differences in opinions between four of the Central European states and the Western EU countries became apparent and in 2016 the UK decided to leave the EU. In 2020 COVID reached Europe and, finally, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 threatened the international order.

external governance is an “institutionalized transfer of rules to EU accession candidates or within the framework of the EU neighbourhood policy through association agreements or political partnerships” and where the EU’s “actorness is de facto assumed” (Lütz et al, 2011, 2). EU external governance therefore goes beyond its own borders and “addresses, although to different degrees, all neighbouring countries of the EU” (Lavenex, 2004, 683). Moreover, the EU’s role as a political actor on the world stage has been defined as a “civil power” or a “normative power”. The EU was formed as a political and economic union on the basis of certain norms and values, but military cooperation was partly outsourced to NATO. Not all EU states are NATO members, but some form of cooperation also exists with non-members in the framework of the partnership for peace. Whereas the European Community (EC), the EU’s precursor, focused on building the supranational organisation by mainly focusing on internal business, the end of the Cold War made it possible to expand its “normative” borders and transfer its governance system to other countries of the former socialist bloc or even to countries of the former Soviet Union. One driving factor for countries joining the European Community (EC), and later the Union, was access to the European market. For countries overcoming the socialist period, the image of what the EU stood for - democracy and freedom - drew the countries into their sphere. It was the EU’s attraction which made countries want to join and consequently to accept to import rules and regulations into their legal framework.

A “civil power” is defined by the attractiveness of its norms, of its way of conducting politics through persuasion and of its objective of “civilising” international relations. Its policies are based on values and set norms, which creates legitimacy. Still, the EU has foreign policy interests, which are to ensure a stable neighbourhood and to persuade countries to follow their lead by accepting the EU as a role model. Due to the fact that the EU’s role as a foreign actor has changed since the 1990s and is now guided by intrinsic interests, Manners suggests addressing the EU as “normative power”, because its founding principles are still attractive to other countries (Manners, 2002, 236). Both concepts of “civil power” and “normative power” are closely connected with Joseph Nye’s “soft power” concept, which is defined as “when one country gets other countries to *want* what it wants” (Nye, 1990, 166). While it is true that the EU has a certain power of attraction, which pulls the countries towards it, there are also push factors, such as the issue of global interdependence and Russian policy, which convince countries to join a larger political unit. The EU’s credibility is an essential factor within the integration process, as the strength of the push and pull factors and the EU’s presence as a political actor determine the willingness of other countries to implement reforms and adopt EU values and policies.

Similarities and Differences: “Western Balkans 6” (WB 6) vs “Eastern Partners 3” (EaP 3)

The usefulness of a comparative approach can be questioned and is very much dependent on the selection of case studies. In this context, the cases are given and their main similarity is their wish to become EU members. This would be insufficient for an in-depth comparative analysis, but the objective in this case is to provide an overview of some facts that demonstrate the differences between the countries. Georgia is included because it is expected to receive candidate status soon. Although it is officially still an EU candidate country, Türkiye is excluded as the process has been frozen due to the country’s domestic political developments.

One of the accession criteria is the EU’s capacity to accept new members, a precondition the EU candidate countries cannot influence by themselves. The capacity argument can be used by EU members as a “veto” against EU enlargement, as membership requires a unanimous vote by all member states. The integration of the three EaP countries will be a much bigger challenge than the accession of the entire WB region at once. Furthermore, Ukraine is currently fighting a war and parts of its territory are occupied by Russia and by Russia-friendly military groups. Similarly, Georgia and Moldova have territories *de facto* under Russian control. Their territorial integrity is infringed, with the presence of foreign troops in some areas constituting a state within a state. How will the EU deal with these issues? Other aspects also need to be taken into consideration, including differences of territories’ size, with implications for the proportion of agricultural land, in population size, which will define the numbers of seats in the EU parliament, and in GDP, with repercussions for the amount required from the cohesion funds.

The difference between the two regions is quite striking when assessing the material facts. The territory of the entire WB region occupies approx. 207,481 km², whereby the Ukraine’s territory alone is 603,500 km². The territories of all three EaP countries add up to 707,045 km². Serbia is the largest country in the WB region (Worldometer, 2023). The total population of the WB is 17.5 million, compared to 50.1 million of all three EaP countries, with a Ukrainian population of 43,8 on its own (World Economics, 2022). GDP per capita (current prices in USD in 2022) is more than 2,5 times higher in the WB region (45,326.08 USD) than in the three EaP countries (16,726.5) (IMF, 2023). The general debt in the WB is in average 54,90 percent and in the three EaP countries on average 43,41 percent (IMF, 2022).

The other important issue for the EU enlargement process is the status of the rule of law and the democratic reforms in the candidate countries. In five WB

countries, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) declared the state of democracy as “defective” (7.99 - 6), with Bosnia-Herzegovina categorised separately as a “highly defective democracy” (5.99 - 1). All three EaP countries fall under the category of “defective democracy” (7.99 - 6). Freedom House’s Transformation Index identifies all the countries of both regions as “Transitional and hybrid Regimes” (34-50). The Freedom Index categorised all the countries as “partly free”. The Bertelsmann Governance Index shows a range of data for the WB region. The Government Index formulated the following ranking: Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro as “good” (6.99 - 5.6), Serbia and Kosovo* as “moderate” (5.59 - 4.3) and Bosnia-Herzegovina as “poor” (4.29 - 3). The Government Index for all three EaP countries - Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine - is assessed as “moderate” (5.59 - 4.3) (Bertelsmann Index, 2022).

There are no major differences between the WB and the EaP countries regarding their democracy status, governance or fundamental rights, but the status must be improved, and work done in those areas, in order to obtain EU membership.

The main difference between the WB 6 and EaP 3 is their geopolitical location and the direct influence of Russia on the EaP 3 countries. Russia is Ukraine and Georgia’s direct neighbour. Moldova lies between Romania and Ukraine but contains the pro-Russian enclave of Transnistria within its territory. After a misguided military intervention in 2008, Georgia had to accept that it failed to establish its sovereignty over the two majority Russian-speaking regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On the contrary, the WB states have a more advantageous geopolitical position, because the region is surrounded by EU countries which have an interest in dismantling EU external borders and improving interconnectivity between EU countries by integrating the WB 6 into the EU.

The following part of the paper discusses the additional accession criteria for the WB, which have been devised in relation to overcoming the legacies of the wars in the region and to establish trust between the political leaders and the population. This analysis relied on a selection of the EU’s progress reports from 2005 until 2021, e.g., the Enlargement Strategy and Main challenges (2008-2009; 2011-2012, 2012-2013) as well as on the most important EU-WB strategies, e.g., on the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP) for the countries of South-Eastern Europe (1999); 2002-2006 Regional Strategy (2001) and “A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans” (2018).

That is followed by an analysis of the EU documents relevant to the three EaP countries, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, according to the same criteria. The official documentation is limited to the Opinion of the EU Commission regarding the EU

membership application and the of all three countries (17 June 2022), the three Association Agreements (AA) including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) of 2014, and the AA Implementation Reports of each of the countries (i.e., Georgia from 2019 to 2022; Moldova 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023; Ukraine from 2016 to 2020, and 2022) and the Conclusions of the European Council meeting (European Council, 2022). The main aim of the analysis is to establish if there are any indications that some of the conditions specific to the WB have been transferred to the new candidates. As the three EaP countries have to deal with the effects and legacies of conflicts and wars, it would be consistent with the EU's enlargement process already being applied to the WB region.

Special Conditionality: Western Balkans +

The main objective of the EU after the Kosovo war in 1999 was the stabilisation of the region, therefore the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) was launched in the same year. To underpin the process, the EU expected the countries of the region to improve their neighbourly relations and to solve bilateral conflicts. Regional cooperation was seen by the EU as the means to improve the relations between states in the region. The countries would only qualify to join the EU once they had proved their ability to overcome the differences stemming from the violent secession of Yugoslavia.

Good neighbourly relations

Maintaining good neighbourly relations also demonstrates the level of political maturity required to become an EU member, because within the EU political decisions are decided jointly based on a broad political consensus, requiring a certain level of trust and ability to cooperate constructively on political issues. Good neighbourly relations are therefore a precondition for EU membership. "Each country's willingness to build good relationships with its neighbours shall be the key determinant of its readiness to move closer to the goal of EU membership" (European Commission, 2001, 5). Regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are seen as essential elements of the EU enlargement process. In theory, regional cooperation fosters good relations with neighbours, however, because of damaged bilateral relations, regional cooperation often cannot be implemented efficiently.

The question of how to improve relations with neighbours will have to be addressed in the enlargement to Ukraine, Moldova and later Georgia. For now, the EU promotes the idea that “[r]egional cooperation and good neighbourly relations are essential for progress on the countries’ respective European paths” (European Commission, 2018c, 6). Still, the WB example shows us how difficult it can be in the absence of political will. The onus for establishing good neighbourly relations is on the country wishing to join the EU, hence the neighbour might abuse this situation. According to Van Elsuwege, it is unclear if the WB countries have an *obligation of conduct* or an *obligation of result* in the context of EU accession (Van Elsuwege, 2015, 218).

Good neighbourly relations as principles can be found in the UN Charter in Article 1 and 2 (UN, 1945, Chapter 1), in the 1970 “Declaration of Friendly Relations” (UN General Assembly, 1970) and the Helsinki Final Declaration of the 1975 Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). The EU is very clear that international law must be followed: “Respect of international law, inviolability of international borders, peaceful resolution of conflicts and regional co-operation are principles of the highest importance, to which we are all committed” (European Commission, 2003, 1).

Regional cooperation

The regional cooperation approach aimed to assist in overcoming distrust among politicians and the broader public and assist reconciliation processes, but also sets out to initiate economic growth and create prosperity for the people in the region. Cooperation is in general supported in areas of common interest such as infrastructure, economics, security or energy. This functional approach assumes that regional cooperation in non-political areas creates a spillover effect into other, more politically sensitive areas of cooperation. The EU drew many of these ideas from its own experience: “This regional cooperation model is essentially an extension of the EU’s own philosophy that deeper cooperation with neighbouring countries is a route to national as well as regional stability and growth and that such cooperation serves the mutual interests of all countries concerned” (European Commission, 2001, 5). That model has obvious limitations in the context of the WBs, as political behaviour is driven by national populism and ideas inconsistent with the EU’s political culture. Regional cooperation in the WBs was more successful in some areas than in others, but overall, it has slowed down and lacks regional ownership. It was essential for the EU that the countries of the WB region initiate activities out of their own interest and take on the ownership of regional cooperation in the region in general. Although a long list of regional organisations

was established throughout the last 25 years, “symbolism politics” dominates, hence regional meetings are maintained, but with limited outcomes and activities that are conducted merely to demonstrate to the EU that regional cooperation takes place.

Reconciliation

The EU likes to refer to its own experience when addressing conflicts and reconciliation, presenting itself as a role model for conflict resolution, to be followed by other states. “The EU is itself a model for overcoming conflict and promoting reconciliation through close co-operation to achieve common goals, while respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity” (Commission of the European Communities, 1999, 6).

Reconciliation and addressing the legacies of the past have crept onto the list of requirements for EU accession. Similar to regional cooperation, reconciliation activities initiated by the WB countries demonstrate their maturity regarding their prospective EU membership. “All countries must unequivocally commit, in both word and deed, to overcoming the legacy of the past, by achieving reconciliation and solving open issues well before their accession to the EU” (European Commission, 2018c, 6-7). What needs to be done to fulfil this requirement is somewhat unclear, perhaps even deliberately so. One important part of reconciliation is to establish the truth about crimes and atrocities committed in the context of war or conflict. The WB countries’ cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) therefore became a main obligation at the start of the accession process, requiring the extradition of alleged war criminals to the international tribunal in The Hague. This led to situations where countries had to arrest people who, at home, were considered war heroes. Due to the domestic resistance to this demand, governments were not always able and willing to comply. The ICTY was closed in December 2017 and the majority of open cases was transferred to national judiciaries; only a few remained at the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). Currently, the responsibility for dealing with the past’s atrocities lies with the national courts, but progress is very slow and only minor crimes have been adjudicated.

Reconciliation is a rather broad concept and incorporates a set of ideas, such as establishing the truth, addressing the past, building trust, justice, healing, reparations and restoration of relationships (Huyse, 2003). Still, the EU left it quite open for interpretation. The EU remarks that “further efforts towards reconciliation are crucial to firmly anchor peace and ensure lasting stability in the region. The wounds of the 1990s still need time to heal” (European Commission, 2018c, 6).

The additional preconditions for the WBs were considered to be necessary for a region which was emerging from conflict. The EU's political conditionality should provide a push to bring the countries to deal with the sensitive war issues and legacies, as well as the injustices committed during that time. In the case of Ukraine, the recording of war crimes committed by the Russian armies, as well as by the Ukrainian forces, is an ongoing task. How many of these facts can and will be brought against the perpetrators cannot currently be foreseen.

The European Neighbourhood's new candidate countries (EaP 3)

The political situation of Moldova, Georgia and especially Ukraine is determined by its Russian neighbour, which for some time has shown a disregard for international law and the sovereignty of neighbouring countries. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has evolved into a full-scale war, although already in 2014 Russia's annexation of Crimea and parts of Eastern Ukraine (Donbas and Luhansk) infringed the state's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Georgia's regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia are under the control of the pro-Russian forces. Moldova must deal with the existence, within its officially internationally recognised borders, of the more or less separate state under Russian influence, of Transnistria. By awarding these countries EU candidate status, the Russian zone of influence is being questioned.

Ukraine

Since its independence, Ukraine has had to face the political dilemma of being squeezed between the EU and Russia's spheres of interest. In 2004, the Orange Revolution removed the allegedly elected president Viktor Yanukovich from office. Claims of electoral fraud brought masses onto the street, which led to a pro-EU declaration and a rejection of Russia's support for Yanukovich. In 2013, Yanukovich – by then elected – refused to sign the newly negotiated Association Agreements (AA) with the EU, which resulted in the Maidan protests and Yanukovich's flight to Russia (Busygina, 2018, 173-178).

Already in 1994, the EU had established contacts with Ukraine by signing a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force in 1998. In 2004, Ukraine was promoted to priority partner of the EU's European Neighbourhood programme, which was underpinned by an Action Plan in 2005,

and by 2009 Ukraine was a member of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) (Busygina, 2018, 186-192; European Commission, 2022c, 2-5). Petro Poroshenko won the presidential election after the Maidan protests in 2014. In March 2014, the government signed the political part of the AA with the EU and, two months later, the economic agreement of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). In September 2017, the AA/DCFTA fully entered into force (European Commission, 2022c, 3). Ukraine applied for EU membership on 28 February 2022. The Council of the European Union requested the Commission to form an opinion on the application. Ukraine received further questions on the economic and political criteria and additional questions on the *acquis* in April and May 2022. In June the Commission presented its opinion on membership was granted on 23 June 2022 (European Council, 10.02.2023).

The preamble of the AA makes a reference to European values and lays out the objectives and the areas of cooperation between the two contract partners. It draws on the “close and lasting relationship that is based on common values, namely respect for democratic principles, the rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, non-discrimination of persons belonging to minorities and respect for diversity, human dignity and commitment to the principles of a free market economy” (European Union, 2014a, 4). Moreover, the contract sets out as objectives the promotion of peace and stabilisation of the region according to established international principles. In this regard a reference to the neighbourhood is found requesting “to promote stability, security and democratic development in their common neighbourhood, and in particular to work together for the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts” (European Union, 2014a, 8). The wording suggests that these are shared responsibilities and not one-sided conditions for Ukraine. One obligation for Ukraine that was mentioned in the agreement and was followed up by the country, was the ratification and implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 1998 (European Union, 2014a, 8). Despite the aim of preserving and strengthening peace and stability in the region, the term “reconciliation” is not mentioned in the document. Addressing regional challenges and security issues and fostering cooperation for “achieving peace, security and stability on the European continent” have been included in the AA as objectives of the EU and Ukraine (European Union, 2014a, 7). Chapter 27 on “Cross-Border and regional Cooperation” mentions that both contract parties are committed to promoting “mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation”, strengthening “cross-border and regional cooperation, [...]and promot[ing] the strengthening of cross-border and regional economic and business networks” (European Union, 2014a, 161).

Areas of existing regional and international cooperation are e.g., are combating terrorism, implementing international human rights refugee and humanitarian law standards (European Union, 2014a, 9), police cooperation, environmental protection as well as regional projects in the area of transport and infrastructure. Cooperation within regional organisations such as the Eastern Partnership Transport Panel, the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea, the UN, the OSCE, and the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, is another aspect of cooperation (European Union, 2014a, 145, 148, 154).

The EU Commission's Opinion on Ukraine's accession capability is based on the evaluation of the AA, the DCFTA and the level of implementation of the EU's *acquis*. The EU Commission granted EU candidate status to Ukraine because of the well-advanced development in the area of political criteria, the stability of political institutions, the guarantee of democracy, rule of law and the protection of minorities. In terms of economic criteria, it mentioned that a certain macro-economic resilience existed before the war and it needs to be seen, if the Ukrainian economy has the capacity to withstand the pressure of the EU market (European Commission, 2022c, 19-21). The document on the opinion does not address the issue of good neighbourly relations or reconciliation. Although regional cooperation is not mentioned in the document, Ukraine is a participant in the macro-regional EU Strategy for the Danube region, it is included in a number of educational programmes such as ERASMUS and participates in a number of regional cooperation initiatives, therefore showing that it is able and willing to cooperate with regional partners (European Commission, 2022c, 19-21).

The AA and the Implementation Reports from 2016 until 2022 were analysed to search for an indication of whether good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation might become preconditions in the EU negotiations. The term "neighbourhood" only relates to the names of various EU strategies or organisations, such as European Neighbourhood Policy, European Neighbourhood Instrument, EU Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP). No reference is made to non-EU neighbouring countries. Regional cooperation is not mentioned as a precondition for Ukraine, but the reports have documented activities of regional cooperation, such as Ukraine's membership of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA) since 2019, the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea (SRIA), the Black Sea Working Group of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean and a possible participation in the regional cooperation project BlackSea4Fish (European Commission, 2020a, 15; European Commission, 2016, 11).

The implementation reports were also searched for the term “reconciliation”, but no mention was found. This might not be unexpected, as Russia started its invasion only in February 2022, yet the conflict has existed since the occupation of Crimea and the eastern parts of Ukraine, Donbas and Luhansk, in 2014. Of importance is that Ukraine accepted in 2015 the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court “over alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Ukraine since February 2014” (European Commission (2016, 6). The EU Commission’s 2022 report mentioned that, although the Russian aggression towards Ukraine has an impact on the implementation of the AA/DCFTA, the circumstances have not “weakened the determination of Ukraine to pursue its European path” (European Commission, 2022b, 19).

The AA/DCFTA are a clear examples of the EU’s external government approach, as it refers to common values, which are the basic principles of the EU, and includes parts of the EU’s *acquis*. Ukraine will have to demonstrate that it is complying with these guidelines, as any other prospective EU member wishing to be admitted to the Union. There is no reference to reconciliation found in the documents, as addressing the impact of the ongoing war on the population is currently not feasible. Rather than “good neighbourly relations” the AA mentions that a “common neighbourhood” and cooperation for a “peaceful settlement of regional conflicts” are envisaged, as well as the diffusion of the common values. Ukraine is involved in a number of regional activities, but for more pragmatic reasons, such as the improvement of economic cooperation or regional approaches in the area of transport, environment and energy. An effective regional cooperation initiative, with the aim of improving political relations, would require Russia’s inclusion, which is currently not conceivable. In terms of dealing with the current war, it can be said that Ukraine has signed an agreement with the International Criminal Court (ICC) and that, based on the agreements, it is committed to work for a peaceful settlement of all conflicts in the region.

In view of Ukraine’s specific situation, the EU might refrain from adding preconditions for conflict resolution to Ukraine’s accession process. However, as this might be a long process, some additional preconditions might sneak in at a later stage.

Georgia

Georgia also signed an Association Agreement (AA) with the EU, including the June 2014 Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which entered into force in July 2016. Georgia, together with Moldova and Ukraine, became partners of the EU’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009. The EU recognised the territorial

integrity of Georgia, continues to support a long-term conflict resolution process and an active engagement with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the two Georgian break-away regions under separate, Russian-supported administration. Additionally, an EU Monitoring Mission was established to observe the situation at the borders of the two regions (Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, 2021a).

In August 2008, against the backdrop of increased tensions between Georgia and Russia, the then Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili approved a military attack on South Ossetia. President Saakashvili, who came to power after the “Rose Revolution” in 2003, made the election promise to re-integrate the two break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In the early 1990s, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, both regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared their wish to remain with Russia, which resulted in a violent conflict with the Georgian government. The deployment of Russian peacekeepers in both regions to de-escalate the conflict was agreed in 1994. In the summer of 2008, at the start of the military campaign, Georgian troops were able to take the capital of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali, only to be pushed back by Russian troops, which crossed into Georgia proper, some days later. The Georgians claimed that they acted pre-emptively as additional Russian troops were observed in the provinces, a claim which could not be verified. The 2008 attack by Georgia led to the death of around 850 people and the displacement of over 100,000 civilians (Traynor, 2009). Despite Georgia’s misguided behaviour in triggering the conflict, the EU is very clear that it respects Georgia’s territorial integrity. “The EU remained strongly supportive of Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders” (European Union, 2014b, 7).

The EU-Georgia AA refers to common values of “democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law”. The agreement also states that the parties recognise the importance of Georgia’s reconciliation efforts “to restore its territorial integrity and full effective control over Georgian regions of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia in pursuit of a peaceful and lasting conflict resolution based on principles of international law” (European Union, 2014b, 5). Additional references to the need for reconciliation can be found in Article 9 under the section “Peaceful conflict resolution” that stresses the importance of “post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliations efforts” (European Union, 2014b, 10). The AA contains an obligation for Georgia to improve relations with both break-away regions and to find peaceful means to address the underlying conflict. The implementation reports include no reference to “reconciliation” or “good neighbourly relations”, which suggests that conflict resolution and reconciliation measures are only laid down in the AA/DCFTA and are not followed up on. The reason could be that a solution depends on all conflicting parties, but

there is no motivation for Russia to support any long-term solution. Still, the AA in its preamble and in Article 1 includes the obligation of “promoting cross-border and inter-regional cooperation by both sides in the spirit of good neighbourly relations” (European Union, 2014b, 6). Georgia’s task is to create a conducive environment for conflict resolution and for the promotion of cooperation. This demand could be strengthened in future EU enlargement relations with the EU. According to the implementation reports, Georgia has since 2021 addressed the issue of the so-called “occupied territories” by working on a “state strategy for de-occupation and peaceful conflict resolution”, which aims to improve the “*engagement through cooperation*”. (European Commission, 2022a, 6). Of significance is the signing of an agreement with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in July 2017 to investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed by the armed forces in South Ossetia during the 2008 conflict (European Union, 2017b, 5). According to the 2019 and 2020 implementation reports, Georgia has continued its cooperation with the ICC (European Commission, 2019c, 5, European Commission, 2020b, 7). In 2016, the ICC started an investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in 2008 (ICC, n.d.). The EU concedes that the war in Ukraine heavily impacts Georgia, especially in relation to economic and security issues. As a consequence, the EU has expressed its support for Georgia, despite the country not having imposed any sanctions on Russia (European Commission, 2022a, 2).

Regional cooperation and the request that Georgia should “work to further promote regional cooperation in various formats” (European Union, 2014b, 8) is mentioned in the AA. In order to ensure regional stability, cooperation is required on issues of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and conflict management (European Union, 2014b, 9). Cooperation in economic areas as well as in the area of infrastructure on a regional level is encouraged by the EU. The EU positively notes that Georgia signed agreements to be able to join the Neighbourhood Cross Border Cooperation Black Sea Programme (European Commission, 2017b, 15-16; European Commission, 2019c, 17; European Commission, 2020b, 17) and participates in the EU4Business initiative, supporting business development on a bilateral and regional level, and other additional regional programmes, e.g. EU4Energy, EU4Environment, EU4ClimateChange and EU4Youth initiatives (European Commission, 2017b, 15-16).

The analysis of the Georgian case seems to suggest that the issues of conflict resolution, reconciliation activities, good neighbourly relations and regional cooperation are important aspects of the EU’s policy towards Georgia, especially in relation to the two break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Although reconciliation was only found in the AA and not followed through as a principle in

the implementation reports, the necessity to address the origins of the conflict with South Ossetia and Abkhazia is clearly mentioned. The EU's early engagement with the 2008 conflict could explain this focus on conflict resolution. Georgia showed some political maturity by actively cooperating with the ICC in relation to the 2008 war. Although regional cooperation is mostly pursued in technical areas such as infrastructure, environment and the economy, this might foster relations with neighbouring states, with the exclusion of Russia. In the Georgian case, it appears that the principles of reconciliation and good neighbourly relations have already found their way into the EU's conditionality playbook for Georgia.

Moldova

Similarly, to Georgia and Ukraine, Moldova is not in full control of its territory, as the Transnistrian province is governed separately with the help of Russian separatists since 1992. The peaceful co-existence which was in place for decades has come under pressure since February 2022 and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Moldova's wish for a closer rapprochement with the EU had already previously led to tensions with pro-Russian Transnistria and its Russian protector. Despite political divisions in Moldova on the issue of EU membership, the pro-EU government and current Moldovan President Maia Sandu have pursued this political path, especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine made Moldova's dependence on Russia apparent (Wilder, 2023). The EU has declared that it fully recognises Moldova's territorial integrity and supports a peaceful resolution of the conflict with Transnistria by suggesting a special status for Transnistria (European Commission, 2017c, 2). Even in its last report in 2023 the EU confirmed its commitment to supporting a peaceful approach to address the Transnistrian case, still fully supporting Moldova's territorial integrity and sovereignty (European Commission, 2023, 7).

Moldova also signed an AA and DCFTA in 2014. In June 2022, Moldova received a positive response to its EU application, being awarded EU candidate status together with Ukraine (Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, 2021b). The relationship between the EU and Moldova is more or less based on the AA signed in 2014, which obligates the contract partners to "preserve and strengthen peace and stability" and to promote "cross-border and inter-regional cooperation, in the spirit of good neighbourly relations" (European Union, 2014c, 7). An objective of the agreement is to establish stability and peace and to promote democratic development, which provides a background to deal with conflicts in the region (European Union, 2014c, 9). Although reconciliation has so far not found its way into the EU-Moldova documentation, the country has committed to addressing the conflict. In Bratislava in 2019, an attempt was made

to constructively engage with the Transnistrian case in 5+2 talks by discussing a settlement on a special status for Transnistria. The talks were not continued (European Union, 2021, 8).

Moldova is tasked with the support of the EU to promote “cooperation and good neighbourly relations, including cooperation on the development of projects of common interest” (European Union, 2014c, 8). The AA makes several references to cross-border, regional cooperation (European Union, 2014c, 6).

In relation to regional cooperation, it can be seen that the report continuously refers to regional activities in the area of economics, transport, environment and other areas of cooperation, which are considered to add up to a positive development for Moldova. Moldova also participates in EU regional programmes, e.g., Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) programmes for the Black Sea, for the Romania-Ukraine-Moldova cooperation, the Romania-Moldova Programme and the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme (European Commission, 2017c, 12). It is a member of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and even coordinates the Priority Area “People and Skills” (European Commission, 2018b, 10), but activities are limited within the EU Strategy due to a lack of financial resources. Moldova is also a participant in regional programmes supported by the EU in areas of crime prevention, e.g., Fighting Organised Crime in the Eastern Partnership region and the Training and Operational Partnership Against Organised Crime (TOPCOP), EU4Monitoring Drugs project and since 2020 in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) (European Commission, 2021, 12). Additionally, Moldova is involved in regional cooperation initiatives working on supporting SMEs, improving transport, energy, environment and the overall business environment (European Commission, 2017c, 12; European Commission, 2018b, 16; European Commission, 2019b, 20).

Moldova has tried to address the case of Transnistria, which will require a more permanent solution if it wants to move forward on its EU path. Again, the EU candidate status has created an uneasy situation for the Moldovan government, which has a Russian enclave in its back garden. The EU is interested in an undivided Moldova with full territorial integrity including a Transnistria with a special status within Moldovan borders. Reconciliation is not explicitly mentioned in the context of Transnistria, but there is a clear understanding from the guiding principles of the AA that a peaceful settlement of the Transnistrian case needs to be reached. Moldova is engaged in several initiatives on a regional level, which are supported by the EU and assist the country in dealing mainly with security issues in the region. The emphasis on regional cooperation can be explained through Moldova’s geographical location close to its EU neighbour Romania, which could be a good partner in supporting Moldova during the EU accession process. The EU’s position

on addressing the case of Transnistria found its way into the relevant documents for Moldova and this might provide a first idea of Moldova's requirement for its EU accession.

Conclusions

The paper attempted to analyse if and how the additional preconditions for the WB countries for addressing their conflicts, were introduced to the EU documents of the 3 EaP countries of Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The result is mixed, but for the analysis the most relevant documents were the three AAs. The AA are a good example of the EU's "external government" approach towards the region. The EU's main values and principles are referred to and the EU's *acquis* is integral part of the agreement. For the EaP countries it will be of essential importance that the EU can strengthen its foreign policy role and can act as a counterweight to Russia. The EU is a "normative power" and might remain a "civil power" despite all the current geopolitical shifts, but it is imperative that it remains a credible power, because having the trust of its people would be its ultimate advantage over Russia.

The paper demonstrated that Ukraine, Moldova and – later on – Georgia's EU enlargement is different compared to that of the WBs due to the difference in size and population (mainly connected with Ukraine) and due to the geopolitical location. Both regions have to deal with current or past conflict situations. Therefore, the EU should propagate its model of conflict resolution in the EaP region. In this regard, some activities in the area of conflict settlement or resolution and reconciliation could be observed and were reported in the implementation reports. Regional cooperation as a general principle seems to be widely recognised as a meaningful policy, although it mainly focuses on infrastructure, energy, security, cooperation on crime and economic issues in the EaP countries, with no claim to foster better political relations. Good neighbourly relations are mentioned in the report as a necessary condition for a stable and peaceful political environment.

According to the AA, the EU does not place any major demands on Ukraine in solving the conflict with Russia, but generally demands a peaceful solution of conflicts in the region. However, Ukraine signed an agreement with the ICC, which will gain in importance in the years to come. Georgia's task is to work on a solution and to improve relations with the secessionist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Georgian army will also have to cooperate with the ICC in relation to the 2008 conflict. The aspect of addressing conflict and working on a peaceful

future seemingly is a certain priority for Georgia. Moldova, similarly to Georgia, has to deal with the results of a past conflict. The EU is in favour of a special status for Transnistria within the officially recognised borders of Moldova. However, it is the policy of regional cooperation which has received some attention in the contracts, which can be considered as a mechanism for Moldova to catch up with developments in the EU neighbourhood.

Until now the EU's advantage was that countries wishing to join the EU were located in its direct neighbourhood. The strength of Russia's influence on those countries made it more difficult to transfer EU values and ideas to them. It is unclear if the EU can step up to its new role as counterpart to Russia.

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Kristina Eva GRISLER

DOBROSUSEDSTVO KAO KRITERIJUM ZA PRISTUPANJE EVROPSKOJ UNIJI ZA UKRAJINU, MOLDAVIJU I GRUZIJU?

Apstrakt: Za Ukrajinu, Moldaviju i Gruziju – nove i buduće kandidate za članstvo u Evropskoj uniji – evropski put je zasnovan na istim, „utvrđenim kriterijumima i uslovima“, kao i za zapadnobalkanske kandidate. Međutim, pristupni process Zapadnog Balkana sa sobom je doveo i dodatne uslove, poput regionalne saradnje, pomirenja i dobrosusedskih odnosa. Cilj Evropske unije u tom trenutku bio je da ohrabri zemlje regiona da poprave odnose sa susedima, i da prevaziđu ratno nasleđe kroz inicijative regionalne saradnje. To podstiče pitanje kako, i u kom obimu, ovi dodatni kriterijumi mogu postati deo procesa evropskih integracija Ukrajine, Moldavije i Gruzije, koje imaju sukobljene odnose sa Rusijom. Teorijska pozadina ove analize je u domenu akterstva Evropske unije (EU's actorness) i politike spoljnog upravljanja (external governance), širenja normativne sfere uticaja na zemlje ne-članice. Autorka diskutuje o dodatnim uslovima za Zapadni Balkan i identifikuje slične predispozicije u relevantnim ugovorima i dokumentima Evropske unije za Ukrajinu, Moldaviju i Gruziju od 2014. godine. To pokazuje da se neki od preduslova za Zapadni Balkan koriste i za istočne partnere, ali da za sada deluje da je to predmet nižeg prioriteta.

Ključne reči: proširenje Evropske unije, uslovljavanje, sukob, susedstvo, Zapadni Balkan, Istočno partnerstvo, Rusija.

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Geopolitical Challenges and the Macedonian Path to EU Accession

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Abstract: While formally founded on a variety of values and rules, the enlargement of the European Union (EU) has also been consistently influenced by geopolitical considerations, including within the Western Balkans (WB). The author particularly focuses on the Macedonian case in this regard, observing it in the context of the enlargement policy's diminished credibility, the lack of progress towards fulfilling membership criteria, and more recently, the complications caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Apart from the veto imposed by Greece due to the naming dispute (which began in 2005), Skopje's progress towards EU accession was further hindered by additional challenges related to democratic regression, state capture, and corruption. However, even the change of government and the subsequent conclusion of the Prespa Agreement with Athens in 2018 failed to result in the initiation of EU accession negotiations, which were initially blocked by France and later by Bulgaria. Meanwhile, concerns regarding the high degree of corruption persisted, while Bulgarian bilateral demands became integrated into the broader EU expectations from Skopje. The author concludes that the Macedonian case is characterized by a significant degree of bilateral and geopolitical considerations, further undermining the legitimacy and objectives of the enlargement policy.

Keywords: EU enlargement, Western Balkans, conditionality, geopolitical considerations, bilateral disputes, corruption.

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Introduction

The Article 49 of the Treaty on the European Union states that “[a]ny European state which respects the values” [of the Union] and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union.” Indeed, accession of new member states has been on the European agenda since the creation of the European Economic Community in the 1950s. To join, European states have to fulfill political conditions and should have developed into stable democracies. The EU’s guiding tenets, upon which membership criteria are based, are “human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.” Enlargement is a key instrument of the Union’s so-called “soft power.” On the other hand, EU enlargement and geopolitics are coupled in principle.

The question is when is a European state ready to become an EU-member? Although built on values and rules, European Union enlargement has been influenced by geopolitical considerations since the founding days of the EU. In the 1960s France repeatedly blocked Britain’s attempts to join what was then the Common Market. Change of governments in Paris and strong US support to British accession in the context of the Cold War prevailed. Despite their recent authoritarian governments, geopolitics was a strong driving force behind the accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal. The central objective was achieving democratic stability and to strengthen the West in its competition with the Soviet bloc in southern Europe. Enlargement to the formerly neutral Sweden, Finland and Austria after the fall of communism also contained a geopolitical connotation. Aiming to curtail Russia’s influence, the so-called “Big bang”, or the fifth enlargement, was an exceptional success story premised on the transformation of the enlargement policy into a central foreign policy instrument of the EU. The expansion of the European Single Market to turn EU into the largest single market in the world also contained geopolitical elements and ramifications.

Likewise, geopolitics plays a major role in the accession of Western Balkans to the EU. Since becoming a candidate country in 2005, Macedonia has been denied a clear path to membership due to geopolitical consideration. In the period until 2015 the country was blocked by Greek objections over the name. In 2015-7, beyond the name questions, issues of democratic backsliding, state capture and corruption prevented Skopje to open EU accession. Once a new government took power in 2017 and concluded the so-called Prespa Agreement with Athens in 2018, the country was supposed to continue on the path to EU membership. Yet, first France blocked the opening of membership negotiations at the EU Council Summit in October 2019 in order to reform the enlargement

methodology, and then in 2020 Bulgaria applied a veto. Meanwhile, the state capture and corruption issues remained unresolved. Apart from that, the EU backed Bulgarian demands regarding the prospective start of the accession negotiations. Such political and geopolitical phenomena harm the legitimacy of EU and the enlargement. This becomes even clearer when one considers the recent granting of candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova.

Conditionality, geopolitics and EU enlargement

The EU agenda in the Western Balkans is focused on building a better shared future, while tackling elements of the past which act as an impediment to future co-operation, stability and prosperity. This for example was reflected in the EU's 2020 Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans. Overcoming the legacy of the past in the region is supposed to contribute to anchoring sustainable socio-economic development in the region. Indeed, reconciliation and achieving good neighborly relations through the resolution of outstanding issues between countries has been promoted as a key precondition for the enlargement process (2009 Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010). The pre-accession conditionality towards the Western Balkan states regarding neighborly relations as defined by concerned EU countries serves well the positions of the enlargement-reluctant member states. Candidate countries have thus often faced 'obstruction from one or more member states who have tried to delay their progress towards the EU, sometimes successfully, due to bilateral issues' (Denti, 2014).

In this context, Winn and Harris rightly so argue that "postcommunist transitions to democracy showed that it is easier to erect democratic institutions, formal rules and procedures than to change historically evolved practices, norms and *collective identities* [emphasis added by author]" (2003: 3). If the conditionality touches upon identity politics, the EU's transformative power appears to be very weak and ineffective. Nowadays it is manipulated by sometimes 'uncompromising nationalist and particularistic member-state demands' (O'Brennan, 2013:39). In particular, it is difficult for candidate countries to reach an agreement on bilateral disputes when the power in defining the solutions typically rests with the member states. It is true that lessons from past enlargement experiences and unresolved disputes that have affected EU policymaking, such as the division of Cyprus, show that it is preferable if candidate countries resolved outstanding bilateral questions before accession, but this is very complicated in the Western Balkans. Moreover, the abuse of the veto power "for issues that have nothing to do with the criteria

and conditions with which each candidate country must comply highlights the inherent weakness and hypocrisy of the EU's decision making process in relation to its enlargement policy" (Fouéré 2022, 1).

Despite official statements from the EU institutions and periodic summits between the EU and Western Balkan leaders, the EU's enlargement agenda has barely moved in the past few years and has lost almost all credibility (Fouéré 2022, 1). Much of the delay is due to geopolitical considerations. Thus, the enlargement policy of the EU, has evolved from "a promise of a European future" (the Thessaloniki Summit) and "a credible perspective" (the Juncker Commission) to the post-Brexit's "firm, merit-based prospect of full membership", dependent on the Union's very own political, security, and economic interests. The enlargement policy has become increasingly complex. New conditions and procedures have been added to the accession negotiations methodology. Reaching consensus on further enlargements has become close to impossible. Not much progress has been made in recent times. Recently, France, blocked the enlargement process based on the general concerns about the Union's internal coherence and unity and offered ideas for reforming the enlargement agenda. French proposal of a "European political community" (Council 2022) and the similar Charles Michel's offer of a "European geopolitical community" presented in May 2022 (European Western Balkans 2022) represent the initiatives that should run in parallel if not as an alternative to the enlargement process. President Macron argued for the abandonment of enlargement as a Union's geopolitical tool because it is contrary to preserving the EU's internal unity. In his words, "We have ... the historic duty, not to do what we have always done and say the only solution is accession ... but rather to open up a historic reflection commensurate with the events we are experiencing, on the organization of our continent" (Council 2022). Once a successful instrument, the enlargement policy "no longer fits the purpose, even though it would be expected to deliver a similar result in a contemporary era of heightened geopolitical tensions" (Radic and Domaradzki, 2022, 392).

While Western Balkans has already been undergoing its democratic stagnation, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has complicated the democratic transition and EU integration of the region even further. At the EU Council meeting in June 2022, a major shift in EU foreign and enlargement policy occurred with the approval of the candidate status for Ukraine and Moldova in light of the Russian aggression on Ukraine. The war in Ukraine and its application for membership have created a "perfect storm" for the enlargement policy (Kovačević 2022, 354). Western Balkan elites understandably fear[ed] that their countries aspirations to join the Union are now even more unclear. Even before 2022, the lack of a clear path to membership has negatively affected internal political developments in the Western Balkans.

Now, the Russian attack of Ukraine has “emboldened autocratic forces in the Western Balkans and has threatened to further shrink the space for civil society action” (Shentov et al. 2022, 23). Despite the emergency geopolitical situation created with the war in Ukraine, “the EU enlargement policy remains in paralysis while alternative offers (e.g., European (geo) political community) appear” (Radic and Domaradzki, 2022, 405). Under these circumstances Western Balkan leaders have increasingly resorted to authoritarian practices, capturing of state institutions, and widespread corruption.

A variety of reasons including the very low support for enlargement among its citizens, which affects domestic elections and political behavior of member states politicians, influence the thinking of EU leaders to slowdown the integration process of Western Balkan countries into the Union. In order to become a global player the EU needs first to reform itself and then expand. For example, France and Germany are pushing a large-scale institutional reform of the European Union, to abolish the veto on European Council votes in order to simplify the making of the EU’s common foreign and security policy. On the other hand, in June 2023, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group tabled a motion in the Bundestag calling for a new policy towards the Balkans. The reasoning was that if full political membership is currently not available, EU should introduce an attractive intermediate step in the enlargement process - the single market. Citizens of the candidate countries would enjoy the four freedoms (movement of goods, persons, services and capital) within the EU. Brussels would have bigger influence again in a region, while the candidate countries would not have an influence in the decision making process of the Union, no commissioners of their own and no veto rights. This would be an intermediate goal achievable in the foreseeable future that would precede the political membership in the EU. Other EU Member States have also put proposed for differentiated/ sectoral integration, partly with a focus on the internal market, on top of the 2020 revised enlargement methodology.

Macedonia, geopolitics and EU conditionality in relations with Greece

The Macedonian example indicates that the pre-accession conditionality pertaining to good neighborly relations might severely slow down further enlargement. The ‘name dispute’ with Greece represents[ed] a heavy burden for Macedonia. On 22 March 2004, Macedonia submitted an application for EU membership. Greece lobbied against the Macedonian EU candidacy,

(Mavromatidis, 2010, and Pond, 2006) but in November 2005 the Commission recommended to the EU Council that candidate status be granted to Macedonia. The Council confirmed the candidate status in December 2005, but has failed to initiate negotiations for membership despite repeated European Parliament resolutions to do so. Greece objected to the use of the name 'Macedonia', arguing that Macedon was an ancient Greek kingdom and hence the former Yugoslav republic should not bear such name, considering that Macedonia is the name of a region of the Greek state. At the European Council summit on 19-20 June 2008, Greece succeeded, against the objections of some other member states led by the Slovenian presidency, in inserting a statement into the Conclusions that 'maintaining good neighborly relations, including a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution on the name issue, remains essential.' The discrepancy between this position and the view of the Commission that 'bilateral issues should not hold up the accession process which should be based on established conditionality' (Enlargement Strategy 2014: 17) is clear, but not resolved. Although the European Commission in its Progress Reports kept recommending the start of accession negotiations, Greece has maintained its veto power as a diplomatic tool, as was the case with the blocked NATO candidacy of Macedonia (Mavromatidis, 2010:58). Joining Greece, Bulgaria has since 2012 also objected to opening negotiations with Macedonia claiming Skopje uses anti-Bulgarian propaganda and manipulates historical facts badly affecting good-neighborly relations.

Whereas up until 2015, "the key precondition for any further integration progress was of an external nature, namely 'resolving the name issue with Greece'; in the subsequent two years, the key issue became one of an internal nature: namely internal democratization" (Reka, 2023, 153). Whether the European Commission would recommend the start of accession negotiations was under question. For the first time, in December 2015 the European Council asked for "the fulfillment of internal conditions, namely the full implementation of 'The Przhino Agreement' of 15 July 2015, and of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) of 13 August 2001" (Ibid, 14). The events of 2015 and 2016 were turbulent. In February 2015, the Social Democrat (SDSM) opposition leader Zoran Zaev begun releasing sets of illegally recorded phone conversations. The accusations against Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and the Head of the Intelligence Service (DBK) Sasho Mijalkov were that they have, during the last few years, secretly and illegally wire-tapped some 20,000 people including journalists, opposition leaders, businessmen, NGO activists, academics, religious leaders, members of the judiciary and others prominent intellectuals.

The recordings indicated direct influence on the judiciary, including dismissing criminal charges against government ministers, appointment of party loyal judges,

influence on the media, selective prosecution of political opponents, mass electoral fraud, misuse of police and public administration for party agenda, and pressure on individuals and firms. The recordings have augmented the fear that the system is designed with the objective of maximizing wealth, power, and impunity for the benefit of specific individuals and networks, rather than serving the public interest (Daskalovski 2017). Among the public there was a feeling that Prime Minister Gruevski and his associates have learnt to maximize wealth and power for their own benefits, while undergoing a large-scale extraction of resources from the society and employing part of these resources through clientelism.

Generally, democracy was gravely endangered as the system was designed with the objective of maximizing wealth, power, and impunity for the benefit of particular groups and networks, rather than serving the public interest. A widespread 'sense of impunity' of the VMRO-DPMNE and DUI officials, amplified by a long-standing absence of alternation in government existed. The judiciary "became politicized, party-affiliated, corrupted, unprofessional, selective, inefficient and partial...the similar situation happened in the Council of the Prosecutors" (Mitevski 2018, 105). Moreover, many critically oriented media were closed down. The control of the public institutions was overwhelming. The VMRO-DPMNE led government established control and management of different power systems by "placing suitable and loyal party members/supporters for rectors, directors, general managers, presidents, members of managing and supervisory boards, councils and so on" (Mitevski 2018, 171). Political influence on the judiciary in Macedonia has been apparent for many years. In the period 2006-16, "under the VMRO-DPMNE/DUI coalition, the problem became endemic" (Trpkovski et al. 2020, 70). If we take the standard definition of "state capture", that "it occurs when the ruling elite and/or powerful businessmen manipulate policy formation and influence the emerging rules of the game (including laws and economic regulations) to their own advantage" (Hellman et al, 2000) and that the distinguishing feature of state capture is a high level of secrecy, then we can easily confirm that the rule of the Gruevski government fits in this category. The wiretapping scandal took away the secrecy.

Tensions were high as many people protested the alleged government corruption and state capture, while pro-government rallies occurred as well. Clearly, there was "no place for existence of state capture and corruption in a county aspiring for membership of the European Union." (Hudson 2023, 34) A compromise, brokered by the EU and the USA, between the main political parties was worked on from 2nd June to 15th July 2015. The agreement foresaw the establishment of a Special Prosecutor to lead the investigations about the eventual crimes highlighted by the wiretapping scandal. As part of the deal, Gruevski

resigned in January 2016, SDSM joined a caretaker government that was to organize early elections, postponed but ultimately held in December 2016. VMRO-DPMNE won gaining 51 seats in the 120-member Parliament but could not renew its coalition with the ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) which won 10 seats, thus failing to form a government. Consequently, SDSM created a coalition with DUI and other ethnic Albanian parties and formed a government in the end of May 2017 despite protests, blockade from the president and violent storming of the parliament on the 27th of April 2017 after the new coalition government elected an ethnic Albanian as the new speaker.

Coming into office, Zoran Zaev vowed “economic prosperity, EU and NATO integration, and zero tolerance for corruption” (Marusic 2017). Prime Minister Zaev promised “honest and responsible governance, a strong fight against crime, and institutional reform” (Dimeska 2021, 2). He announced a responsible, reformist, European government, seeking to deal with the naming dispute with Greece and an improvement of inter-ethnic relations. He also pledged to rid the courts of political interference so that many high profile graft investigations and trials could be brought to swift and fair conclusions (Marusic 2020). Zaev promised to dismantle the “state capture” across all branches and levels of government and create conditions for the country’s Special Public Prosecutor to get to the bottom of the wiretapping affair (Bliznakovski 2017, 4).

Macedonia signed a bilateral agreement with Bulgaria (2017) and with Greece (2018), which unblocked its Euro-Atlantic integration. After winning the general elections, the SDSM in coalition with DUI won in almost all the municipalities in the local elections of 15–29 October 2017. At a central level, the SDSM-DUI coalition won the early elections of 2020 too and formed a second Zaev government. As a result of the Prespa Agreement, Greece abandoned the veto and on 27th March 2020, North Macedonia became the thirtieth member state of the Alliance. Meanwhile, due to French objections on 18 October 2019, the EC Council had taken the decision not to grant a date for the start of accession negotiations for the Republic of North Macedonia to enter the EU, thereby causing yet further delays in the EU integration process. Then, on 24 March 2020, after so many delays, ministers for European affairs gave their political agreement to the opening of EU accession talks with North Macedonia. What was impossible during Gruevski’s rule was achieved under Zaev.

The ‘solution’ to the name dispute has “been motivated by geopolitical ‘urgency’ i.e., a need to solidify NATO on the Balkan ‘frontline’ in the context of Second Cold War prospects” (Vankovska 2020, 343). Macedonia’s accession into the NATO Alliance was a geopolitical victory for the USA further pushing Russia’s influence away from the Western Balkan region. The agreement was also both a

geopolitical victory for the EU and a vindication of its vision of how international politics should work (Chryssogelos 2019). The ‘resolution’ of the name issue was supposed to serve as a prelude to solving a far more important geopolitical issue—the Kosovo imbroglio. Rewarding Macedonia “for the ‘sacrifice’ of its name could be seen as an encouragement for Serbia to follow suit” (Ibid). EU was seen as playing a positive role in the assumed resolution of the name dispute in the Prespa Agreement and Macedonia was to start the long overdue accession talks.

While successive right wing Macedonian governments in the period 2006–2016 withstood the pressure to change the name in order to accede to NATO and start negotiations for membership with the EU it did not progress in the democratization of the country, quite on the contrary. State capture, corruption and illiberal rule were characteristics of Gruevski’s rule in 2015–6. The EU and USA supported changes of the regime and once it happened strongly supported the left wing government. The Prespa Agreement was the choice of new ruling coalition even though the dispute between Athens and Skopje was such that it could have lasted indefinitely (Merlicoo 2018, 157). Zaev came to an understanding with Athens and Sofia. Macedonia became member of NATO and Greece became supporter of its efforts to join the EU. Both agreements (with Sofia and Athens) were “concluded under the veil of secrecy, with no public or expert debate, and at the expense of the rule of law principle” (Vankovska 2020, 354). The Agreement has been “baked in the Pentagon and Berlin and as such it serves, first and foremost the interests of the USA and Germany” (Fouskas 2018). Indeed, the implementation of the agreement was possible due to the infamous encouragement of EU Commissioner Hahn to Zaev to do so suggesting a ‘combination of the Balkan and rational approach’ in securing the 2/3 majority necessary for the change in the Constitution and ratification of the PA (Marusic 2018). EU conditionality worked in favor of the EU member, which Bulgaria understood well.

Macedonia, geopolitics and EU conditionality in relations with Bulgaria

Bulgaria and Macedonia signed a bilateral Friendship Treaty in August 2017. According to the Treaty both countries were to set up an multidisciplinary committee on historical and educational issues (Joint Multidisciplinary Expert Commission on Historical and Education Issues) to discuss the two countries, ‘shared history,’ to ‘organize celebrations of shared historical events and personalities,’ and ‘to contribute to the objective, based on authentic and evidence-

based historical sources, scientific interpretation of the historical events.’ In the Preamble there is a point about “taking account of the shared history that ties together the two countries and their peoples.” The Treaty between Sofia and Skopje was presented as a closure of the long-lasting bilateral dispute between the two neighboring countries, which accelerate the EU accession of Macedonia. Gruevski was not ready for any “dramatic concessions – defense of Macedonianness was the key point of his ruling paradigm and ideology” (Vankovska 2020, 387). Zaev promptly accepted everything that the VMRO-DPMNE government did not want to. Thus, while Zaev said that the Friendship Agreement was “a historic step forward for Macedonia and Bulgaria that it shows that the past can be a basis for future cooperation” Bulgarian prime minister Boyko Borissov stated that “the treaty shows that even in the turbulent Balkans, problems can be solved through agreements and without foreign mediators” – an outcome which he said deserves high praise from Brussels (Balkan Insight 2017).

A joint commission was formed in 2018 to serve as a forum where controversial, historical and educational issues could be raised and discussed. However, the commission has not been able to find common ground on the historical interpretations of events and important personalities in the history of the two nations. Bulgaria put strong demands regarding the work of this body and Macedonian history in general. In the fall of 2019, it became evident that the European Commission would likely recommend the opening of accession talks for Macedonia (and Albania) at its December summit. In October 2019, Bulgaria set out a “framework position”, warning that it would block the EU accession process unless Macedonia fulfilled a number of demands regarding what Bulgaria perceived as “anti-Bulgarian ideology” in the country. Among the many stipulations, it demands that North Macedonia remove any plaque commemorating events from the Second World War that contain the phrase ‘Bulgarian fascist occupier’; that EU documents use the phrase ‘official language of the Republic of North Macedonia’ instead of ‘Macedonian language’, and if the term ‘Macedonian language’ is used, it should be clarified that ‘the linguistic norm in the Republic of North Macedonia is tied to the evolution of the Bulgarian language and its dialects in the former Yugoslav republic after their codification in 1944’. Furthermore, it states that ‘no document during the accession process shall be understood as Bulgaria’s recognition of the existence of a so-called “Macedonian language”, different from Bulgarian’ (Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2019).

Moreover, the Bulgarian parliament passed a Declaration on 10th October 2019, which listed the preconditions that Macedonia must meet to satisfy Bulgarian demands. The text includes the Bulgarian claim on the Macedonian language as being ‘official according to the constitution’, thereby implying that it is merely a

dialect of Bulgarian, and that Macedonia should acknowledge what Bulgaria perceives as being the shared history prior to 1944, implying that, the shared history prior to 1944 was in effect Bulgarian history (Hudson, 2023, 24). The Bulgarian Declaration (2019) also demanded that North Macedonia should “renounce the existence of an ethnic Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, rehabilitate the victims in Macedonia who were allegedly repressed during communist Yugoslavia because of their ‘Bulgarian national consciousness’, and stop the alleged propaganda or hate speech against Bulgaria and ethnic Bulgarians who are citizens of Macedonia.” One passage which really stands out is that the Declaration: ‘[stresses] that the opening of negotiations should not be interpreted as a guarantee of membership of the European Union, but as an incentive to accelerate reforms, strengthen the rule of law and maintain good-neighbourly relations.’ According to Bulgaria’s interpretation, the population of Macedonia and its language was Bulgarian prior to 1944.

In March 2020, the EU announced that it would start accession talks with Macedonia by the end of the year. At the same time, the Bulgarian government issued an explanatory memorandum, a document that it sent out to all other member states. This memorandum was then attached as an annex to the European Council Conclusions issued in March 2020, but as a unilateral statement of a member state, not as the Council’s position. The memorandum reflects much of what had been stipulated in the Frame-work Position of Bulgaria’s government the previous year, for example, the statement that: ‘The accession path of the Republic of North Macedonia provides a valuable opportunity for its leadership to break with the ideological legacy and practices of communist Yugoslavia. The enlargement process must not legitimize the ethnic and linguistic engineering that has taken place under former authoritarian regimes’ (Kolekjevski, 2020). On November 17, 2020, Bulgaria refused to approve the European Union’s negotiation framework for North Macedonia, effectively blocking the official start of accession talks with this country. Bulgaria had imposed a veto invoking historical and identity issues, the key among them being, as Sofia claimed, the ethnic and linguistic engineering that had taken place in Macedonia since World War II (Georgievski 2020). Bulgarian government demanded that Macedonia accept that both the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language are Bulgarian in origin and character. Bulgaria justified its veto by claiming that Macedonia has not been complying with the Friendship Treaty due to the lack of results reached by the interdisciplinary committee (Radio Free Europe, 2020). Sofia had the opportunity to lodge a veto on the European Commission decision to open accession talks for North Macedonia in March 2020, but the veto came after the Commission revealed its negotiation framework in June the same year.

A turning point seemed to appear in June 2022, when France presented a proposal for the resolution of the dispute. Bulgaria soon accepted this plan to move past the stalemate. According to this framework, Macedonia would change its constitution to acknowledge a Bulgarian minority in the country, protect minority rights, change textbooks with negative references to Bulgaria, and introduce hate speech laws into the criminal code. Yet, Skopje's EU progress would be contingent on good neighborly relations with Sofia. The proposal gives Bulgaria the upper hand during any stage of Macedonia's accession process. This is because it now effectively has the formal right to veto any of Skopje's subsequent steps. On 24 June 2022, Bulgaria's parliament approved the lifting of the country's veto on opening EU accession talks with Macedonia. In July, 2022, the EU held the first intergovernmental conference with Macedonia following the approval by the Council on 18 July 2022 of the Negotiating Frameworks for the negotiations. The Macedonian opposition sees the French proposal negatively affecting the Macedonian people, its language, history and identity and objects to Constitutional changes.

Clearly, Bulgaria uses the provision of the Friendship Agreement and the work of the interdisciplinary committee as a form of political leverage over Macedonia's accession into the EU. Sofia plays of identity politics, as did Athens in the past. The Bulgarian demands "look more assertive than the Greek ones which mean even tougher conditions on the path to EU membership" (Marusic 2019). By threatening to continuously (ab)use its veto right in the EU, Bulgaria is attempting to impose its own interpretation of history (Vangelov 2023, 212). The shared history as prescribed in the Treaty implies a mutual history of the Bulgarians and Macedonians, and a mutual identity between the two. According to Sofia, the emergence of a Macedonian nation must be understood as a historical aberration, where the Communist International (Comintern) and President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito engineered a Macedonian identity so as to thwart the 'legitimate' Bulgarian claims regarding the Macedonian people and language. For almost "three decades of Macedonian independence, Sofia has consistently denied the human rights of ethnic Macedonians living in the region of Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria and has claimed that the Macedonian people were 'invented' by Tito, also denying the existence of a separate Macedonian language, referring to it as a western-Bulgarian dialect" (Hudson, 2023, 22). Indeed, Council of Europe documents have noted numerous instances of non-recognition of the Macedonian minority by Bulgaria (and non-obliging to judgments of the Court of the organizations aiming to achieve "the recognition of the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2019). The Treaty encourages further denial of human rights of Macedonians in Bulgaria. Yet, if Bulgarian interpretation "is not

accepted as an indisputable fact during North Macedonia's accession process in the EU, North Macedonia must not be allowed to join the bloc" (Vangelov 2023, 212). The Bulgarian veto came as a shock particularly to the advocates of the agreement with Greece. The well-known South Slavic linguist Viktor Friedman argues how "perhaps the most insidious part of the Prespa Agreement is the result that by opening the way to North Macedonia's membership in the EU it has also opened the way for Bulgaria to pursue its denialist policies toward the Macedonian language and to lay claim to all its dialects" (Friedman 2019, 85). It seems that the Macedonian side "just exchanged one deadlock with another, which is far more serious and threatening than the Greek one" (Vankovska 2020, 394). In any case, the Bulgarian veto and its blackmail position suit those big EU powers who object to further enlargement of the Union.

Geopolitical considerations and state capture 2.0

Although Macedonia underwent an important political change in 2016, the evidence suggests that this has not brought democratic rule, and that some of the practices and mechanisms of capture remain untouched (Daskalovski 2017, Taseva 2020, Resimic, 2022). Corruption in the judiciary and an unreformed public administration remain an outstanding issue (Taseva 2020, BTI 2020, Bliznakovski 2021). Overall corruption remains "one of the key obstacles to democratic transformation, as evidenced by international governance indices that point to the country's lack of progress in curbing corruption" (Resimic 2022, 5). Macedonia ranks poorly on the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), and World Governance Indicators (WGI) dataset developed by the World Bank. Already in the first year in power, despite the resolute pro-EU rhetoric and support from Brussels, SDSM has "stalled on many of the envisioned reforms... its newly appointed officials demonstrating certain unethical practices, and there have been indications for corruption as well... while promising comprehensive reforms, the rule of SDSM continues[d] as "business as usual" (Vangeli 2017, 7). Problems of politicisation and corruption in public employment procedures, are particularly challenging (Taseva 2021). Much of the captured state during the VMRO-DPMNE and DUI coalition remained intact. SDSM has "inherited an elaborate and apt network of coercive and extractive state institutions, which it has also continued to use in a way that has alienated great portions of the population" (Vangeli 2017, 7). Not surprisingly while the independence of the judiciary is formally guaranteed it has been pointed out that there are "indications of political influence on the decisions of the judiciary" (BTI 2020, 12).

When Zaev signed the so-called “Prespa Agreement” pledging to change the name of the country among other things to get into NATO, he did not secure popular support in a referendum. He proceeded in securing the 2/3 majority necessary to change the Constitution and ratify the Agreement. The process was completed “by means of intimidation and ‘reconciliation’ with eight opposition MPs who had been charged by the Special Prosecutor’s office or by the regular state prosecutor (regarding the events of 27 April), including a quick change of the Criminal Code to provide them guarantees that they won’t be charged in the future” (Vankovska 2019, 73). Their support for the name change came only after the parliament passed a much-disputed Amnesty Law that legally absolved some of the participants of the 2017 riot. The court decided to release the mentioned eight opposition MPs, just a day before the voting on changing the country’s constitutional name.

In any case, Zaev’s government did not fulfill its mission and electoral campaign pledges. A BIRN fact-check in June 2020 showed that of “43 promises Zaev made during the [inauguration] speech, just 16 have been fully met and 12 only partially; no progress has been made on any of the rest” (Marusic 2020). Zaev’s rule was marred by “many corruption affairs, such as a major case that involved the country’s special public prosecutor, an owner of a TV station close to his party and an oligarch close to the previous regime” (Jovanovic 2021). While SDSM made progress in managing the various ethnic Albanian minority coalition partners such successes stand in sharp contrast to “the failures in the field of rule of law” (Marusic 2020). The public also became disillusioned after the so-called “Racket/Extortion” affair in 2019, in which “people close to Zaev allegedly participated with Katica Janeva, the special prosecutor in charge of investigating organized crime and corruption, in extorting money from businessman Jordan Kamchev” (Dimeska 2021, 2). Moreover, “one of Zaev’s top advisers, Dragi Rashkovski, was placed under house arrest for alleged impropriety regarding the purchase of government software, even though Zaev regularly proclaimed Raskovski’s innocence” (Dimeska 2021, 2). In another case, Zaev’s previous deputy prime minister was found by the Anti-Corruption Commission to have concealed a private interest in a decision that the government made. (Jovanovic 2021).

Various reports confirm that in 2021 “the state administration and state - controlled enterprises remain the domain of political appointees, whereas directors and board members in the state-run companies and institutions usually come from the ruling parties’ structures, regardless of their experience in the related field, and even lower-level appointments in schools and hospitals have to pass ruling parties’ filters” (Dimitrievska 2021, Dimeski 2021). In April, 2021 police officers were arrested as part of a criminal gang supplying passports and identity

documents to high level criminals. More than 200 passports were issued to foreign nationals including members of international crime groups and drug cartels as well as an ISIS member (Damovski 2021). A video was also released of police cars escorting a Turkish crime lord that received such a passport, while photos on social media show an off-duty policeman acting as a bodyguard to the same person as he walks through the streets in Skopje. The affair has indicated a high level of corruption within the Interior Ministry.

The country fell drastically in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranking from 62nd in 2012 to 111th in 2020. Macedonia ranked 67th in 2013, 64th in 2014, 93rd in 2018, 106th in 2019 and 111th in 2021. Sladjana Taseva, president of the Macedonian section of Transparency International, said that the 2021 ranking is “a sign of a captured state, high level political corruption, lack of transparency in public sector and the inefficiency of the control and regulatory bodies that is a consequence of insufficient capacity for their work.” The president, Stevo Pendarovski emphasized in an interview on October 15, 2020, that no senior politician has been brought to justice and held accountable for corruption, ...they all seem to enjoy impunity due to a culture of political protectionism and party control” (Taseva 2021, 6). Zaev’s management of the COVID-19 pandemic was “also disastrous and brought the country to fourth place in the world in terms of the number of COVID-19 deaths per capita.” (Jovanovic 2021) The government did little to cut infection numbers, boost the vaccination rate and deal with the economic damage caused by the pandemic. Corruption allegations were rife in the botched attempts for procurement of Chinese vaccines. Anti-Corruption officials and the president stated that “allegations that the Health Minister pursued a dodgy deal to procure Chinese COVID-19 vaccines for his own profit must be carefully investigated” (Marusic 2021).

The sense of impunity was prevalent when after a fire in September 2021 in Tetovo, at a makeshift COVID-19 hospital, 14 people died, the health minister, Venko Filipce, offered his resignation, but Zaev did not accept it, and when no one took responsibility for 44 victims of a traffic accident in Bulgaria involving a Macedonian agency bus. In April 2022, the Public Prosecutor’s Office for the Fight against organized crime and corruption issued an order for investigative actions against the Secretary General of the Government, Muhamed Zekiri. According to the prosecution, from April 2021 to January 2022, Zekiri, along with two Croatian citizens, made a contract for consulting services worth almost a million Euros without a public procurement. He is a former journalist, who joined SDSM, eventually becoming its Vice- President in 2019. A close associate of Zaev, Zekiri is the second Secretary General of the Government that faces corruption charges.

Other cases of corruption and nepotism have caught the attention of the Macedonian public in 2022. Radio Free Europe reported that tenders in the public enterprise REK Bitola were given to companies of SDSM members (Mitevaska 2022). In November, 2022, Islam Abazi, with a very sparse portfolio and with suspected affiliations to DUI, the junior ruling party, was elected as the new head of the Organised Crime and Corruption Prosecution. He is from Zajaz, the place of birth of Ali Ahmeti, the leader of DUI, and can be seen in a number of photos from the social media together with party functionaries, alerting the public of possible DUI influence in his election. Abazi won despite “being the only one who did not present a platform for his candidacy ahead of the election, and the only one who refused to participate in several televised debates between the candidates” (Marusic 2022a). The Organised Crime Prosecution deals with several high-profile cases involving former officials close to the current Social Democratic government and VMRO-DPMNE. In December, 2022, the government scrapped its decision granting citizenship to Oleksandr Onyshchenko, who is wanted for arrest in Ukraine and on a US blacklist, after BIRN reported that he was given a passport in unclear circumstances. US has put Onyshchenko on a sanctions list in January 2021 for being a “member of the Russian network meddling in the US presidential election”. The question of why the National Security Agency failed to identify his past issues with the law remains unanswered (Marusic 2022b).

The Platform of civil society organizations for fight against corruption released a statement underlining that “the election of the Head Public Prosecutor for Fighting Organized Crime and Corruption and head of the Judicial Council, the turmoil in the councils (the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors) destroy the perception of impartiality and do not instill confidence in the improvement of the quality of justice” (Platform 2022). Moreover, the Platform was especially harsh evaluating the fight against corruption of the government explain that problems reoccur in most of the areas vulnerable to corruption. In the press release it noted that “the trend of public procurement with favorable winners, low competition and poor performance control and delivery of goods, works and services continues while the high “tax” of corruption causes the domestic business not to develop or, on the other hand, quality foreign capital does not want to invest in the country; and young people continue to leave the country” (Ibid).

The State Commission for Prevention of Corruption in its Annual Report on the Implementation of the National Strategy for Preventing Corruption and Conflict of Interest noted that 22 out of the 111 activities foreseen to be implemented in 2021 were fully implemented, or just 20%, 27% of the activities are being implemented and a majority of 53% of the activities have not even been initiated for

implementation (DKSK 2021, 9). Realization of activities was not much better in 2022. While the 2022 Annual Report is not yet published the president of the State Commission Biljana Ivanovska in a recent public debate confirmed that the realization of activities remains at 20% and that the level of corruption is worrying. The feeling among the public is that corruption is rampant. In a governance and democracy poll conducted in 2021 a massive 83% of the respondents said that corruption is either a serious or a very serious problem, while in another survey of public opinion only 8% of the citizens claimed confidence in the judiciary and in the prosecution (Jovanovski 2022). Recent surveys of public opinion confirm the perception of prevalence of corruption in Macedonia. In an IRI national poll published in December 2022, citizens had low levels of trust in the three branches of government and in particular in the judiciary where just 4% stated to have a great deal of trust and 19% somewhat trust (IRI 2022, 24).

Corruption is hindering Macedonia's Europeanisation and is intimidating the youth who continuously leave the country. It has become a serious issue for USA and the EU. At an event of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption Ambassador Aggeler reiterated the willingness of USA to assist Macedonia's fight against corruption. She argued that corruption "in whatever form – nepotism, patronage, undue political influence, favoritism in employment or contracts – a problem that holds the country back from the economic, social, educational, and structural success it can and should continue to achieve" (Aggeler 2022). Similarly, the EU Ambassador, David Geer, underlined that "Macedonia is at a crossroads and must choose whether to move forward, deal decisively with corruption, or allow corruption schemes to take root even more" (Novinite 2022). According to Geer, the fight against corruption must engage public institutions, which should through laws and codes of conduct, and serious sanctions for corrupt behavior reduce the possibilities for unlawful behavior.

In lieu of conclusion: Macedonian Balkan stalled accession

Both inside the EU and in the Western Balkan region, the enlargement project faces serious obstacles. Following Croatia's accession to the EU on 1 July 2013, no candidate country is on track for membership in the conceivable future. Various EU Member States have repeatedly pointed out that an internal reform of the EU would have to precede any further enlargement. Beyond politics, EU investments in the region have also slowed down. Nationalism has remained a strong force in the region, and in some places it has been supplemented by the growth of Islamist

radicalization. Despite the urgency following the Russian invasion of Ukraine the EU struggles to bolster the enlargement process. The disappointment of people who never expected the path to EU membership to be so long and so difficult is obvious in the Macedonian case where EU accession talks have stalled since 2006, due to bilateral disputes with first, Greece, and since 2019 Bulgaria. The Macedonian example indicates that the conditionality regarding good relations with neighbors might severely slow down further EU enlargement. In particular, it is difficult for candidate countries to reach an agreement on bilateral disputes when the power in defining the solutions typically rests with the member states. EU member states have a veto power and occasionally use it unjustifiably. The EU geopolitics in the case of Macedonia, harms the legitimacy of EU and the enlargement.

Unresolved historical disputes and injustices are a frequent source of tension or conflict in societies. Nationalists use and abuse the EU memory framework to achieve a broad set of goals: seeking acknowledgement, recognition for their own narratives of the past, to pacify tensions, and support or even oppose Europeanisation. In this process, collective memory—knowledge and representation of the past—is constantly reinterpreted in the light of present political (individual or collective) needs. Since memory itself is a tension between what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is present and what is missing, memory actors (ab)use its inherent selectiveness to underpin their agendas and support their interests. As such, divergent interpretations of history continue to trigger confrontations between neighbouring countries and hinder their EU perspective. Disputed historical legacies can be misinterpreted or manipulated to serve partisan political ends, often aggravating prejudice, hatred, and belligerent nationalist sentiments. They can contribute to tensions and discord at the community, national and even regional level. The Macedonian- Greek and Macedonian- Bulgarian historic disputes negatively influence the EU enlargement process.

Once Macedonia agreed with the Prespa Agreement in 2018 to change the name and allow Greek historical interpretations of ancient past to become prevalent in international and domestic relations, it acceded to NATO and was to begin negotiating EU membership. However, the French postponement and Bulgarian objections to opening accession talks, as well as Sofia's insistence on Skopje accepting the Bulgarian historic and cultural understanding of Macedonian history, language and identity reinforce EU enlargement opponents. Moreover, Bulgaria's policy *vis-à-vis* Macedonia, opens the door for further bilateral objections and conditioning of Western Balkan neighbors by the EU member states from the region, such as Croatia, Hungary, Romania or even again Greece. If for a while, one could argue that the Skopje- Athens deal symbolically closed the Pandora box of

conditioning of the EU accession of the Western Balkan candidate states, Sofia's position have reopened it.

Enlargement as a policy and EU conditionality as a tool seem to have reached an exhaustion point. The slow pace of accession and the EU enlargement fatigue among some of the key European actors is a serious issue, affecting rule of law in the Western Balkans. The enlargement process still allows Member States to impose their positions regarding bilateral disputes on the Union level. Inconsistency and geopolitical approach to regional governments is a serious issue. For example, the difference of the EU approach to Macedonia at the time when Gruevski and VMRO-DPMNE was in power and ever since Zaev and SDSM came into office is stark. While in the first case, EU stopped opening membership negotiations until Skopje was ready to give in to Athens' demands *and* stop democratic backsliding, in the second, Brussels supported Bulgaria's position vis-à-vis Macedonia, but turn[ed] a blind eye to the state capture issue. Corruption and state capture by elites that only nominally endorse liberal democratic principles can be manipulated by malign external factors. The unpredictability and the increasing decline of credibility of the process opens door for undemocratic and anti-European influences. The Russian attack of Ukraine has also potential spillover effects on the Balkans. Russia, China, and Turkey, undertake (dis)information campaigns and promote illiberal ideas and alternative modes of governance, which in effect negatively influence democratization and Europeanisation of Macedonia and the region.

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Židas DASKALOVSKI

GEOPOLITIČKI IZAZOVI I MAKEDONSKI PUT KA PRISTUPANJU EVROPSKOJ UNIJI

Apstrakt: Iako je utemeljena na vrednostima i pravilima, politika proširenja Evropske unije oduvek je bila podložna geopolitičkim uticajima. Autor se posebno fokusira na makedonski slučaj u tom kontekstu, posmatrajući ga u okviru smanjene verodostojnosti politike proširenja, nedostatka napretka ka ispunjenju kriterijuma za članstvo, kao i komplikacija izazvanih ruskom invazijom na Ukrajinu. Osim veta koji je Grčka nametnula zbog spora oko imena (što je započeto 2005. godine), napredak Skoplja ka pristupanju EU dodatno su ometali dodatni izazovi vezani za demokratsku regresiju, zarobljavanje države i korupciju. Međutim, ni promena vlasti ni zaključivanje Prespanskog sporazuma sa Atinom 2018. godine nisu rezultirali otvaranjem pregovora o pristupanju EU, usled francuskog i bugarskog protivljenja. U međuvremenu, zabrinutosti u vezi sa visokim stepenom korupcije ostale su prisutne, dok su bugarski bilateralni zahtevi postali deo širih očekivanja Evropske unije od Skoplja. Autor zaključuje da na makedonski slučaj u značajnoj meri utiču bilateralna i geopolitička razmatranja, što dodatno utiče na podpiranje legitimiteta i ciljeva proširenja Evropske unije.

Ključne reči: Proširenje EU, Zapadni Balkan, uslovljavanje, geopolitička razmatranja, bilateralni sporovi, korupcija.

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The “Power of Weakness”? The Western Balkans and Europe’s Global Neighbourhood

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Abstract: Putin’s war in Ukraine might result in a shift from the worn-out refrain of “Europeanization” towards a more realist approach to EU enlargement and its geostrategic stakes. Russia has turned into a significant threat due to its *weakness* rather than its power. The author considers the “power of weakness” a crucial concept in the ongoing aggression and its geostrategic consequences. Paradoxically, weakness might be an actual source of power in these uncertain times of global transformation. Is that an opportunity for the Western Balkans (WB)? Analyzing the troublesome Western Balkans’ EU integration based on their economic, demographic, and other (limited) features while relying on the decolonization approach, the author finds that their integration constitutes an emergency precisely due to their weak points. Russia and China seek for weakening states across the globe, minor players where anti-Western feelings are easy to instrumentalize. The WB candidates deserve to be better integrated into the list of European priorities. A lack of EU strategy in the WB might indicate the absence of sound perspectives for the Union’s broader international role. The paper explores Bertrand Badie’s decolonization approach, applying it to the Western Balkans, Hungary’s practice regarding the “power of the weak”, and Turkey, aiming to illustrate that weakness should not be perceived solely as the opposite of power, but as a suspicious international element since the Cold War onwards.

Keywords: the power of weakness; Western Balkans; EU enlargement; globalization; Bertrand Badie; decolonization; imperial legacies; Hungary; European perspectives.

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Introduction

Every year, during the month of July, articles in Western European press commemorate Srebrenica. There is a recurring formulation in these commemorations: Who would have thought there could be war again in Europe? Between the lines, this phrase reveals a freeze in the European narrative. It latently says that if there is war, it cannot be in Europe. During the 1990s and up to the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit and the 2004-2007 Eastern Enlargement, the “end of History” was in the spirit of the times, and a war in Europe could only refer to past events. Observing global transformations in the medium term, i.e., since the collapse of the USSR, the progressive shaping of an enclave of EU candidate countries might become emblematic of the aforementioned narrative freeze: the European difficulty in facing the fact that the postwar period is a bygone era – and was already well before the 2022 escalation of Vladimir Putin’s war against Ukraine. An open conflict in Europe is not inconceivable anymore. The violent breakup of Yugoslavia, a player in the Cold War’s geopolitical game, marked the beginning of a turning point in contemporary European history. Ironically, the progressive end of the postwar period (in Europe) is symbolized by a heterogeneous set of countries blocked in a new postwar condition. The Western Balkans (WBs) still struggle to emerge from the shadows of the recent past or even risk bellicose relapses.

With Putin’s war, the WBs have caught new attention in the European Union (EU). However, the European integration of the Western Balkans is not exclusively a European story. Or, if it is, it connects to Europe’s more global neighbourhood, well beyond the WB enclave in Southeast Europe. Indeed, if the Ukrainian battlefield is undeniably in Europe, the global framework for resolving the conflict and making European security more sustainable is global.

It has become crucial for European security to consider how different regions of the world, from the Sahel to Central and Southeast Asia, perceive the war in Ukraine and think and feel about Europe. Since the escalation, consecutive United Nations (UN) resolutions have sketched a contrasted global picture. What is at stake for the Euro-Atlantic system of alliances is to avoid alienating countries that, for multiple and complex reasons, do not wish to take a clear position in the ongoing conflict or might, with time, take their distances from the Euro-Atlantic standpoint. The WBs are part of this global picture. Their EU integration is not merely an intra-European or peripheral issue. This integration process is part of the global patchwork of problematic macro-regions whose frustrations and resentment towards the “West” pose a security threat to Europe in the longer term. It is vital to locate the WB challenge on Europe’s global map rather than on its periphery – geographically and politically. Renewed reflection on the geostrategic importance

of the WBs' integration might be the opportunity to think more critically about Europe's place and role in the contemporary global world.

Instead of sterile discussions on European identity and cultural boundaries, let's rethink the WBs' situation in geopolitical terms. This might contribute to opening up the enclave and the way Europeans think and feel about the Southeast European countries engaged in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). This paper aims to show how the WBs connect to the most pressing geopolitical challenges of the global world. The common denominator between decolonized countries and the post-Yugoslav states is undoubtedly not cultural but geopolitical. Fractured macro-regions, fragile or failing states indicate the peculiar role of *weakness* in the transformation of the international order since decolonization.² The "power of weakness" is an existing concept in decolonial geopolitics (Badie 2018). The partial integration of newly independent countries is a significant failure of decolonization. Freshly emancipated states have been formally added to the international order without being duly recognized as equal players. This asymmetrical process has led to an anomaly: precarious and seemingly insignificant members of the international community turn their weakness into a questionable form of power examined in this paper: *annoyance*.

This twisted concept of weakness is worth applying to a broader spectrum of anomalies in power relations. How come international military coalitions fail in front of small terrorist cells (Afghanistan, Sahel)? What kind of political capital results from instrumentalizing groups who feel disadvantaged in liberal democracies? Why is a weakened power like Russia more threatening than if it had hegemonic means? How come asylum-seekers, crowds of individuals without substantial rights and deprived of mobility, are easily perceived as a significant threat by some of the wealthiest European societies?

It is vital to see that the EU integration of the WB candidates is the best way to prevent their weakness from being instrumentalized by global players like China and Russia. It is also crucial to relearn to measure adequate power in international relations and see how declining powers might become more dangerous than steadily emerging ones. A proper realist approach to geopolitics needs a substantial concept of weakness. This concept is not merely the opposite of power, what fails in front of traditional power, but a very source of power that eventually undermines the successful transition from yesterday's international order towards a fair global framework.

² The paper introduces the political concept of weakness in realist geopolitics. Based on an existing theory in decolonial studies, the author explores the possibilities of applying the concept to the European context, i.e., the EU integration of the Western Balkans, the shortcomings of cohesion (Hungary), and the patchwork of imperial legacies across the continent.

This paper will show how the WBs' European integration is inherently part of contemporary global challenges. It is not a secondary topic or a compartmentalized field studied at the expense of more pressing issues. Bertrand Badie's concept of weakness will be used to reframe the WBs in Europe's global neighbourhood and to bring a twist to the realist approach of international power relations to the WBs case. First, Badie's concept of weakness will be clarified. Second, the paper will define what Europe's "global neighbourhood" means by examining the UN resolutions voted since the 2022 escalation of Putin's war. This will allow a critical location of the WBs on Europe's global map. Third, a couple of European cases connected to the WBs will be examined: Hungary, Turkey, and the EU itself, to show the contrasting aspects of weakness as a promising concept for comprehending power relations in this age of global transformations.

The "Power of Weakness": Badie's Geopolitical Theory

The postwar period, stretching from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Soviet Union, was strikingly teeming with heavily armed conflicts. The time of the wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, with their share of ideological discourse underlying geostrategic aims, is also the time of decolonization. The wars of this period have a common denominator: the defeat of the stronger. Indeed, if we measure power in terms of military might only, the outcome of these conflicts is puzzling as developing countries and societies managed to push back advanced nuclear powers.

The defeat of the stronger does not mean a clear victory for the weaker, but such defeats indicate asymmetry in the postwar balance of power on the international scale.

Since the end of the Cold War, this phenomenon has been permanent. "Is there anyone still winning wars nowadays?" – asks Badie. For him, the international order established after 1945 is not a successful geopolitical framework that would only face shortcomings in our contemporary world. It is a much older world order, the Westphalian one, that has been trying to "resist" the structural changes of globalization throughout the postwar period and until nowadays (2018, 59-97). For Badie, the Cold War era is the medium-term decline of a particular conception of power and hegemony (Badie, 2019).³ "It is time to accord a place to the player

³ The approach is not untypical in French historiography (Braudel [1949] 1990). In the age of "crises" and "states of exception", from short-term antiterrorist policies (Agamben 2003) to the Covid

from the *South*, from the periphery, outside the official scene, from those places that “have not entered History” (2018, 13). This potential place calls for the international order’s opening to the global world’s geopolitical realities. It is not a focus on the global scale at the expense of the international framework’s achievements: the idea of the “South reinventing the world” is instead a Western, self-critical contribution to a more sustainable global balance, with the West as a major power centre within it.⁴ Europe at home is not less “post-colonial” than her former colonies. Let’s examine the theory of weakness: it provides a global perspective on the WBs’ regional challenge and a substantial conceptual framework for *integration*.

A Theory of Integration

Integration is the keyword for Badie (2018, 21-28). His theory on failed decolonization should shed new light on European integration issues. Integration (into the international, i.e., UN system) is a three-step process: including new states, establishing well-balanced interdependence, and mobility.

The first step is the *inclusion* of freshly emancipated, new sovereign states. According to Mattias Iser, this first step has three layers: a formally legal, a political, and a moral one (Badie, 2018, 22; see Iser, 2015, 27-45). The legal procedure is, for Badie, the “most evident” one: following the proclamation of independence, the new state is admitted to the United Nations (2018, 22). The political layer is already more problematic. Politically, the aim is to fully recognize the new state as “a political player, interacting on all great international questions”. Decolonized states are stuck in formal recognition and remain “under tutelage”: “Their right to manage their domestic issues, to intervene in regional conflicts, and to fully join the international system is *de facto* denied” (23). In other words, the integration process blocks at a rather initial stage. Iser insists on a third moral layer within this first step. It is “esteem”: a given state carries its own values, history, and culture; disrespect towards these properties drives the integration process back to “the

lockdowns – these also meant being locked down in the precarity of the present moment (Hartog 2020), embracing longer-term historical continuities and political turning points might be a more constructive approach than an exclusive focus on punctual “breaking points” (Le Goff 2013). Nowadays in Europe, EU candidate countries are not only locked in a geopolitical enclave; lasting candidacy also blocks perspectives in time.

⁴ The shortcomings of the international system in front of the global world - this does not mean “cancelling” the former for the sake of the latter. The international order calls for constructive criticism so that democratic values remain at work in global governance to come (Buda 2023).

trap of universality” where integration and the emulation of European history are synonyms (Badie 2018, 24). Integration is not assimilation: it supposes difference, and only recognizing such difference would mean proper integration.

Badie comments on social integration to nuance the idea of difference: inequality and difference are not interchangeable notions, and recognizing difference should come along with reducing social inequalities globally. Otherwise, the global framework emerging from decolonization will remain the “most inegalitarian ever evented, highlighting a fundamental and critical stake of our international modernity” (2018, 25). Integration means the respect of differences on the one hand and the reduction of inequalities on the other. Modernity as a melting pot is a deadlock where inequalities rise and cumulate reasons for dissent and resentment. Global modernity calls for a nuanced concept of integration, distinct from violent assimilation into a historical narrative considered universal (Wallerstein 2006). What goes for global modernity should apply to intra-European discrepancies and narratives of modernization and “catching up”.

The second step of integration is *interdependence* – a peculiarly catchy notion, often considered a promise or almost a guarantee of order on the global plane. According to Hubert Védrine, economic interdependence is “blatant”. The global transformations of the last forty years have been characterized by an optimistic approach to the integrative potential of “globalized value chains” (Védrine 2021, 241-242). Except for a “couple of new institutions meant to facilitate the integration of newly independent states”, such as the first UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I, 1964) or the UN Development Programme (UNDP, 1966), the international order has not adapted its institutional framework to the enlarging, global community of states. As a reaction, ill-integrated states have nurtured dreams of autonomy based on resent towards well-established powers who have not genuinely broken with their imperialist ways and colonialist means. The unkept promises of interdependence have turned independence into dissent (Badie 2018, 26).

Mobility would be the third step of full integration into the international community. In the age of globalization and significant progress in communication, a “more fluid global space” should have replaced the imperial logic where distance was a “privileged political resource” and a tool of colonial tutelage (Badie 2018, 27). Practically speaking, globalized mobility would be the evidence and guarantee of integration as a two-way street. Mobility would mean the mutual share of skills, competencies, and resources. According to Badie, the opposite tendency has been followed, leading to “the time of walls” (2018, 28). Instead of rethinking mobility in analogy to interdependence – or as a landmark – the centuries-old international (European) system has maintained its one-way patterns (2018, 59-97). This has

fragilized states where colonial exploitation and tutelage now run under other names, and only the imagination of precarious populations has the “mobility” to wander across a globalized world that is more of an iconic promise than an institutional achievement. In front, the old international system secludes itself from the “outside world” and indulges more and more explicitly in narratives such as “Fortress Europe” and other “bubbles” (Sloterdijk 2011).⁵

Stuck at the initial stage of formal recognition, the integration process of the decolonized has turned many of the newly emancipated countries against the international order, which, following Badie’s line of thought, should not be considered as well-functioning at all during the Cold War – the bipolar order corresponds to the period where nowadays’ significant shortcomings and discrepancies find their causes and origins. On the global scale, the question is not if there can be war again *in Europe*; the fact is that the “postwar” period teemed with wars and violence, recalling the relentless imperial conflicts of the 19th century’s “hundred years of peace”. For Badie, the Cold War was a failed transition rather than a golden age of globalizing integration and exchange, the very period when the Westphalian system got radically put to the test.

The Main Forms of Weakness

The “power of weakness” is an anomaly in the international balance of power resulting from failed integration and the missed occasion to shift from the international to a genuinely global order. Before locating the Western Balkans in this biased global picture, let’s examine the anomaly and sketch the challenges of reconstruction on schedule. The lack of full recognition, interdependence, and global mobility have radicalized the emerging South, adding dissent, resentment, and “a spirit of vindictiveness” to its identity (2018, 28). According to Badie, the peculiar power of the weak has three primary forms: the weakness of states, the weakness of nations, and that of societies.

The weakness of newly emancipated *states* quickly became a significant stake in the postcolonial era. Instead of consolidating weak states, old powers have taken the profit of such fragilized members to forge the concept of “failed states” (Zartman 1995).⁶ For Badie, this new concept has legitimized Western interventionism in the

⁵ The so-called “migrant”, this recurring character of our fortified narratives, despite being identified with movement, is precisely someone whose main characteristic is to lack mobility – at least if this notion refers to the ability and the potential to travel and share skills, knowledge, and experience.

⁶ International relations have a nuanced glossary of weakness, from *fragile states* to Least Developed Countries (LDCs). It is vital to see that the same way “failed states” can be turned into

South, especially in Africa (DR Congo, Central African Republic, Somalia, and South Sudan), and did not count with the backlash, i.e., the instrumentalization, *by the weak*, of the UN system where they have not been well integrated.

The weakness of a postcolonial *nation* “condemns its political system, highlights the artificiality of its social contract, and tends to raise elites and populations against each other”. This also generates “cross-border solidarities” (2018, 116-117). These oppose macro-regional integration, which would suppose well-enrooted national constructions. Instead, they result in porous borders pre-emptively fractured by imperial boundaries. Lines drawn on the map and in the sand (Hardy [2016] 2018, 1-5) undermine the primary conditions for launching nation-building.⁷ Such shortcomings do not stem from the weakness of the states but the pre-emptively fractured national constructions.

The third form of weakness to consider is that of *social ties*. Due to two main reasons, freshly independent states have struggled to establish civil societies that could consolidate them. First, the “horizontality” of social ties is challenging to achieve in societies structured by clientelism and “segmented realities that confront clans, tribes, families” (Badie 2018, 118). This verticality of ties exposes societies to the “political power of the patronizing state or the arbitrariness of the intertribal game. Second, the low level of the Human Development Index (HDI) wounds democracy and “the overall political stability of new states”.

A Twisted Pattern: The Power of Annoyance

Annoyance as a twisted form of power results from interdependence (Elias [1939] 2000; Devin 1995). Akin to *sharp power* (Walker and Ludwig 2017), it consists of tacit means and methods of corrosive interference in well-established frameworks like a democratic state or an international alliance (the EU, NATO) or community (the UN) with the aim to undermine these from the inside (Tellenne

excuses for interventionism, fragile states and LDCs are easily tempted to use the examined power of weakness – hence the need to include this anomaly in UN and EU strategies in the concerned regions. “Failure”, “fragility”, and “underdevelopment” might not sufficiently cover the challenge: weak does not automatically mean powerlessness.

⁷ The nation-building process took centuries in the West. Nations slowly emerged from the Middle Ages before the French Revolution turned the nation into an inclusive political concept, coupling the process with industrial development in the 19th century (Hobsbawm [1990] 2012). There were already significant discrepancies between Western European nations – what to expect then from groups that embraced the nation-building narrative at a later stage, in the 20th century, and emerged as nations from the shadows of colonialism?

2019, 31). From *fake news* to electoral interference to the abusive use of a veto right, annoyance usually betrays the lack of adequate military or political power. Such attempts to turn the tables on effectively powerful players or institutions lead to the paradox of “power’s powerlessness” (Badie 2004): without proper and alert means of reaction to such corrosive attacks, i.e., without a well-prepared “immune system”, an objectively powerful player or institution can be hijacked by a weak player. However, in the wide range of cases where it can be observed, annoyance usually lacks the capacity to lead to a sustainable alternative: it can only destabilize the existing order and dissimulate the lack of power in the case of the opportunistic weak player (Tellenne 2019, 54).

For Badie, annoyance is a form of dissent that fractures the international order but has the advantage of highlighting the longer-term shortcomings of the Westphalian system. It is an institutional disturbance on the global scene in a geopolitical context where, already during the Cold War, nuclear superpowers lost wars against developing countries (Vietnam, Afghanistan). Since the end of the Cold War, this phenomenon has intensified through a comprehensive and complex range of challenges, from terrorism to populism and instrumentalized migration.

Decolonization has strengthened the idea that the just causes belong to the weak. The “ideas of nation, sovereignty, and development, that shaped the cause of the weak as evidently more just and urgent than the aims of the strong, got mobilized against powers not yet completely defeated” (Badie 2018, 121-122). In other words, along with the institutional resistance of the international system to a new global order, the anomaly above has its roots in the conflicts of the violent process of decolonization.

The discovery of a new set of tools in front of much stronger opponents was progressive. First, the idea of “soft balancing” came to light (Pape 2005) based on the fact that, per definition, weak states had to look for alternative resources to “hard power”, “accessible to the poor” (Badie 2018, 121). This led to the extensively disputed development of humanitarianism (Fassin 2010).⁸ Second, players in the emerging South understood how annoyance can hurt the strong much more than the strong can harm with its traditional conception of might. “With some ruse and limited material means, it was possible to strike the giant, to wound it, or even neutralize it if its public opinion was reached” (Badie 2018, 123). Public opinion can turn a military victory into a political defeat, as the 1968 Tet Offensive illustrates. This realization has opened the field to “violent entrepreneurs”, inhumane terrorist cells successfully defying old-fashioned military powers.

⁸ Soft balancing, which Badie calls the “global market of mercy” (2018, 122).

Badie elaborates on how this potential can, in a “more noble way”, characterize the strategy of decolonized states. According to Badie’s sources (Heikal [1972] 1973, 330), the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru would have used the following milestone phrase in 1961, during the first Summit of the Non-Aligned in Belgrade: “For the first time in History, the weak demand something from the strong”. It was the beginning of a “wonderful story” in times of change when, despite resisting the emergence of a globalized world, the old powers of the international order could not do anymore anything they wanted. It also began a new type of discourse in the South, demanding a “new international economic order” (Badie 2018, 126). The global scale started confronting the international. The development of the power of weakness is a matter of scales. Badie explains how this “innovation” impacts major conflicts nowadays. The Syrian War shows how superpowers (the United States) might get disabled in front of more regional players (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia); regional powers are easily overridden by local actors whose alliances and antagonisms are often challenging to follow. In front, superpowers are “paradoxically prisoners of [their] prodigious resources”, starting with nuclear power. This innovative “inversion” of power relations commenced in an age that the West still tends to perceive as an international power balance based on mighty blocks. It is vital to see that, elsewhere in the world, the idea of a balance based on the traditional measure of power was progressively questioned through decolonization. As one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavia was a European state that played an active role in this “inversion”.

If dissuasion with hard power was the critical component of the bipolar order, weakness became an alternative to it – and successfully slipped through the superpowers’ thick fingers. Power alone “does not organize the international agenda as it used to since the end of the European Middle Ages” (Badie 2018, 105). Weakness, with its emphasis on the small confronting the mighty, its narrative inherited from decolonial wars, and its hardly visible means of military action against yesterday’s armed-to-the-teeth mastodons, might be an innovative unity better to judge the actual capacities of opponents in contemporary conflicts.

The power of the weak is not exclusively military. In international institutions, formally admitted members with such self-confidence can quickly turn the tables on the very founders of the UN system. Without full integration, which includes the consolidation of member states and two-way mobility, interdependence gets trapped. To give a European example, Badie refers (back in 2018) to the Greek case: “The economic future of Greece or some other fragile Mediterranean countries is more decisive for Europe than German power” (Badie 2018, 109). Though the French geopolitical analyst focuses predominantly on the Global South, he

mentions European cases that will now allow me to get back to the case of the successor states of the former leader of the Non-Aligned.

Indeed, after listing neoconservative (George W. Bush, Nicolas Sarkozy) and liberal (Ikenberry 2012) reactions to global transformations and the growing opposition between the international system and more fairly global order, Badie mentions a couple of contradictory European cases: Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Jarosław Kaczyński in Poland are interesting hybrids which use elements of ethnicist Western “defence” against the emerging Global South but at the same time play with the power of annoyance that appeared in the very process of decolonization. The question is, who plays the role of the “evil colonizer” in, for instance, the official Hungarian narrative?

Europe’s Global Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans

Badie’s theory has the advantage of shedding new light on ongoing conflicts and international positioning in the UN system. We have an unexpected variation in the power of weakness with Putin’s war. It is a former superpower that hastily tries to bridge the gap between its impressive nuclear arsenal and dramatically weakened traditional military tools and economic means with annoyance in energy supplies and the instrumentalization of the weak, from Mali to Serbia.

Following the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, US President Obama opted for a humiliating response to Moscow’s move: “Russia is no more than a ‘regional power’ whose actions in Ukraine are an expression of weakness rather than strength” (Borger 2014). “The humiliated, writes Badie, etymologically speaking (*humus*), is the one who is put to the ground level, whose identity is conceived as the lowest and weakest one. And the refusal of this status, argues Badie in the decolonial context, is at the origin of a revolt that yesterday’s powers have never and nowhere defeated” (Badie 2018, 108). In 2014, Barack Obama, who tried to structure a new foreign strategy regarding global transformations, did not see that humiliating the Northern Asian regional power might turn counterproductive and hazardous for European security. In 2022, French President Emmanuel Macron did not grasp that it was too late to comfort Russia with empathetic (long) table discussions. Since the escalation of the war, Putin, who had strategically instrumentalized the weak links of the UN system, perceived Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic system of alliances as weaker than they were. Since the failure of the invasion, the Russian leader has played a confusing game. The combination of traditional (super)power ingredients (nuclear threats and other fire-and-fury

phrases) and annoyance (proper to weak players) does not give the impression of a well-thought strategy and roadmap. However, weakness is crucial – both on the battlefield and on the global scene.

UN Resolution ES-11/1: An Instructive Global Vote

UN Resolution ES-11/1, voted on March 2nd, 2022, right after the beginning of the escalation, provides a relevant still of power relations in the contemporary global world. Though praised – as the resolutions that followed – for the vast democratic majority that condemned the aggression, it is crucial to look closely at the split of standpoints.

One hundred forty-one states condemned the aggression. Five voted against it. Thirty-five countries abstained, and 12 were absent. The majority is clear; the five who opposed the resolution (Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Russia, and Syria) need not be presented. The interesting cases are the abstainers and absentees. Among the abstainers, we have the demographic giants (China and India), the vast majority of Central Asia and a significant part of the Middle East, vast areas in the Sahel, West, Central, and Southern Africa, a visible part of Southeast Asia, and a couple of reluctant states in Central and South America. The absentees are located in these same regions.

There are regional specificities. Central Asian countries are split between abstention and absence. Interestingly, those who depend most on Russia abstained, while those with more latitude within the Russian sphere of influence (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) were absent. In the Caucasus, the three post-Soviet states opted for three different standpoints. Georgia, the victim of Russian intervention in 2008, voted for the resolution. Azerbaijan was absent, relying on its natural resources and backed by Turkey. Lately disillusioned by Russian support in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict against the Azeri neighbour (Whatley 2023), Armenia abstained. In the post-Soviet area, the UN Resolution gives a relatively clear picture of the Russian sphere of influence at the moment of the escalation.

How to explain other regions' abstention rates, especially in Africa? And why does it matter for Ukraine and the rest of Europe? A succinct digression on one case will help make a relevant point for the WBs: the Sahel. In and around Mali, the weakness of both states and nations explains abstention and absence. The Sahel region, with its interstate borders inherited from French colonial times, has been the victim of impotent states facing terrorist cells and separatist movements (sometimes in *ad hoc* alliances) taking profit from porous borders (Bensimon 2019) and impeded nation-building processes. The 2013 intervention led by France

(Operation Serval) that later turned into a problematic macro-regional peacekeeping experiment (Operation Barkhane) could not prevent the spread of the Malian conflict to neighbouring countries.

Paris, inclined towards military interventions in former African colonies, significantly when such action can somewhat distract attention from political shortcomings at home, did not realize how precarious the unity of the Malian nation was. This showed in the divergence between France's military agenda and the Malian government's priorities (Shurkin 2015). Following a double coup, Bamako spectacularly turned against France, accused of colonialist ways (Le Cam 2022), followed by Burkina Faso and Niger.

A failing state, weak nations, local actors using porous borders and trumping impressive military coalitions, and postcolonial resentment against the former colonizer – quite a few elements of Badie's theory meet on the Sahara desert's shore ("Sahel"). What is noticeable in the context of Putin's war is how Russia and China instrumentalize such weakened states and regions worldwide. Resentment towards the former colonizer was heavily fuelled by Russian propaganda (Duerksen 2022). Russia and China hunt for weakened states failed by Western actors in one way or another (Kayali and Caulcutt 2023) and this method is not specific to a region or culture.

Chess or Go Strategy?

Regarding military strategy, Putin's war is a game of *Chess* where the powerful pieces are delivered to Ukraine by Western countries. Nonetheless, despite the bloodshed in Ukraine, it matters for the successful outcome of the war and sustainable European security to see how the conflict takes place globally. And that is more a game of *Go*. This board game, as a "war machine", is different from Chess (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, 436-437). Western stones are challenging in a region like the Sahel, surrounded by hostile local stones. Russia (or China) adds some of its own stones (which do not have identities like Chess pieces), surrounding and eventually grabbing the territory that was initially under Western control.

The battlefield is in Ukraine, but the war and the struggle for global order *and* European security are happening in all those fragile regions that might seem and feel distant or irrelevant to the average European – the same way, let's notice, Ukraine feels far away for those countries who abstained at the UN without pro-Russian feelings or interests. That is what we can learn from UN Resolution ES-11/1. First, Ukraine feels far away from quite a few countries that abstained without pro-Russian feelings or interests (except the interest of not confronting any side of

the ongoing conflict). Second, it is worth critically reflecting on how far some post-Cold War conflicts felt in Europe (Somalia, Ruanda, Afghanistan, etc.).

Third, this does not relativize any horror. The constructive conclusion is to reconsider proximity and neighbourhood in this early 21st century, in the age of digital globalization, to get more aware of Europe's global neighbourhood (Balazs 2022). Distance is no longer a matter of miles, though proximity has never meant good neighbourhood relations. Proximity is given in space; neighbourhood is a set of ties to build up (Simmel 1903, 27-71).

The neighbourhood is also a matter of mobility. The EU has a highly privileged situation in terms of mobility, which is already clear compared to the EU's direct, Western Balkan neighbourhood. The challenge is to use mobility and freedom of speech better to enhance the mobility of critical and cosmopolitan thinking: How come so many countries abstained? What are the different sets of reasons? How is Europe perceived from the outside? How do close neighbours, i.e., candidate countries, think and feel about the EU? Finally, how to make sure countries that condemned the Russian aggression do not turn into calculating abstainers or cautious absentees?

Here we get back to the Western Balkans. The question differs from how far these countries are from the EU geographically, politically, or culturally. "Europeanization" tends to be a *porte-manteau* word that loses sight of geostrategic priorities. Among them, there is the challenge of not losing further countries from the orbit of the Euro-Atlantic system of alliances. Accession fatigue can quickly alienate WB SAP countries with strong Russian, Chinese, and Turkish influence. Here, again, like in Mali's case, the imperial background (for instance, Ottoman) or the role once played by a "liberator" (for instance, Russia) does not mean automatic alignment with Putin's ideology. It is the feeling of a weakening process ("we do not matter anymore"), the hopes triggered by new promises following failed or unkept ones that put distance between the "West" and its opponents (those who call it the "West", a somewhat vague denomination in geopolitics). The Western Balkans matter *because* they are weak, i.e., exposed to Russian and other interferences. Holding them up at the gates of the EU because they are weak is a ridiculous paradox – at least based on Badie's concept. It is not a matter of European "identity" but of security for both parts of the EU integration process.

The Power of the Weak: European Variations

Applied to the EU, some of its problematic member states, and candidate countries in the Union's direct neighbourhood, the twisted power of the weak should help re-read the shortcomings of the WB enlargement process. Following the 1995 accession of Austria, Finland, and Sweden, enlargement has only dealt with the integration of poorer peripheries to the East, Northeast (2004-2007), and Southeast of the Western core of the European construction. Since the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit, only one WB country has joined the institutional community (Croatia in 2013). The willingness of this member state to mediate and bridge gaps between the EU and WB candidates is questionable (Chastand 2022), debated (Luša and Picula 2022), though not as spectacularly polemic as the transactional tactics on the side of the Eastern Balkans, i.e., Bulgaria and Greece's behaviour when it comes to North Macedonia (Bytyci and Teofilovski 2022).

SAP countries have the disadvantage of an unfortunate chronology of events. Regarding enlargement, the war in Ukraine has brought new potential candidates to the limelight in Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova) and beyond (Georgia). Is this speeding up of the enlargement process not happening at the expense of longtime WB candidates and the way they think and feel about the EU? Regarding cohesion, the inglorious cases of Hungary and Poland as counterproductive new members who, following a successful enlargement process, do not have a constructive approach to European cohesion undermine the chances of the WBs as toxic precedents: what to expect from Southeast Europe if East-Central Europe has already been that problematic and conflictual? Another failure of integration has arisen on the Southeastern borders of the EU. It stands up against the rules and values of the Euro-Atlantic system of alliances: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey.

In short, the WBs appear once again as an enclave, now in a figurative sense: the six candidates' agenda is "stuck" between new members and old and new candidates. The common denominator of problematic new members and old candidates is their weakness.

The Hungarian Precedent

Recently, though not for the first time, the Hungarian leader clearly stated that his country's interest in the EU is purely financial (Inotai 2023). The style and manners of Viktor Orbán betray a position where a small and relatively insignificant (Nádasdy 2023) member of the EU struggles to use the only power it has at its disposal: annoyance in the EU – and NATO. Despite the resemblance with Putin's

Russia (Sz. Bíró 2023), the Hungarian “hybrid regime” seems to be EU-specific. EU documents explicitly state concerns over financial mismanagements in Hungary (Sorgi 2023). Lesser studied is the way Orbán’s regime has used EU mobility to let the steam of protest out of Hungary and consolidate a regime based on generalized apathy and the lack of political alternatives (Balazs 2023). More interesting for the present topic is how Hungary has abused the limelight of EU platforms to bargain with the European community and look more significant than it is in reality. An ill-integrated member (ab)uses the democratic system of the international institution and uses the rights of its membership to block the community without accurate political or economic weight. Orbán’s self-proclaimed “freedom fighter” role (About Hungary 2022) is somewhat akin to postcolonial narratives: morals would be on the side of the small fish emancipating from imperial rule. Hence the weak is in his right to be harshly demanding in front of the strong.

Orbán’s narrative about global transformations is a cynical combination of seemingly sound global premises and the Eurocentric illusion of the Old Continent as a “fortress” to defend against the outside world. The regime appropriates the (sound) idea that the West has lost its monopoly on power (Mahbubani 2018; Védrine 2021, 266), a set of geopolitical realities the West cannot ignore (“we are not alone in the world”, see Badie 2016). However, Orbán’s so-called “Eastern Opening” has resulted in a further slide towards the most extreme-right corners of politics, along with shallow economic outcomes. Hungary has taken up the somewhat contradictory role of a “Christian bulwark” (Balogh 2022) that would paradoxically defend the Old Continent against Europe. Based on the abuse of EU member states’ veto right, the Hungarian leader’s power of annoyance has isolated the country in the community of its allies. The interest in Central Asian partners also shows this isolation: Orbán goes where he is welcome. Unfortunately, diplomatic isolation in the Western system of alliances also plays a role in Budapest’s covert activity in the Balkans.

On the one hand, nothing is surprising in Hungary’s economic interest in Southeast Europe (Reményi et al. 2021). On the other, this interest is rather selective. Orbán shows solidarity with the WBs to the extent that it does not contradict his regime’s overt Islamophobia. Budapest officially states that “the challenge with Bosnia is how to integrate a country with two million muslims (*sic*)” (Szabad Európa 2021). Orbán has surprisingly friendly ties with President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik, a pro-Putin actor (AP News 2023). It is also likely that Orbán was involved in the 2021 “non-paper” issue, a plan to considerably redraw the map of the Balkan peninsula (Balkan Insight 2021). “Solidarity” looks more like a series of deliberate attempts to fracture the fragile post-Yugoslav area (Kovács 2022). Diplomatically, such opportunistic solidarities confirm the isolation

of Hungary in the West. Regarding the close Orbán-Vučić relations, the former foreign minister of Croatia, Vesna Pusić, said that “with such friends, Serbia does not need enemies anymore” (Hang 2021). Here, again, the situation resembles the classic instrumentalization of the weak: Orbán uses the partnership with Belgrade as a platform to send undermining messages to the EU. That misuse takes place in the context of Serbia’s accession fatigue where the support from Hungary as its first neighbour (however desirable) actually ends up being counterproductive, due to that country’s underdeveloped democratic practices. How to believe, from a Western European point of view, that such ties will not lead to similar “hybrid” regimes in Southeast Europe if the WB SAP countries join the EU?

Hungary is a weak link of the EU using its default power of annoyance. Similarly, the authorities in Belgrade challenge the EU’s limitations and consolidate a “stabilitocracy” (Fruscione 2020, 13-16) rather than deepening costly EU-accession-related reforms, building political capital on the weakness of an exhausted and confused SAP country without reliable “plan B”. In a twisted sense, there is a “plan B” for WB countries: profiting from a never-ending accession process. Cynically, *stabilitocracy is the plan B*. The power of weakness might sound attractive in theory. Is it not an opportunity to seize when a state/nation/economy/society lacks traditional power tools?

In reality, it is only an opportunity for leaders who build political capital on the instrumentalization of the weak: the population they are supposed to represent. The Hungarian minority of Vojvodina is particularly exposed to such instrumentalization. Budapest correlates the perspectives of this group to the personal friendship between the Hungarian prime minister and the Serbian president. Besides, it is not unlikely that Orbán considers the Republika Srpska as a “model” to follow by ethnic Hungarians in other countries (Romania and Slovakia). That would be a classic case of the instrumentalization of the weak. There is a correlation between the power of annoyance in front of stronger counterparts and the likewise arrogant mistreatment of precarious ethnic, national, and social groups.

The Turkish Precedent and the European Patchwork of Imperial Legacies

Erdoğan’s Turkey, or Türkiye, is a striking example of the consequences of longer-term accession fatigue and establishing a regime fed by anti-Western resentment. Moreover, despite its size, critical geostrategic position, and military might, Türkiye is yet another variation on the power of the weak: Erdoğan’s regime bears symptoms of a regional power whose geopolitical choices are tainted with

nostalgia for bygone *grandeur*. The power of the weak is not exclusively relevant in the case of small and weak states. It can also help estimate the behaviour of the power of states that used to be more powerful.

The European (ECC) integration of Turkey dates back to the 1960s. After the end of the Cold War, the question was not the “Europeanization” of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s state not only followed a Western model of secularization (the French republican model and concept of *laïcité*); it was also a crucial NATO member, with its long terrestrial border with the USSR. In the 1990s, the geostrategic question was not to bring Turkey closer to Europe but to keep the country within the Western system of alliances. The Turkish case might contrast with the WBs in that the promises of the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit were sincere at the time. In the case of Turkey, promises had never been taken seriously. To put it in a more nuanced way, and based on the debates of the 1990s, promises of EU integration were not commitments to those EU leaders who made them. These were commitments to those who wanted to believe in them, i.e., Turkish politics and public opinion.

We see the results of such unkept promises. Türkiye has relapsed into the opposite of Western modernization; its leader fuels resentment towards Europe and the West and plays a blurred geostrategic game at the expense of good neighbourhood relations (Boniface and Védrine 2020, 112-113). Nostalgic of Ottoman *grandeur*, Türkiye also builds on Turkey’s Cold War status and undermines NATO’s integrity in times of war. Imperial nostalgia can quickly resurface if promises of modernization and Western convergence are not taken seriously. Turkey, as well as Russia, use lose nostalgic narratives to motivate the deepening of ties with WB countries. Such threats should motivate changing the paradigm: a weak country is a lesser problem inside the EU than left alone in its weakness, and without a reliable plan B, outside of the EU, in a region that looks more and more like the soft underbelly of European integration.

Europe is a patchwork of imperial legacies. If we take European diversity as a serious, normative concept and not merely as an appealing phrase, the challenge of European integration is to make a value out of this patchwork. Given that diversity is not a value in itself – the task is to turn it into a constructive asset. Claiming that one group from the patchwork is “less European” than the others is unfair and unfaithful to History in all cases: excluding the formerly colonized, i.e., the immigrants, is not one bit less unworthy than claiming that the European successor states of the Ottoman Empire, i.e., the Balkan countries, are not “really” in Europe. European diversity deserves better than identity issues. Differences can easily lead to resentment and frustrations and get instrumentalized by opportunist actors, resulting in Hungarian-like “freedom fighting” operetta or other pro-Russian

agendas. The power of the weak as an anomaly of integration and the traditional instrumentalization of the weak (a frustrated population, a fragile minority, or asylum-seekers without rights and mobility) come along. What matters is to prevent such profiting from weakness and adopt a more realist approach to the EU's direct and global neighbourhood, starting with the WBs.

Conclusion

The postwar European reconstruction tends to be perceived, like the international liberal order during the Cold War, as a success story. Badie shows how the failure of decolonization put to the test a centuries-old international system. The “power of the weak” highlights the structural shortcomings of the Westphalian system. In the case of postwar Europe, it is critical to grasp the inherent role of weakness in the integration process. Indeed, the six founding members of the European community might want to remember that they all lost World War II in one way or the other. This could generate a bit more empathy for the six WB countries who are still stuck nowadays in a postwar situation. After 1945, Western Europe could not have taken the reconstruction path without significant transatlantic help and support (Steil 2018). Beyond empathy, the stake is also to avoid turning the WBs into an instrumentalized set of weak states, i.e., to build European “identity” by contrast with European states who would not meet the standards.

Describing Europe as an economic giant and a political dwarf has become a commonplace. One way to reconsider the shortcomings of European politics and defence more critically is to reread postwar European history as a combination of wealth and weakness. Following the 2004-2007 Eastern Enlargement, the challenge is to turn the tables on abusive weak members, counter their power of annoyance built on their veto right and the unanimity rule, and draw conclusions regarding the EU's systemic weaknesses in the new geostrategic context of global transformations. Instead of sticking to the postwar narrative of recovery, European integration must bet on continental democracy to bridge the gap between cohesion (new members) and enlargement (old candidates).

Geopolitically, the concept of weakness has the advantage of better reading contemporary multiscale conflicts and the curious phenomenon of a missing winner. “Is there anyone still winning wars?” – asks Badie. The power of the weak, explored in the decolonial context, applies to EU integration too: Hungary's power of veto-annoyance, Serbia's establishment *outside* the EU with the appropriation,

by its leader, of empty promises, the decline of former imperial centres from Ankara to Paris and London, the instrumentalization of weak minorities and migrant crowds to compensate for the lack of military autonomy – with weakness, we get closer to the big – global – European picture.

The lack of European military autonomy connects to Europe's global place and role. It is a matter of security to integrate weak candidate countries and keep an eye on fragile states outside of Europe due to China and Russia's Go game. Regarding the closer neighbourhood, improving the synergy of the EU and NATO might help keep close countries West-oriented. In Europe's global neighbourhood, it is vital to identify the origins of newly instrumentalized resentment and anti-Western feeling: is the object of resentment a specific country, a former colonizer, the EU, NATO, the US, or the IMF? What Western failure or shortcoming is in the background of China and Russia's progress on the global Go board?

Overall, this first exploration of the power of weakness in the European context has the advantage of overriding the worn-out notion of "Europeanization" and other identity issues. It allows a renewed focus on geostrategic priorities and security. It highlights that the WBs are not another topic, compartmentalized in Academia or unrelated to the most pressing challenges of the global world. The WBs are "part of the solution" for Europe if the Old Continent refreshes how it considers the "outside world" and reconsiders the contemporary meaning of proximity and neighbourhood. It would be a significant step forward in integration to connect debates and realize that focusing on the WBs is not at the expense of other topics. In times of war in Europe, integration is not a matter of cultural "preferences" but of security, coming along with democracy.

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Adam Bence BALAŽ

“MOĆ SLABOSTI”? ZAPADNI BALKAN I EVROPSKO GLOBALNO SUSEDSTVO

Apstrakt: Putinov rat u Ukrajini može da ishoduje promenom izlisanog koncepta “evropeizacije” ka realističnijem pristupu proširenju EU i njenim geostrateškim ulozima. Pre nego zbog svoje moći, Rusija se pretvara u značajnu pretnju zbog svoje slabosti. Autor ovog rada “moć slabosti” smatra ključnim konceptom u tekućoj agresiji i njenim geostrateškim posledicama. Paradoksalno je da slabost može da bude stvarni izvor moći u nesigurnim vremenima globalne transformacije. Da li je to prilika za Zapadni Balkan (ZB)? Analizirajući problematičnu evropsku integraciju Zapadnog Balkana zasnovanu na njihovim ekonomskim, demografskim i drugim (ograničenim) karakteristikama, oslanjajući se na pristup dekolonizacije, autor zaključuje da integracija u EU predstavlja urgentnost upravo zbog njihovih slabih tačaka tj. slabosti. Rusija i Kina tragaju za oslabljenim, manjim državama gde su anti-zapadna osećanja lako instrumentizovana. Zapadnobalkanski kandidati zaslužuju bolju integraciju u listu evropskih prioriteta. Nedostatak strategije EU na Zapadnom Balkanu može ukazivati na odsustvo čvrstih perspektiva za širu međunarodnu ulogu Unije. Rad istražuje pristup dekolonizacije Bertranda Badija, primenjujući ga na Zapadni Balkan, praksu Mađarske u vezi “moći slabih” i Turske, s ciljem da ilustruje da slabost ne bi trebalo posmatrati samo kao suprotnost moći, već kao sumnjiv međunarodni element od Hladnog rata nadalje.

Ključne reči: moć slabosti; Zapadni Balkan; proširenje EU; globalizacija; Bertrand Badi; dekolonizacija; imperijalno nasleđe; Mađarska; evropske perspektive.

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Western Balkans-EU Relations between the USA, Russia and Turkey

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Abstract: Driven by stability and security concerns stemming from the recent past, the European Union (EU) has decided to include the Western Balkans (WB) in its enlargement process. In the meantime, the United States of America (USA), Russia, and Turkey have become engaged in promoting the need for balance of power in the region, although their interests have been mutually conflicting. In fact, the USA has supported the policies of the EU towards the WB to consolidate Euro-Atlantic integration and to maintain its authority as a superpower on the eastern side of the Atlantic. Another major power, Russia, has sought to counterbalance both the EU and the USA in the region by leveraging its close relations with Serbia. On the other hand, a neighboring country in the region, Turkey, has adopted the policy of soft power and good neighborly policy towards the WB to strengthen relations with old partners, based on perception of shared culture, heritage and history. This article analyzes the diverging national interests of the USA, Russia, and Turkey in the context of the Normative Power Europe approach pertaining to the WB.

Keywords: enlargement, Euro-Atlantic integration, power balance, soft power, counterbalance, superpower, power struggle, European Union.

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Introduction

Due to their geographical position, the WB have gained strategic importance for the EU during the last three decades. The EU's history as a peace initiative has also been invoked in the traditionally unstable WB, whose membership perspective was recognized during the Thessaloniki European Council exactly twenty years ago (European Consilium, 2023). On the other side, some international actors, such as the USA, Russia, and Turkey, which were highly influential in the region in the 1990s and 2000s, have influenced the Western Balkan countries in diverging ways. From a realist standpoint, the EU, Russia, Turkey, and the USA are all involved in the WB to varying degrees, driven by their power projection goals and self-interest. Each actor aims to safeguard and promote its strategic objectives. They do so through encouraging economic or political integration, historical and cultural traits, countering rival influences or ensuring regional stability.

As a matter of fact, the USA, Russia, and Turkey have played unique roles in the region. As an effective international power, the USA has supported the enlargement policy of the EU towards the WB, from the other side of the Atlantic to maintain its power in the strategically important European region. As a leader, Washington has dedicated itself to mediate conflicts and promote regional peace agreements. Besides, the United States (US) administrations have also supported the EU by providing financial aid to bolster Euro-Atlantic integration. As the other effective international power, Russia has preferred to use its historical bonds in the region to counterbalance the USA and the EU in order to prevent them to pursue any possible hegemonic policies. In contrast to other actors, Turkey officially aspires to be a more neutral actor in the region. In general, Turkish governments use the concepts of shared culture and common history to cooperate with the regional countries and to promote economic partnerships in the region. Turkey also encourages European integration in the WB and supports diplomatic and economic initiatives within the enlargement policy as a good neighbor. In brief, external actors have different interests in the region. While the main interest of Washington is to promote Euro-Atlantic integration by openly supporting the EU, Russia intends to counterbalance to prevent the USA to pursue hegemonic policies by using its close relations and alliances with the regional countries. Russia also wants to consolidate its influence in the region. Turkey, as a neighbor and a strategic partner to Western Balkan states, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, supports the EU policies leading to the EU membership and strengthens relations with the old partners. Turkey also expects to improve its relations with the EU on the road of full membership through close relationships with the regional countries.

This article uses the Normative Power Europe approach, which examines the interrelationship between the EU and other actors in terms of its planned policies and projects and aims to explain the similarities and differences between the perspectives of actors. In this context, the paper hypothesizes that external powers such as the USA, Russia, and Turkey also affect shaping the WB besides the EU. The dependent variable of the study is the EU's policy towards the WB, and the independent variable is the influence of some external actors. The article has two main parts. The first part includes a short summary and literature review, which refers to the primary contributors, their publications, and their main points. The second part of the article explains both the policy of the EU towards the WB, including its enlargement policy in the region, and interactions of some external actors, namely the USA, Russia, and Turkey with the regional countries, based on their different interests and approaches. The article also explains how actors have changed their policies over the years. The article concludes that external actors have had an impact upon the WB so that they have affected the policy of the EU towards the regional countries and so increased the possibility of becoming membership in the EU.

A Literature Review

The WB have always been a critical region to stabilize European prosperity and security because of its geopolitical and geostrategic position. The region has faced many challenges and conflicts throughout the 20th century, including in the 1990s with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The power gap has been deepened due to conflicts and crises, and the tension in the region has rapidly escalated because of unstable power balances. The WB (a term that applies namely to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo^{*3}, and Serbia) have been included in the EU enlargement agenda to promote regional economic and political stability and security. In this context, the EU has tended to include the WB in its accession process and enlargement agenda to promote regional economic and political stability and security.

Considering the developments in the WB, Bechev (2012) highlighted the region's peripheral status in the framework of the EU and the vulnerabilities of

³ "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UN Security Council resolution 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence."

external influences towards the area and system. Bechev argues that the Euro-crisis pushed the Balkans to the outmost circle of the periphery. According to him, accepting the stagnation in the backyard of the EU-WB would be an official admission of the failure of European policies. Consequently, it was vital for the EU to include WB in the enlargement process to keep its authority in the region and reduce other international actors' influences. Similarly, Dabrowski and Myachenkova (2018) discussed the challenges that the WB have faced with law, economic development, and politics before and during the accession and enlargement processes of the EU. The authors pointed out that the EU is the biggest trade partner, the largest source of foreign investment, and the primary destination for outward migration to the region. Thus, various economic reforms are necessary to promote the stability of the WB.

According to Kovačević (2019), the EU has a unique role in the WB, where it has applied a wide array of foreign policy instruments ranging from diplomacy and trade, through financial aid, to enlargement as the EU's most successful foreign policy tool in Central and Eastern Europe. Kovačević discusses the Europeanization concept that based on incentive is not enough to explain the European integration towards the WB. Moreover, the author refers that an additional significant factor is the impact of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which has not only contributed to the proliferation of unfinished countries in the WB but has also led to a diminished efficiency of the enlargement policy instruments. In this context, Atiyas (1995, 185) explained the impact of external actors and initiatives towards the area, especially the importance of mediation initiatives in the conflict of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Atiyas examines mediation initiatives by concentrating on that particular case and highlighting the distinctions between a mediation process that results in an agreement and one that concludes in a stalemate. Mayer (2004, 237) discussed the positioning of the WB within the EU structure and their requirements to promote long-lasting peace and stability. Moreover, Mayer discusses the primary objectives for the settlement by drawing attention to the conflict between Pristina and Belgrade and international organizations' influences. Arı and Pirinççi (2011, 1) highlighted the importance of the power gap created after the world wars and sought to explain that the gap continued to deepen the dissolution of Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The authors analyze the power gap and Washington's actions during and post-crisis engagements in the context of the Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia crises. They called attention to the region's critical situation with examples of the economic initiatives of the USA toward the area. Djokic (2020, 231) analyzes Russia's soft power approach in the Balkans from the perspective of the Russian Federation's longstanding historical ties with the region. Djokic also explains the reasons for Russia's counterbalance status and its partnership with

Serbia. Likewise, Brey (2022) presents Moscow's solid media power and its influence over the Balkans by explaining strategic partnership between Russia and Serbia throughout the decades. In Ekinci's (2009) comprehensive analysis, the economic, political, and cultural connections between Turkey and the WB are explored through an examination of their historical ties. The author emphasizes the strategic significance of the WB as a crucial link between Turkey and Europe, making the developments in the region of utmost importance.

Ekinci (2018) argues the visible decline in the EU's political, normative, and economic power as a dominant actor in the WB. The author analyzes the power vacuum that created space for action for international actors and explains Turkey-WB relations under the AKP Government. Sorovic (2019, 87) explains and defines political processes and changes throughout the history of the WB and Republic of North Macedonia. In that manner, Sorovic refers the influential factors in the region which are promoting ethnic and cultural heritage in the EU. Brown (2019, 141) explained the political and economic aspects of Turkey's involvement in the region, exemplifying its objectives and motivations in the WB. Likewise, Janković (2016, 7-23) alluded to former Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's foreign policy objectives until 2023, which align with Turkey's aspiration to enhance its international influence in neighboring regions, coinciding with the evolving trend towards a multipolar order. Bieber and Tzifakis (2020) provided a deep analysis of the Western Balkans' traditional relationships with the international community, and they offered insights into the region's integration with non-Western actors.

The EU provides financial investments with political and cultural initiations towards the WB to promote lasting peace and stability. According to Petrović (2019), the notion "Western Balkans" was unsolicited by the region, but rather bureaucratically imposed by the EU, to designate the yet-to-be-integrated part of Europe; however, this temporary designation has been in use for over two decades, reflecting the prolonged EU accession process of the region (Petrovic 2020). On the other hand, the effects of external actors have always been a game changer in the region because of strong historical ties with the WB. Besides international actors with similar interests can confront a power struggle when they seek to maintain their authority in the WB, the prevailing sentiment of enlargement fatigue has recently overshadowed the EU's enlargement efforts in the WB as another threat. Europeans and their leaders were reluctant to embrace new members into the union, citing concerns about potential strains on processes and institutions (Economides 2020). However, a more recent shift has been observed towards enlargement resistance, where opposition to enlargement is no longer solely based on absorption capacity but twin obstacles of internal fragmentation and disintegration and the candidate's ability to meet the necessary criteria. Notably, besides the primary driver of the EU's

impact on the region, the USA, Russia, and Turkey, which are the external influences, also shape the dynamics of the WB by using their shared culture, historical ties, and close relations with the Western Balkan states. Recognizing these influences is vital for the EU to maintain its presence in the region. Thus, the EU has followed a path through diplomacy and global cooperation.

Actors' Agenda on Western Balkans: Strategy and the Policies in the 1990s and 2000s

The European Union

The EU and other actors have aimed to promote regional control within their national interests and political agenda. The EU's objectives were to promote regional stability, democracy, peace, economic development, and political integration with other Balkan states. However, the EU's short-term stability interests, coupled with the specific state challenges in the region, did not translate adequately into the long-term democratic stability in the WB (Kovacevic 2011). Besides the EU and its policies, the other external actors, the USA, Russia, and Turkey, have taken crucial steps that affect WB and shaped the region's political stability. The WB have suffered from fundamental problems and conflicts that ended with the United Nations (UN) and NATO's promises of accession to the area in the 1990s. In the early 2000s, the EU's specific goals and interests in the WB focused on economic recovery and institutional reforms. The EU's enlargement policy towards the WB has sought to complete the Balkan integration so that the EU could continue to control the region and promote stability for the sake of all Balkan states (Kıraç and İlhan 2010).

In the 1990s, the WB faced numerous challenges that resulted in highly negative consequences for the region. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia, extremist nationalist movements arose in the WB, and ethnic tension became another problematic issue besides critical economic status. However, the EU recognized the necessity to offer a membership perspective to the Balkans, like it did earlier in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2008) Thus, the EU strengthened its policies and initiatives throughout the region and was successful due to the EU's national agenda (Bieber and Tzifakis 2020). The Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) became operational in 1999 to draw a path for possible membership in the long run. In the 2000s, the EU set its goals to promote economic and political stability. Between 2007-2009, the global boom in

economic recovery supported the EU's accession to the area. However, the European financial crisis in 2010 slowed down the economic recovery and the EU's efforts to improve the region's prosperity and the EU's accession efforts (Dabrowski and Myachenkova 2018). Therefore, these efforts resulted in some incentive reforms in the region (European Consilium 2023). In 2011, the EU's enlargement efforts continued with the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. In this process, the EU facilitated the mediation to promote reconciliation and reduce the tensions between the two sides. Similarly, the UN supported the EU's leadership in the process to mitigate possible conflicts in the WB (United Nations 2023, 2010). In 2018, the European Commission adopted the strategy for credible enlarged perspective and engagement towards the WB (European Commission 2023). However, this indicative timeline stands in contrast to the earlier enlargement rounds, where accessions were pre-scheduled and strongly supported by the EU (Petrovic 2019). In the Annex of the Action Plan, the Commission confirmed that the region's future would depend on European values (European Consilium 2023).

The EU has continued to promote regional stability, democracy, and progress toward integration in the 2020s with some renewals. In 2020, the European Commission publicly announced its renewed policies and enlargement strategy in the WB in the form of the revised enlargement methodology (Bojinovic-Fenko and Kocan 2022). Its brand-new policies focused on strengthening the law, fundamental rights, and WB integration into the EU (European Consilium 2023). Besides, the EU contributed to financial development for regional connectivity within the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) (WBIF 2023). Finally, in 2022, the EU adopted its 2022 Enlargement Package to continue to promote stability in the region. The primary objective of the EU since the 1990s was to stabilize the region in every area to keep it safe and sound in the Balkans. Even the external influences in the region can change the structure of the region. In this context, the EU's policies and allies have intended to prevent possible threats and counterbalances. In CEE, the European and NATO integrations were mutually complementary (Hürsoy 2002). Likewise, in the WB, most countries are either NATO members or candidates, while also seeking to become EU candidates.

The United States of America

The foreign policy of the USA largely corresponds with the EU's leadership in encouraging further accessions of European candidate countries. Moreover, Washington actively advocates for NATO enlargements and its policies became more active in the WB throughout the last decade. The Balkan region has faced many conflicts that greatly influenced stability and security, such as Yugoslavia's

collapse and the difficulties of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia's position. After regional fragmentation and ethnic cleansing campaigns, the region's latest concerns were financial, and the consequences were severe for the Balkans (Ari and Pirinçç 2011, 1). These conflicts have grown so much that they have become a possible threat to USA's global interests directly or indirectly. In other words, the situation in the Balkans forced the USA to take measures as a superpower to keep control and authority in this very significant part of the world (Mayer 2004, 237).

Regarding the escalating disputes and tension in the Balkans, the USA has taken remarkable initiatives toward the region, primarily economic, diplomatic, and military. After the Cold War, in the WB, the region's political structure needed a unique strategy. In this sense, Washington was active in creating unique policies that fit the regions and disputes (Ruy and Conley 2021). After the period of Yugoslavia's collapse, the USA followed a much more protective path in its policy, but the Balkan Crisis, which flamed pretty much at the same time as the Gulf Crisis, was a milestone for the USA on its path to the Balkans. Until then, the USA diplomatically worked towards stabilizing the region due to its economic and political concerns like Russia and the EU. The USA's integration through the Balkans continued with the considerable financial aid, and this support increased after the EU's initiation to solve the Balkan Crisis through negotiation (Biden, 2021). The EU's negotiation efforts were persistent, but it yielded no result (Atiyas 1995, 185; Ari and Pirinççi 2011, 1). In 1993, the Clinton administration revitalized its Balkan policy. The main concern for the USA was the prevention of the possible clashes in Europe. The USA aimed explicitly for cooperation and military power in the Balkans. In 1995, the Clinton administration announced its national strategy on engagement and enlargement (A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement). In this context, Washington stated its global goals and intentions in the Balkan region (The Washington Institute, 2023). The EU referred to its commitment to the WB on its European engagement and integration process in the context of membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions in recent years. Washington focused on conflict settlement and economic initiatives in the 1990s, then focused on post-conflict stabilization and integration and continued to provide financial aid through agreements such as Central European Free Trade Agreement and institutions like the Regional Cooperation Council in WB, in the 2000s (DG NEAR, 2023). The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), endorsed by the EU and also supported by the USA, has notably facilitated the liberalization of trade in the WB, covering not only goods but also services and investments (Markovic, Petrovic and Bjelic 2021). In the early 2000s, The USA primarily focused on Kosovo and Bosnia; with Bosnia's NATO initiative about peace program and Washington encouraged the EU to bear the region's problems in the first place (Ruy and Conley 2021).

In the 2020s, the USA stance through the WB was still active and focused on promoting stability, supporting democracy, and seeking to reach Euro-Atlantic integration. However, differences of administrations affected the USA attitudes toward the region. In fact, there were critical differences between Donald Trump (2017-2021) and Joe Biden (incumbent) administrations. On the one hand, Trump, was more likely to reduce the USA's engagement through the region, unlike the other administrations. On the other hand, Biden clearly expressed his support for the WB at the Munich Security Conference in February 2021 and their integration into the institutions such as the EU and NATO (Biden 2021; Ruy and Conley 2021). Biden's expression of the recent USA vision of the region was encouraging, contrary to Trump's indifferent strategies. However, regardless of differences in administrations, the USA foreign policy in general, focused on promoting regional stability, and democracy and supporting the EU's enlargement in the region (Krstic 2021, 175).

In short, the USA supports the EU's policies towards the WB and provides significant financial aid to show its support to the EU. The USA's desire to strengthen its authority in the WB has become a matter of national agenda, especially after 1992, with the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The new power balances in the region would threaten a superpower that might shake its authority and existence. Thus, Washington took some precautions to be ready for any possible power conflict. The path through surveillance of the region and keeping the power balance stable in the WB is creating tailor-made policies towards the area, such as the one of the Clinton administration in the 1990s. The plans of the EU had failed one by one due to unstable political and economic situation in the Western Balkan states. The USA proved its presence in the WB by these measures on the other side of the world regardless of government differences. On the other hand, Russia most likely counterbalances any actor, including the USA's influence in the region, to maintain its strong presence by using its alliance relations. In contrast to the USA and other actors, Russia also sees itself as a domestic actor and uses its historical background with Slavs to unite against the outside world to newborn influences (Suslov, Vuckovic, and Dordevic 2023).

Russia

Unlike the USA and Turkey, Russia's goals in the WB differed slightly due to cultural affinities, financial concerns, and geopolitical compete with the West. Back in the Russian Empire period, Russia attributed itself to a role as protector of the Orthodox Christians, simultaneous with the Balkan Wars and the dissolution of Yugoslavia (Djokic 2020, 231). Until then, WB were in the sphere of influence for

Russia's national agenda. In fact, Russia was a significant political, financial, and military supporter of the region. In essence, Russia's goals were to engage with the world, retain control over the post-Soviet atmosphere, and preserve its global status (Bechev 2012).

Russia's strategy in the WB has been balancing the Western influence, and resisting expansion of the institutions such as NATO and the EU. Russia perceives itself as a power with a longstanding historical presence in the region and the other actors, like the USA and the EU, were just newborn powers. The power of stability in the WB was necessary. In this sense, the Russian government followed its energy interests, construction of oil and gas pipelines, and therefore provided a secure path to access energy resources. Also, Russia and Serbia have been allies since the world wars (Djokic 2020; Brey 2022). In this context, Russia's power on media in Serbia was enough to present its own views on the recent developments in the region. Besides, heavy energy dependence of the Serbian industry strengthens this alliance. Russian authority was similar in Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina due to the same religious, historical bonds, and financial dependence. In this way, Russia improved its influence and authority in the Balkans and, at the same time, kept its ties strong against sanctions that applied from other Balkan states.

In the 2020s, Russia maintained its close ties with Serbia in advance and continued to counterbalance the USA effect in Europe by using an alliance system and media power. In Serbia, Russian power on media was enough to shape public opinion in the region. Serbia, a traditional Russian partner, has been exposed to these influences due to constant support of Moscow to Serbia's territorial integrity in Kosovo. Russia questioned that Kosovo's demand violated international law and brought it to the Court of Justice (International Court of Justice 2008). Russia's relationship with WB was motivated by cultural and historical roots of Slav communities and to protect Orthodox Slavs in the region. Nevertheless, the invasion of Ukraine has led to the imposition of sanctions against Russia by the EU and its Western Balkan allies, resulting in their distancing from Moscow. While Serbia mostly refrained from implementing restrictive measures against Russia, it did align with seven political EU declarations critical of Russian actions in Ukraine throughout 2022. Consequently, the relations between Serbia and Russia have become more intricate and multifaceted since the onset of the 2022 invasion (ISAC 2023).

In brief, Russia's active stance in the WB continued although the invasion of Ukraine caused distancing of the entire WB (to a varying degree) from Moscow. However, Russian support for Belgrade in international forums over Kosovo has made such a course in case of Serbia more challenging and uncertain. For Russia, the WB is not a new interest; contrary to the USA stance. Russia has historical and cultural ties with these states, and religion represents a cohesive factor. Russia's

relations provide the Russian government to attribute itself as a protector of the Orthodox role in the international area, specifically in the region. Russia wants to continue and improve its presence in the WB by providing protection and security for economic interests. Moscow was determined to reach the region's energy paths while keeping it secure through alliances with Serbia. Also, Serbia has not been dismissive of Russia's presence and activities in the region. The media represent an additional tool for Russia's authority and a surveillance system. Serbia's support for Russian media provided convenience to Russia in their allied relations. Russia's influence in Montenegro, Bosnia, and Herzegovina were similar, but the connection with Serbia was more strategic and consistent. In that manner, it is rational and strategic to Russia that continues its presence in the WB with allies, funding, and media instruments. However, Russia is not the only state with historical ties to the Western Balkan region. Due to its Ottoman legacy, Turkey has strong ties and shared culture with the most Western Balkan states. Besides being an ally, Turkey has been a reliable partner for the Balkan countries. Turkish government always followed the path of mediation while in their relations and all the conflicts that Western Balkan states had to face.

Turkey

Turkey has a shared cultural traits and sense of kinship with the Western Balkan states because of its Ottoman heritage. Unlike the USA and Russia, Turkey aims to apply a more neutral partnership approach. In other words, Turkey is a semi-active alliance with the Western Balkan governments. Turkish government seeks to enhance cultural, economic, and political cooperation and integration while supporting peace building and stability. Ankara has no goals of controlling the region but cooperating closely with neighboring countries. The efforts have always been cooperative, based on the idea of negotiation, and being a good neighbor (Ekinci 2018). Like Russia as regards the local Orthodox Christian inhabitants, Turkey has a significant influence as a protector and strategic ally of the Muslim population in the WB. The Turkish government attributed itself a role of protector to those in the international area. Turkey's stance was sharp, and the government publicly opposed artificial differences among Balkan states (Çavuşoğlu 2017; Ekinci 2018).

In the 1990s and the early 2000s, Turkey shared the WB goal to join the European Union. Especially in the 1990s, the general Turkish foreign policy was on mediation and good neighbor policy to create and strengthen an alliance system in the international area. Turkey wanted to improve its credibility with the Western world and desired to become a member in the long run. Stabilization problems of the Euro-Atlantic integration and Turkey's insufficient political and economic

stability overlapped in the membership process (Sorovic 2019, 87). Turkey's policies highly depend on soft power, and in the last two decades, Turkey's proactive attitude in the WB has been significant. In 1996, Turkey promoted the mediation South-Eastern Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) and participated in Southeastern Europe Defense (Ekinci 2009). Similarly, in the 1990s, Turkey played its part in Bosnia in the UN Protection Activities, and in 1996, the actors signed two bilateral agreements that included the defense industry, military, scientific research, and development. As the years passed by, although the Turkish government's hopes to become a member were shaken, in 2010, Turkey had a diplomatic initiative to create stability between Western Balkan states and continued its mediator role again. Unfortunately, the Turkish government did not reach its goal of becoming a member of the EU. The process is going backward with the latest developments in Turkish politics, the economy, and the migration dilemma (Boskovic, Reljic and Vracic 2015).

In the 2020s, Turkey sought its national agenda on economic cooperation and trade in WB due to shared historical and cultural connections. Turkey has strengthened its trade and energy infrastructure investment in the region in the last three decades with the Balkan borders. Since the 1990s, Turkey has continued to support infrastructure and connectivity projects in the area and is a faithful ally to Western Balkan states, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. The perception of Turkey's intentions to use soft power in the area is undoubtedly beneficial for relations between Turkey and the WB and to someday become a part of the EU. On the other hand, besides Turkey's role as a good neighbor, the government also promoted cultural and educational exchange programs in the last decades to improve its approach toward the region and the EU (MFA 2023).

Turkey is an excellent example of a bridge and mediator between East and West. Especially in the WB and due to the historical ties since the Ottoman Empire period, Turkey regarded the WB as a strategically significant region. Turkey's strategic aim to join the European Union constitutes the shared interest with the Western Balkans, even though Europeanization in both cases is challenging and burdened with problems. The Turkish government undeniably has significant initiatives in the economic and diplomatic scenes, specifically in the last decades. Russia's national interests in the WB would be a problem for Turkey, such as in the USA, in the long term. Turkey's choice of soft power is rational due to its national agenda and international goals. Also, the government avoided to pick sides during the regional disagreements. Turkey's influence in the WB has never been questioned and has risen since the 2000s.

General Assessment: How Actors Have Changed Their Policies over the Years

Even though the goals were different, all foreign actors in the WB – the USA, Russia and Turkey – maintained their influence in the region, pursuing their national interests. The primary objective of all actors was maintaining their authority in the region, in the heart of Europe. Occasionally, the EU's endeavors to foster a more stable and democratically developed region have faced opposition from the short-term political interests or gains pursued by the mentioned "third actors". The primary aim of the EU has always been to keep all European regions secure. Thus, the organization took measures to stabilize the region and focused on economic and political development within the line of peace-building. Throughout its history, the EU enlargement process has consistently been motivated and guided by security perceptions, with Brussels aiming to enhance its own stability by integrating neighboring regions. Thus, the EU decided to include Western Balkan states in its alliance system to complete the economic development. The USA supported almost all the EU's policies in their enlargement and provided financial assistance to the region as a superpower. Besides being a superpower and regional authority, Washington was advocated about completing the Euro-Atlantic integration. Even the Trump administration, which followed an ambiguous stance in foreign policy, the USA government provided its support to the mediation and peace-building processes. Similarly, Biden administration focused more on mediation and publicly supported the EU's enlargement. Both cases show that even though the WB are not the priority of the USA's foreign policy, they do represent an important element in their agendas.

On the other hand, Russia has been challenging the EU and the US dominance in the WB by enhancing and deepening cooperation with Serbia. The ideology behind Russia's stance in the region was its thought that Russia was the domestic actor and a protector of Orthodox Christian culture and the others were just outsiders. Besides the doctrine, Russia aimed to reach energy hubs in Europe and desired to strengthen its authority. Russia used its historical and religious background with Slavs and propaganda tools to achieve its goals. On the contrary, Turkey's stance was more into mediation and partnership-based to WB, the EU, and others. Turkey's choice of soft power positively affected its presence in Europe and its membership goal. Like Russia's historical ties, Turkey has also shared history and culture with the Western Balkan states since the Ottoman period. Turkish foreign policy towards the region was partnership driven. The administration supported the EU's policies to promote their neighbors' regional stability and take a step towards the Union membership. By supporting the EU integration in the WB, and

NATO enlargement agenda (proposed by the USA), from its perspective, Turkey contributed to the Euro-Atlantic perspective of the region and to the decrease of the Russian influence at a geopolitically volatile moment. Turkey's policy towards the WB complements that of the EU, which also reflects advanced ties between Ankara and Brussels, despite all challenges and some negative phenomena.

Conclusion

The EU acknowledged the membership prospects of the WB through the Stabilization and Association Process (1999). This process aimed to provide financial assistance, diplomatic support, and economic and political reforms to prevent problems to any potential harm to the EU's structure. The USA, Russia, and Turkey are highly interested in the region with overlapping concerns and goals. The USA highly supported the EU's enlargement policies in the WB, aligning its national interests by providing stability, economic development, and democracy. The USA supported the EU initiatives for the WB, such as Central European Free Trade Agreement in the 2000s. Also, the Euro-Atlantic integration process has started since the late 1990s with the Clinton administration's. For the USA's global authority, it was essential to support areas that would be the direct sphere of influence in the future to retain its superpower status. Although during the early 1990s, the US refrained from taking the lead over the EU in the WB, this changed following the EU's unsuccessful efforts to resolve conflicts in the context of the dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia. Despite its support to the WB in the 1990s and early 2000s, the USA engagement in the region has been problematic and questioned the level to the transatlantic partnership.

Despite the differing strategic focuses and leadership styles of the last two American administrations (Trump and Biden), Washington has largely supported the EU's leadership role in the WB. Although there were some isolationist moves during the Trump administration, transatlantic cooperation has strengthened since 2020. This strengthening is particularly evident in the context of the invasion of Ukraine, which contributed to enhanced coordination and deeper cooperation between the transatlantic partners.

On the other hand, Russia aims to counterbalance the Western strategies in the WB and to maintain its influence in the region, which has been challenging, especially since the beginning of its assault on Ukraine which is perceived negatively in the entire region, despite some differences in terms of harmonization with the EU's common foreign and security policy. Russia attributes itself a role of the

protector of the Orthodox Christians due to Russia and Western Balkan states' shared historical background. The European and NATO integrations are not perceived favorably by Russia, especially since the onset of its military campaign in Ukraine, which also caused wide-range geopolitical disturbances. Russia also supports the governments and minority groups that advocate Euro-Atlantic skepticism. Like the USA, Russia did not want to lose its authority in the area due to concerns that different actors' influence may disrupt its energy dominance in that part of Europe. Besides not supporting the EU's enlargement policies, Russia also showed its stance to oppose Kosovo's secession and strengthen partnership with Serbia.

Turkey formally aligns with the EU's enlargement policy in the WB and shows its support for integration with the EU within the actors. Apart from the connections stemming from the Ottoman era, relations with the WB are also developing in economic, diplomatic, and other segments. Even most Turkish leaders refer in their speeches that WB are their relatives, which is why Turkey plays a mediator role and shows its presence in most regional disputes attempting to act as a neutral actor. Turkey's active stance in mediation also positively impacted the region, and in fact, the Turkish government's choice of soft power was mainly successful. However, the domestic problems in Turkey and the lack of progress towards meeting EU membership criteria has caused ambivalent reactions in the EU, including when it comes to Turkish influence in the WB. Turkey continued its mediation efforts and the use of soft power in the 2020s as it was in the 1990s to keep its ties strong with the Western Balkan neighbors and the EU, Turkey's long-lasting goal to become a member of the EU is still formally in place, despite the political and economic instability and challenges when it comes to harmonization with EU standards and the *acquis*.

On the other hand, the lack of the US direct engagement in the WB affairs provided more space to the other foreign actors, apart from the EU. Whereas Washington did intervene on several occasions during the 1990s in the context of the Yugoslav conflicts, since the early 2000s, the European Union took the lead as the primary protector of the WB. The signals of increased US interest for the region only reappeared following the invasion of Ukraine, which brought security concerns to both EU and its transatlantic ally. Turkey's recent domestic problems raised concerns about the compatibility of its foreign policy with the EU's values, even if Turkey is an important mediator. The power conflict in the region occurred, where different actors took a stance within their national interests, and in some cases, these interests may harm the region's fragile status and the EU's efforts to promote peacebuilding and stability in the area. Managing the actors' controversies must be the essential and primary goal of the EU's future initiatives to strengthen the

Western Balkan and Euro-Atlantic integration to reach their diplomatic objectives and decrease regional threats. Russia's perspective of the USA, the EU, and Turkey is the newcomer to the region, and Russia has historical rights in the area, caused to strengthen their tight policies towards the region.

In brief, considering each actor's regional policy, they are consistent and stable in their goals despite the choice of Russia to pursue its national interests through warfare. Namely, these actors have no intentions to make unexpected, devastating policies toward the region to deepen the power gap, at least soon. Although the risk of escalation in the WB should never be underestimated, such a scenario is unlikely and does not suit the interests of all major mentioned actors, except perhaps Russia to a certain degree. Taking the very nature of the EU-WB relations as exemplified in the Stabilization and Association Process, the regional stability and security has remained one of the top priorities for Brussels, and also the USA and Turkey as its close partners.

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**ODNOSI ZAPADNOG BALKANA SA EVROPSKOM UNIJOM IZMEĐU SAD,
RUSIJE I TURSKE**

Apstrakt: Usled bezbednosnih zabrinutosti proisteklih iz skorije prošlosti, Evropska unija odlučila je da uključi Zapadni Balkan (ZB) u proces proširenja. U međuvremenu, Sjedinjene Američke Države (SAD), Rusija i Turska promovisale su potrebu za ravnotežom moći u regionu, premda su njihovi interesi međusobno suprotstavljeni. Zapravo, SAD je podržala politike Evropske unije spram Zapadnog Balkana kako bi konsolidovala evroatlantske integracije i zadržala svoj autoritet kao supersila na istočnoj strani Atlantika. Druga velika sila, Rusija, nastojala je da pruži kontratežu Evropskoj uniji i SAD-u u regionu kroz bliske odnose sa Srbijom. S druge strane, zemlja iz bliskog susedstva, Turska, usvojila je politiku meke moći i dobrosusedskog pristupa prema ZB kako bi ojačala odnose sa starim partnerima, na osnovu percepcije o zajedničkoj kulturi, istoriji i nasleđu. Ovaj članak analizira suprotstavljene nacionalne interese SAD, Rusije i Turske u kontekstu pristupa evropske normativne moći spram Zapadnog Balkana.

Ključne reči: proširenje, evroatlantske integracije, ravnoteža moći, meka moć, kontrateža, supersila, borba za moć, Evropska unija.

PRIKAZ

Hrišćanski nacionalizam u SAD: priča o moći, granicama i poretku

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Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2020.

Nije retkost da se hrišćanstvo u određenim zemljama prevodi u narativ o Božijem planu za naciju. Tako se u Nagorno-Karabahu moglo čuti: „Hrišćanska vera može biti stara samo dve hiljade godina u drugim zemljama. Ali za nas, narod Karabaha, Spasitelj je pokazao svetlost tri hiljade godina pre ostalih“ (Kaldor 2007, 157). Na drugom kraju sveta, u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama (SAD), u južnobaptističkoj crkvi u Južnoj Karolini, predvodnik službe za Dan nezavisnosti je rekao: „Jedino Isus ima moć da promeni našu naciju, on je položio ultimativnu žrtvu za naše živote i za našu naciju“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 2). Da li američka nacija zaista jeste ili je nekad bila hrišćanska, česta je tema u literaturi. Jedni joj pristupaju analizom osnivačkih dokumenata i dela očeva osnivača (Harris and Kidd 2011), drugi analizom civilne/građanske religije (Gorski 2017), dok treći nalaze vezu između civilne religije i nacionalizma (Soper and Fetzer 2018). Potpuno drugačiji pristup i pogled nudi knjiga *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (2020) autora Endrjua Vajtheda (Andrew L. Whitehead) i Semjuela Perija (Samuel L. Perry). Autori su profesori i predavači na univerzitetima Klemson (Vajthed) i Oklahoma (Peri) i stručnjaci u oblasti konzervativnog hrišćanstva i američke politike. Knjiga koju predstavljam je dobitnik znamenite nagrade Društva za naučno proučavanje religije (Society for the Scientific Study of Religion) za 2021. godinu.

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Rad je nastao u okviru naučnoistraživačkog projekta „Srbija i izazovi u međunarodnim odnosima 2023. godine“, koji finansira Ministarstvo nauke, tehnološkog razvoja i inovacija Republike Srbije, a realizuje Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu tokom 2023. godine.

Šta je inovativno u ovoj knjizi? Pre svega, istraživački problem. Za Vajtheda i Perija nije važno da li je američka nacija hrišćanska. „Važno je to što značajan broj Amerikanaca *veruje* da ona to jeste. I što značajan broj *veruje* u suprotno“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 4). Posledično, ova uverenja oblikuju svetonazore građana, kao i njihove aktivnosti u pravcu menjanja ili očuvanja sveta u kom žive. Drugim rečima, hrišćanski nacionalizam utiče na društveno i političko ponašanje. Tako dolazimo do druge inovativnosti ovog dela. Vajthed i Peri su sproveli prvo sistematično i empirijsko istraživanje uticaja hrišćanskog nacionalizma na društveno-politički život SAD, koristeći podjednako kvantitativne podatke iz dostupnih baza i kvalitativne podatke dobijene iz pedeset dubinskih intervju sa građanima SAD i posmatranja sa učestvovanjem na relevantnim događajima u Teksasu, Oklahomi i Južnoj Karolini. Naposljetku, autori nude inovativnu konceptualizaciju. Hrišćanski nacionalizam nije isto što i hrišćanski nacionalni narativ. Dok bi, na primer, hrišćanski nacionalni narativ Martina Lutera Kinga (Martin Luther King Jr.) preispitivao nepravednost postojećeg društvenog poretka, dotle bi hrišćanski nacionalizam koristio hrišćanski nacionalni narativ zarad očuvanja postojećeg društvenog poretka (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 17). Dalje, autori prave razliku između hrišćanskog nacionalizma i desnog autoritarizma (right-wing authoritarianism), „belog evangelikalizma“ („white evangelicalism“) i samog hrišćanstva ili religije, jer se svi ovi termini u javnom govoru, ali i u literaturi, često uzimaju kao sinonimi. Hrišćanski nacionalizam je „kulturalni obrazac – kolekcija mitova, tradicija, simbola, narativa i sistema vrednosti – koji idealizuje i zagovara stapanje hrišćanstva sa američkim građanskim životom“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 10).

Knjiga se sastoji od predgovora, zahvalnice, uvoda, četiri poglavlja, zaključka, tri dodatka, popisa endnota, bibliografije i indeksa. U prvom poglavlju, koje se zove *Četiri Amerikanca (Four Americans)*, autori predstavljaju četiri osnovne orijentacije prema hrišćanskom nacionalizmu u SAD i njihovu demografsko-teritorijalnu raspoređenost. „Četiri Amerikanca“ su: Odbacivač (Rejecter), Otporaš (Resister), Prilagodljivac (Accommodator) i Zastupnik (Ambassador). Prema istraživanju *Baylor Religious Survey* iz 2017. godine, Odbacivača ima 21,5%, Otporaša 26,6%, Prilagodljivih 32,1%, a Zastupnika 19,8% u američkoj populaciji. Najvažniji nalaz izložen u ovom poglavlju je prošaranost svih sociodemografskih, etnoreligijskih, političkih i geografskih skupina četirima orijentacijama u odnosu prema hrišćanskom nacionalizmu, što umnogome razbija ustaljene stereotipe. Ipak, u uslovima porasta broja verski neopredeljenih i tzv. skupine „*nones*“ u poslednjih trideset godina, prisutan je trend sporog ali stabilnog opadanja podrške hrišćanskom nacionalizmu (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 46-47).

Drugo poglavlje *Moć (Power)* se detaljnije bavi odnosom hrišćanskog nacionalizma, evangelikalizma i podrške Donaldu Trampu (Donald Trump). Ustaljeno je mišljenje da beli evangelici biraju Trampa. Međutim, zašto bi nakon brojnih skandala i afera evangelici i dalje smatrali da je Tramp branilac porodičnih vrednosti? Odgovor leži u stavu birača prema hrišćanskom nacionalizmu, koji se ne mora nužno poklopiti sa religijskim opredeljenjem. Hrišćanski nacionalisti visoko vrednuju tri ključne stavke na Trampovoj političkoj agendi: viđenje muslimanskih imigranata kao terorističke pretnje, javno iskazivanje patriotizma i suprotstavljanje restriktivnim zakonima o kontroli posedovanja oružja. Najvažniji zaključak ovog poglavlja je „veliki paradoks da hrišćanski nacionalizam i religioznost utiču na američke političke stavove u potpuno suprotnom smeru“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 84). Konkretno, što su redovniji na crkvenim službama, češće se mole i čitaju Sveto pismo, Amerikanci bivaju manje zagovornici pomenutih politika. „Pozivanje na hrišćanski nacionalizam, suprotno, uključuje ili pozivanje na vlasnička prava ili pozivanje na oružje, uvek kao odgovor na uočenu pretnju. Ukratko, kod hrišćanskog nacionalizma je sve u vezi sa moći“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 86).

Treće poglavlje nosi naslov *Granice (Boundaries)*, što su autori preuzeli od jednog pastora iz kategorije Zastupnika, koji je rekao: „Mislim da je Bog Bog granica“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 89). Autori se, stoga, u ovom poglavlju bave time „kako zagrljaj hrišćanskog nacionalizma pruža kulturni materijal koji se koristi za izgradnju zidova oko američkog identiteta, zidova koji isključuju etničke ili verske autsajdere“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 91). Drugim rečima, ko su „drugi“ u odnosu na „nas“. Dokazuju kako je hrišćanski nacionalizam najsnažniji prediktor viđenja autsajdera – latinoameričkih imigranata, muslimana, Jevreja, crnaca, Mormona, rimokatolika – kao pretnje po vrednosti, slobodu i fizičku bezbednost (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 112). U svim slučajevima (izuzev stava prema ateistima), visok nivo religioznosti i crkvenosti vodi suprotnom stavu od stavova hrišćanskih nacionalista (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 118).

Četvrto poglavlje *Poredak (Order)* polazi od sledećeg shvatanja jednog Zastupnika: „Bog je na prvom mestu. Muževi i očevi su posvećeni i saraduju sa svojim ženama u odgajanju poslušne dece. Svako zna svoje mesto. Članovi ovih porodica zatim izlaze u zajednicu i ‘postajemo bolji kao nacija’“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 123). Tri pitanja – porodični život, pol i seksualnost – pokazuju kako hrišćanski nacionalizam ne teži uspostavljanju reda samo u javnoj sferi, već i u privatnoj (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 123). Da bi se razumela ne tako jednostavna razlika između stavova religioznog Amerikanca i Amerikanca koji je bliži hrišćanskom nacionalizmu u pogledu homoseksualnosti, transrodnih prava

i razvoda braka, autori zaključuju: „Veza između religije i tradicionalističkih interpretacija porodice, roda i seksualnosti može biti uveliko lična, ali ne mora biti otvoreno politička. Hrišćanski nacionalizam je, međutim, politički u svojoj srži“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 148).

U zaključku, autori se osvrću na važnost i perspektivu hrišćanskog nacionalizma u SAD. U osnovi poziva za „vraćanje Amerike Bogu“ nisu verski ciljevi, već obezbeđivanje moći u javnoj sferi, bilo da je u pitanju politička, društvena ili religijska moć. „Hrišćanski nacionalizam je, stoga, u konačnici [priča] o privilegijama“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 153).

Naučni doprinos ove knjige je vanredan, ne samo u oblasti politike i religije kao discipline u korpusu političkih nauka, već za društvene nauke uopšte. Bez razumevanja društvenog portreta SAD teško je ispravno zaključivati o nacionalnoj i spoljnoj politici ove zemlje. Upravo nakon čitanja Vajthedove i Perijeve knjige mnogi će shvatiti (među kojima sam i sam) koliko uskogrudih shvatanja i stereotipa o odnosu religije i nacionalizma u SAD se ukorenilo u nauci. Ako je tako u nauci, onda ne treba da nas čudi ista slika u društvenom kontekstu. Stoga, društveni doprinos ove knjige je pružena prilika za *razumevanje* shvatanja i postupaka drugih, što je prvi korak do prihvatanja ili, makar, do neodbacivanja. U duboko podeljenim društvima kao što je američko, naučne studije koje analiziraju poprečni presek društva ne bi trebalo da njime zacementiraju postojeće podele. Smatram da su Vajthed i Peri uspešno izbegli takvu zamku, ali i zamku fatalističkog zagovaranja promena, čime bi se i sami svrstali na jednu od četiri strane. Umesto toga, oni su ukazali na novu nacionalnu temu, koja je, potencijalno, nacionalna tema i drugih država i nacija. Zato knjigu završavaju ključnom rečenicom: „Bez obzira na to da li neko nedvosmisleno odbacuje ili revnosno zagovara hrišćanski nacionalizam, svi se mi borimo sa svojim nasleđem navodno ‘hrišćanske nacije’“ (Whitehead and Perry 2020, 164).

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¹ Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, Research Fellow,
ivona@diplomacy.bg.ac.rs,
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The paper presents findings of a study developed as a part of the research project “Serbia in contemporary international relations: strategic development directions and strengthening the position of Serbia in international integrative processes – foreign-political, international economical, legal and security aspects“ (No. 179029) for the period 2011–2015, realized by the Institute of International Politics and Economics, and financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

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Jabri, Vivienne. 2007. *War and the Transformation of Global Politics*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Tadjbakhsh, Shahrbanou, and Anuradha Chenoy. 2007. *Human Security: Concepts and Implications*, 2nd ed. Oxon: Routledge.

Vasquez, John A., Sanford Jaffe, James Turner Johnson, and Linda Stamato, eds. 1995. *Beyond Confrontation: Learning Conflict Resolution in the Post-Cold War Era*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bentham, Jeremy (1907) 2018. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Reprint, London: Clarendon Press. www.econlib.org/library/Bentham/bnthPML.html.

Dal Lago, Alessandro, and Salvatore Palidda, eds. 2010. *Conflict, Security and the Reshaping of Society: The Civilization of War*. Oxon & New York: Routledge.

Hayek, Friedrich A. 2011. *The Constitution of Liberty: The Definitive Edition*. Edited by Ronald Hamowy. Vol. 17 of *The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek*, edited by Bruce Caldwell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988–.

In-text citation:

(Jabri 2007, 59)

(Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007)

(Vasquez et al. 1995)

(Bentham [1907] 2018)

(Dal Lago and Palidda 2010)

(Hayek 2011, 258)

Journal article

Reference list entry:

Nordin, Astrid H.M. and Dan Öberg. 2015. "Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43 (2): 395–423.

Adams, Tracy, and Zohar Kampf. 2020. "'Solemn and just demands': Seeking apologies in the international arena". *Review of International Studies*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210520000261>.

In-text citation:

(Nordin and Öberg 2015, 401) (Tracy and Kampf 2020)

Article in edited volume

Reference list entry:

Herman, Michael. 2004. "Ethics and Intelligence After September 2001". In: *Understanding Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century: Journeys in Shadows*, edited by Len V. Scott and Peter D. Jackson, 567–581. London and New York: Routledge.

Reference list entry:

(Herman 2004)

Conference paper (if not published in conference proceedings)

Reference list entry:

Korać, Srđan. 2016. "Human Security and Global Ethics: Can International Organizations be Moral Agents?". Paper presented at the Third International Academic Conference on Human Security, Human Security Research Center (HSRC), Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, November 4–5.

Reference list entry:

(Korać 2016)

Book review

Reference list entry:

Firchow, Pamina. 2020. "Measuring Peace: Principles, Practices and Politics", Review of *Measuring Peace*, by Richard Caplan. *International Peacekeeping* 27 (2): 337–338.

Reference list entry:

(Firchow 2020, 337)

Legal and official documents***International treaties***

Reference list entry:

[PTBT] Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. 1963. Signed by US, UK, and USSR, August 5. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20480/volume-480-I-6964-English.pdf>.

[TFEU] Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. 2012. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 326, October 26. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.

[UN Charter] Charter of the United Nations, October 24, 1945. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/introductory-note/index.html>.

In-text citation:

(PTBT 1963, Article III, para. 3)

(TFEU 2012, Article 87) (UN Charter, Chapter X)

UN documents

Reference list entry:

[UNSC] UN Security Council. Resolution 2222, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, S/RES/2222. May 27, 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/sc/documents/resolutions/2015.shtml>.

[UNGA] UN General Assembly. Resolution 67/18, Education for Democracy, A/RES/67/18. November 28, 2012. <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/RES/67/18>.

In-text citation:

(UNSC Res. 2222)

(UNGA Res. 67/18)

National legislation

Reference list entry:

[Constitution RS] Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. 2006. *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 98/2006.

Homeland Security Act. 2002. United States of America, 107th Congress, 2nd Session (November 25). https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/hr_5005_enr.pdf.

In-text citation:

(Constitution RS 2006, Article 111) (Homeland Security Act 2002)

Official reports

Reference list entry:

[YILC] Yearbook of the International Law Commission. 2014. Vol. 2, Part Two. https://legal.un.org/docs/?path=../ilc/publications/yearbooks/english/ilc_2014_v2_p2.pdf&lang=ES.

[The 9-11 Commission] U.S. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. 2004. *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Government Publication Office.

US Congress. 1993. Nomination of R. James Woolsey to be Director of Central Intelligence: Hearing Before the Select Committee on Intelligence of the United States Senate. 104th Congress, 1st session, February 2–3, 1993. <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/103296.pdf>.

[USAFH] United States Air Force Headquarters. 2014. United States Air Force RPA Vector: Vision and Enabling Concepts: 2013–2038. www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/news/USAFRPAVectorVisionandEnablingConcepts2013-2038.pdf.

In-text citation:

(YILC 2014, 321)

(The 9-11 Commission 2004, 437) (US Congress 1993, 125)

(USAFH 2014)

EU legislation

Reference list entry:

Regulation (EU) No. 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 establishing the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur). *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 295, 6 November 2013. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1052&from=EN>.

[EC] European Commission. 2010. The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe, COM(2010) 673 final, Communication from the

Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, November 22. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0673&from=GA>.

Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC (Text with EEA relevance), *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 141, 5 June 2015. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015L0849&from=EN>.

In-text citation:

(Regulation [EU] No. 1052/2013, Article 11, para. 4)

(EC COM[2010] 673 final)

(Directive [EU] 2015/849)

Decisions of international courts and tribunals

Reference list entry:

[ICJ] International Court of Justice. Accordance with the International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo, Advisory Opinion, 22 July 2010, ICJ Reports. <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>. [ICJ Order 1999] *Legality of Use of Force (Yugoslavia v. United Kingdom)*. International Court of Justice, Order ICJ Rep. 1999 (June 2). <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/113/113-19990602-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>.

[ICTY Indictment IT-98-32-A] *Prosecutor v. Vasiljevic*, Case No. IT-98-32-A. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Indictment, 30 October 2000. <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/vasiljevic/ind/en/vasonly-ii000125e.pdf>.

Costa v Ente Nazionale per l'Energia Elettrica, Case 6/64, [1964] ECR 585. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A61964CJ0006>. [CJEU Judgment T-289/15] *Hamas v Council*, Case T-289/15. Court of Justice of the

European Union, Judgment, 6 March 2019, ECLI:EU:T:2019:138. <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/documents.jsf?language=EN&critereEcli=ECLI:EU:T:2019:138> [Opinion of AG Bobek] *Région de Bruxelles-Capitale v Commission*, Case C-352/19

P. Court of Justice of the European Union. Opinion of Advocate General Bobek delivered on 16 July 2020(1), ECLI:EU:C:2020:588. <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf;jsessionid=485A5D9AC129179D3D2F2.EC571A384CD?text=&docid=228708&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=req&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=5064004>.

In-text citation:

(ICJ Advisory Opinion 2010, 411)

(ICJ Order 1999, para. 3)

(ICTY Indictment IT-98-32-A)

(*Costa v ENEL*)

(CJEU Judgment T-289/15, para. 23)

(Opinion of AG Bobek C-352/19 P)

Newspapers and magazines

Reference list entry:

Gibbs, Samuel. 2017. "Elon Musk leads 116 experts calling for outright ban of killer robots", *The Guardian*, August 20.

Power, Matthew. 2013. "Confessions of a Drone Warrior", *GQ*, October 22. <https://www.gq.com/story/drone-uav-pilot-assassination>.

Economist. 2015. "Who will fight the next war?" October 24. <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2015/10/24/who-will-fight-the-next-war>.

In-text citation:

(Gibbs 2017, A10)

(Power 2013)

(*Economist* 2015)

Audio and visual media

Reference list entry:

Scott, Ridley. [1982] 2007. *Blade Runner: The Final Cut*. Directed by Ridley Scott. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Blue-Ray disc, 117 min.

Future Weapons. 2019. Waddell Media. Aired on August 7–16 on Discovery Science HD, 3 seasons, 30 episodes (43 min. each). <https://go.discovery.com/tv-shows/future-weapons/>.

Tech Legend. 2020. "Best Drones 2020 – Top 8 Best Drone with Cameras to Buy in 2020". Uploaded on February 7, 2020. YouTube video, 27:20 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6_4JU5Mspw.

In-text citation:

(Scott [1982] 2007)

(Future Weapons 2019)

(Tech Legend 2020)

Social media

Reference list entry:

National Library of Australia. 2020. "National Library of Australia's Facebook Page". Facebook, August 1, 2020. <https://www.facebook.com/National.Library.of.Australia/>.
Kruszelnicki, Karl (@DoctorKarl). 2017. "Dr Karl Twitter post." Twitter, February 19, 2017, 9:34 a.m. <https://twitter.com/DoctorKarl>.

Trapara, Vladimir. 2018. "Victory or nil". *Unwrapping the Essence* (blog). May 29, 2018. <https://unwrappingtheessence.weebly.com/blog/pobeda-ili-nista>.

In-text citation:

(National Library of Australia 2020) (Kruszelnicki 2017)

(Trapara 2018)

Doctoral dissertation

Reference list entry:

Rohrbach, Livia. 2020. *Beyond intractability? Territorial solutions to self-determination conflicts*. Doctoral dissertation. Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen.

Petrović, Miloš. 2018. *Nepotpuna integracija kao prepreka političkom razvoju Istočnog partnerstva Evropske unije*. Doktorska disertacija. Fakultet političkih nauka, Univerzitet u Beogradu.

In-text citation:

(Rohrbach 2020)

(Petrović 2018).

Internet source

If citing an undated online document, give an access date and use the year of access as year of publication.

Reference list entry:

Oxford Library. 2012. "Library Strategy". Oxford Library. Accessed 3 June 2012. <http://www.ol.org/library/strategy.html>.

Google Maps. 2015. "The British Library, London, UK". *Google*. Accessed February 5, 2015. <https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/The+British+Library/@51.529972,-0.127676,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x48761b3b70171395:0x18905479de0fdb25>.

IPE [Institute of International Politics and Economics]. n.d. "Mission". Accessed August 1, 2020. <https://www.diplomacy.bg.ac.rs/en/mission/>.

In-text citation:

(Oxford Library 2012)

(Google Maps 2015) (IPE n.d.)

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Reference list entry:

Guzzini, Stefano. 2013. *Power, realism, and constructivism*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

TABLES, FIGURES AND GEOGRAPHICAL MAPS

It is necessary to give their number and full title – e.g. *Table 1: Human Development Index among EU members* or *Figure 2: State-Building or Sovereignty Strategy* or *Map 1: Maritime jurisdiction and boundaries in the Arctic region*.

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Gregory, Derek. 2014a. "Drone Geographies". *Radical Philosophy* RP 183: 7–19.

Gregory, Derek. 2014b. "The Everywhere War". *The Geographical Journal* 177 (3): 238–250.

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The manuscripts submitted to the journal *International Problems/Međunarodni problemi* undergo a peer review process. The purpose of peer review is to assist the Editor-in-Chief in making decisions whether to accept or reject manuscript as well as the author

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Ivona LAĐEVAC¹

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Knjiga

Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

Vučić, Mihajlo. 2019. *Korektivna pravda pred Međunarodnim sudom*. Beograd: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu.

Tadjbakhsh, Shahrbanou, and Anuradha Chenoy. 2007. *Human Security: Concepts and Implications*, 2nd ed. Oxon: Routledge.

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Navođenje u tekstu:

(Vučić 2019, 59)

(Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy 2007)

(Vasquez et al. 1995) (Bentham [1907] 2018)

(Dal Lago and Palidda 2010)

(Hayek 2011, 258)

Članak u časopisu

Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

Nordin, Astrid H.M. and Dan Öberg. 2015. "Targeting the Ontology of War: From Clausewitz to Baudrillard". *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43 (2): 395–423.

Kostić, Marina T. 2019. „Isključiva priroda evropskih, evroatlantskih i evroazijskih integracija i previranja na evropskom postsovjetskom prostoru“. *Međunarodni problemi* LXXI (4): 498–526.

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Navođenje u tekstu:

(Nordin and Öberg 2015, 401)

(Kostić 2019, 500)

(Tracy and Kampf 2020)

Članak u zborniku radova

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Herman, Michael. 2004. "Ethics and Intelligence After September 2001". In: *Understanding Intelligence in the Twenty-First Century: Journeys in Shadows*, edited by Len V. Scott and Peter D. Jackson, 567–581. London and New York: Routledge.

Zakić, Katarina. 2019. „Politika ekonomskih integracija Kine u Evroaziji“. U: *Integracioni procesi u Evroaziji*, uredili dr Dušan Proroković i dr Ana Jović-Lazić, 13–44. Beograd: Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu.

Navođenje u tekstu:

(Herman 2004)

(Zakić 2019)

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Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

Korać, Srđan. 2016. "Human Security and Global Ethics: Can International Organizations be Moral Agents?". Paper presented at the Third International Academic Conference on Human Security, Human Security Research Center (HSRC), Faculty of Security Studies, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, November 4–5.

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(Korać 2016)

Prikaz knjige

Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

Firchow, Pamina. 2020. "Measuring Peace: Principles, Practices and Politics". Review of *Measuring Peace*, by Richard Caplan. *International Peacekeeping* 27 (2): 337–338.

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Navođenje u tekstu:

(Firchow 2020, 337)

(Stekić 2018, 455).

Pravni i zvanični dokumenti

Međunarodni ugovori

Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

[PTBT] Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water. 1963. Signed by US, UK, and USSR, August 5. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20480/volume-480-I-6964-English.pdf>.

[TFEU] Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. 2012. *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 326, October 26. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.

[UN Charter] Charter of the United Nations, October 24, 1945. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/introductory-note/index.html>.

Navođenje u tekstu:

(PTBT 1963, Article III, para. 3)

(TFEU 2012, Article 87)

(UN Charter, Chapter X)

Dokumenti Ujedinjenih nacija

Navođenje u Bibliografiji:

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(Petrović 2018).

Izvor sa interneta

U slučaju da navodite nedatirani dokument sa interneta, priložite datum kada ste pristupili tom elektronskom sadržaju i godinu pristupa računajte kao godinu objavljivanja tog izvora.

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Oxford Library. 2012. "Library Strategy". Oxford Library. Accessed 3 June 2012. <http://www.ol.org/library/strategy.html>.

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Lična komunikacija

Izvori iz područja lične komunikacije obuhvataju razgovore uživo, intervjuje, materijale sa predavanja, telefonske razgovore, klasičnu i elektronsku prepisku. Izvore ove vrste navedite samo u tekstu, bez stavljanja u Bibliografiju, zato što je najčešće reč o podacima u koje čitalac nema uvid ili se zbog nematerijalnog oblika ne mogu naknadno proveriti:

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U pismu koje je Univerzitet u Beogradu 13. maja 2017. godine uputio Grinovoj (Green 2012, 34) ...

Sekundarni izvor (posredno navođenje izvora)

Kada želite da navedete izvor koji ste pročitali u nekom drugom izvoru, uvek treba da ukažete na oba izvora – originalni i posredni:

Navođenje u tekstu:

U knjizi *Moć*, objavljenoj 1975. godine, Luman shvatanje moći pretežno zasniva na literaturi o društvenoj razmeni i moći zajednice (navedeno prema Guzzini 2013, 79).

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TABELE, DIJAGRAMI I GEOGRAFSKE KARTE

Grafičke priloge (tabele, dijagrame, geografske karte, grafikone i sl.) numerišete i dajete im pun naslov:

Tabela 1: Indeks ljudskog razvoja u zemljama članicama EU

Dijagram 2: Strane direktne investicije kineskih kompanija u Africi (u milionima dolara)

Karta 1: Nacionalne pomorske jurisdikcije i granice na Arktiku

Ukoliko je grafički prilog preuzet od nekog drugog autora ili iz nekog dokumenta neophodno je ne samo navesti izvor, već i dobiti pisanu saglasnost za objavljivanje priloga pre podnošenja rukopisa na razmatranje Uredništvu časopisa *Međunarodni problemi*. Dobijena saglasnost se dostavlja uz rukopis.

BIBLIOGRAFIJA

Na kraju članka, a pre apstrakta na engleskom jeziku, prilažete spisak korišćenih izvora naslovljen **Bibliografija**, koji sme da sadrži samo reference koje ste koristili u tekstu.

Bibliografske jedinice navodite prema prethodno predstavljanim pravilima za navođenje izvora, a ređate ih prema abecednom redosledu.

Ako imate dva ili više radova istog autora objavljenih iste godine, onda uz godinu dodajte slova a, b, c, itd. i ređajte bibliografske jedinice po abecednom redosledu prvog slova naslova rada:

Gregory, Derek. 2014a. "Drone Geographies". *Radical Philosophy* RP 183: 7–19. Gregory, Derek. 2014b. "The Everywhere War". *The Geographical Journal* 177 (3): 238–250.

Rukopisi koji nisu usaglašeni sa navedenim smernicama neće biti uzeti u postupak recenziranja.

Uređivački odbor

UREĐIVAČKA POLITIKA

Međunarodni problemi/International Problems je najstariji naučni časopis u Srbiji i na Balkanu posvećen međunarodnim odnosima. Prvi broj je objavljen u aprilu 1949. godine, samo godinu dana nakon početka rada njegovog izdavača – Instituta za međunarodnu politiku i privredu iz Beograda. Objavljuje se na kvartalnoj bazi i kategorisan je kod resornog ministarstva kao nacionalni časopis međunarodnog značaja (M24).

Međunarodni problemi objavljuju rezultate naučnih istraživanja iz oblasti međunarodnih odnosa, međunarodne bezbednosti, međunarodnog prava i studija globalizacije. *Međunarodni problemi* objavljuju originalne i pregledne naučne radove i prikaze knjiga, na srpskom ili engleskom jeziku, koji prethodno nisu nigde objavljeni niti se nalaze u postupku razmatranja za objavljivanje u nekoj drugoj publikaciji. *Međunarodni problemi* ne objavljuju stručne radove, analitičke komentare niti predloge javnih politika, pa Vas najljubaznije molimo da ne šalžete te vrste članaka.

Uređivački odbor daje prednost analizi kontroverznih pitanja savremene teorije i prakse međunarodnih odnosa uz poštovanje bogatstva disciplinarnih i sazajnih perspektiva. Bez zastupanja konkretnog političkog i teorijsko-metodološkog stanovišta, a sa namerom da podstakne obuhvatniji naučni dijalog o ubrzanim promenama u svetskoj politici u 21. veku, Uređivački odbor smatra da su prioritetne sledeće tematske celine:

- Preobražaj prirode svetske politike u ranom 21. veku;
- Fenomenologija i praksa transnacionalnosti i kosmopolitizma;
- Problemi institucionalizacije međunarodnih odnosa;
- Različita teorijska tumačenja aktuelnih globalnih procesa;
- Kontroverzna pitanja upotrebe spoljnopolitičkih instrumenata vodećih globalnih aktera;
- Uticaj naprednih tehnologija Četvrtre industrijske revolucije na oblikovanje međunarodnih odnosa u 21. veku;
- Civilizacija, religija i identitet u kontekstu svetske politike i globalizacije;
- Konceptualni i metodološki iskoraci izvan tradicionalnog epistemološkog okvira naučne discipline međunarodnih odnosa.

OBAVEZE UREDNIKA, UREĐIVAČKOG ODBORA I IZDAVAČKOG ODBORA

Izdavački savet je savetodavno telo koje aktivno doprinosi razvoju časopisa *Međunarodni problemi/International Problems*. Zadaci i dužnosti članova Saveta su: podrška razvoju časopisa, promocija časopisa, podsticanje stručnjaka u naučnom istraživanju političkih, bezbednosnih i pravnih aspekata međunarodnih odnosa da se uključe u rad časopisa kao autori i/ili recenzenti, pisanje uvodnika, recenzija i komentara o radovima.

Članovi Uređivačkog odbora imaju zadatak da u akademskoj javnosti deluju kao svojevrsni ambasadori časopisa, da pruže doprinos u vidu preporučivanja kvalitetnih autora i rukopisa, podsticanja potencijalnih autora da podnose rukopise za objavljivanje u *Međunarodnim problemima*, te da recenziraju rukopise i pripremaju uvodnike i uredničke komentare.

Glavni i odgovorni urednik odgovara za objavljeni sadržaj i treba da teži stalnom unapređenju časopisa uopšte i procesa osiguranja kvaliteta objavljenog sadržaja, kao i zaštiti slobode izražavanja, integriteta i standarda naučnoistraživačkog rada od upliva političkih, finansijskih i drugih interesa. Glavni i odgovorni urednik treba uvek da objavi ispravku, objašnjenje, obaveštenje o povlačenju članka i izvinjenje.

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OBAVEZE AUTORA

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Prilikom slanja rada, autor(i) šalju potpisanu Izjavu autora, čiji je sadržaj dostupan ovde: [https://internationalproblems.rs/wp-content/uploads/doc/izjava-autora-\(mp-email\)-02.pdf](https://internationalproblems.rs/wp-content/uploads/doc/izjava-autora-(mp-email)-02.pdf)

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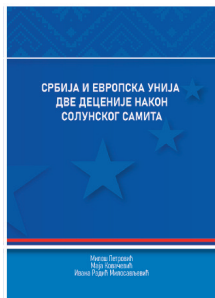


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For its contribution to education and science, the Institute of International Politics and Economics is awarded with the most prestigious social recognition of the Republic of Serbia – the St. Sava Award.



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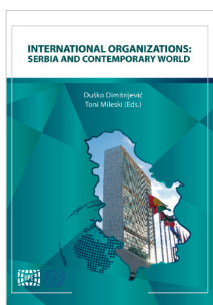
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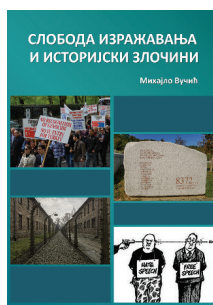
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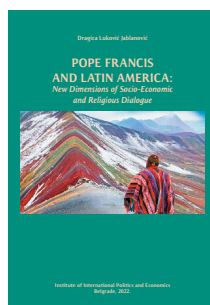
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