

**ETUDES HELLENIQUES**

**HELLENIC STUDIES**

**L'Europe du Sud-Est  
à la croisée des chemins**

**Southeastern Europe  
at the Crossroads**

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# L'Europe du Sud-Est à la croisée des chemins

Ioannis Armakolas\*

En octobre 2010 la Serbie a marqué le 10e anniversaire de la chute de Milosevic.<sup>1</sup> Prenant la parole à Belgrade lors d'une manifestation organisée à cette occasion, le Président Boris Tadić a souligné les réalisations de la Serbie, jadis un pays paria dans la région, notamment les progrès réalisés dans son processus d'adhésion à l'Union européenne (UE).<sup>2</sup> Mais c'était plus l'indifférence et l'absence de tout entrain à la fête par le grand public qui ont donné le ton de cet anniversaire. L'indifférence envers l'anniversaire de cet important événement reflète d'une certaine façon la situation qui prévaut en Europe post-communiste du Sud-Est. En Serbie, comme dans le reste de la région, prédominent la déception et le pessimisme quant à l'avenir. Bien que les élites et les gens ne sont pas bien sûr nostalgiques des années traumatisantes de 1990, les difficultés actuelles des Balkans occidentaux et les défis à venir ne permettent pas de points de vue trop optimistes non plus.<sup>3</sup>

Certes, les Balkans occidentaux ont fait des progrès ces dernières années. En Serbie, après l'événement dramatique de la chute de Milosevic, des progrès ont été accomplis afin de démanteler son régime et procéder à la démocratisation et au développement du pays. Mais il y eu des obstacles et des pas en arrière, comme l'assassinat du Premier ministre réformiste Zoran Djindjic en mars 2003. La région a connu certains événements potentiellement déstabilisateurs, comme l'arrestation et le transfert au Tribunal pénal international pour l'ex-Yougoslavie (TPIY) de Slobodan Milosevic et Radovan Karadzic, l'assassinat de Zoran Djindjic, ou la déclaration d'indépendance du Kosovo, qui a provoqué peu ou pas incidents violents. La question des droits de l'homme et des minorités de la région s'est sensiblement améliorée. Des programmes de retour vastes et relativement efficaces ont été mis en œuvre dans les pays de

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l'ex-Yougoslavie. La coopération des pays des Balkans occidentaux avec le TPIY est généralement satisfaisante, à l'exception notable du cas des deux derniers fugitifs, Ratko Mladić et Goran Hadžić. Les cycles électoraux se poursuivent dans tous les pays des Balkans occidentaux avec très peu de difficultés. La vie partisane est dynamique et la concurrence politique féroce crée souvent des problèmes d'instabilité politique, comme ce fut récemment le cas en Albanie et en Bosnie. Mais en fait ceux-ci sont rarement hors d'un complet contrôle.<sup>4</sup> En règle générale, des progrès ont été accomplis s'agissant des problèmes graves dans tous les domaines auxquels la région a été confrontée dans le passé.

Surtout, les pays de la région ont réalisé d'importants progrès en vue de leur intégration dans des organisations occidentales. L'Albanie et la Croatie ont adhéré à l'OTAN en 2009, quelques années après la Slovénie. La Roumanie et la Bulgarie font partie à la fois de l'Union européenne et de l'OTAN. La Croatie - c'est certain- sera bientôt le premier pays des Balkans occidentaux à adhérer à l'UE et l'ancienne République yougoslave de Macédoine (ARYM) est officiellement un pays candidat. Les autres pays des Balkans occidentaux, actuellement «candidats potentiels», aspirent à atteindre le même statut dans un avenir pas trop lointain.<sup>5</sup> Les espoirs des Balkans occidentaux sont fondés sur la vision et une stratégie européenne d'intégrer la région dans l'UE; une vision qui a été codifiée dans l'Agenda de Thessalonique pour les Balkans occidentaux de juin 2003.<sup>6</sup>

Mais des défis importants demeurent. Parmi les principaux défis il y a certainement des problèmes politiques persistants et la question des minorités dans la région, qui seront analysés brièvement ci-dessous. Mais il serait trompeur d'isoler les questions politiques et celles des minorités comme étant les seuls ou même les principaux défis à relever. Ces dernières années, les organisations internationales et groupes de réflexion ont mis en lumière l'omniprésence et la persistance des problèmes hérités de la transition turbulente vers la démocratie et l'économie de marché en Europe du Sud-Est d'aujourd'hui. Par exemple, un rapport récent sur la politique de menaces non conventionnelles du *Groupe de travail États Unis-Grèce: Transformer les Balkans* a identifié une série de problèmes importants qui entravent les perspectives de l'intégration européenne et euro atlantique de la région.<sup>7</sup> La lutte contre les menaces comme le crime organisé et la corruption est devenue une priorité dans la stratégie de l'Occident pour réformer les Balkans et les intégrer dans les institutions occidentales. Cette stratégie a été couplée avec d'importants investissements en capital politique et en financement canalisé vers le soutien

économique et des programmes d'orientation technique, ainsi que dans la réalisation des initiatives régionales et bilatérales. Mais le rapport constate que la récupération des maux des deux dernières décennies «a été lente et les initiatives ont donné des résultats variables... tandis que l'engagement politique a pris du retard dans de nombreux pays».<sup>8</sup> On peut signaler dans les zones problématiques des menaces latentes comme la corruption, l'héritage des services de sécurité communistes, la traite des êtres humains, le trafic de drogues, le commerce illicite de biens volés et juridiques, le trafic d'armes, l'immigration clandestine, le radicalisme islamiste, et la guerre du cyber -espace. Dans tous ces domaines, malgré les progrès, les principaux problèmes et défis pour l'avenir demeurent. La communauté internationale peut aider les pays des Balkans occidentaux dans la lutte contre ces menaces non conventionnelles en s'appuyant sur le succès du processus d'intégration de l'UE dans la région et des initiatives régionales de coopération interétatique dans le domaine.<sup>9</sup>

Il y a aussi d'importants défis s'agissant des questions relatives à la sécurité humaine, qui ont la particularité d'avoir des répercussions directes sur la vie des gens ordinaires bien plus que toute autre question de haute politique ou de sécurité traditionnelle. Par exemple, le déplacement de milliers de personnes et leur retour dans leurs anciens foyers sont un héritage durable des conflits des années 1990. Les problèmes qui doivent être abordés par les décideurs politiques nationaux et la communauté internationale continuent à exister malgré les efforts énergiques et l'énorme investissement en capital politique et en argent réalisés dans le passé. D'autres problèmes sont la discrimination et le non respect des droits humains qui persistent dans certaines régions du sud-est de l'Europe malgré les progrès que les pays de la région ont fait depuis les années 1990. Surtout, la plupart des efforts dans le passé ont été dirigés vers les questions ethniques et celles des minorités qui menaçaient la stabilité des Etats, la région ou la protection des groupes vulnérables touchés par les conflits, tels que les réfugiés et les personnes déplacées, les rapatriés et autres. Mais il est récemment devenu plus évident qu'une plus grande attention doit être accordée aux groupes qui ont été victimes de discrimination, mais n'ont pas été généralement jugés prioritaires par les élites nationales et la communauté internationale. Par exemple, le problème de la discrimination fondée sur l'orientation sexuelle et l'identité de genre est devenue plus évidente ces dernières années en raison de la violence anti-gay à Belgrade et à Sarajevo.<sup>10</sup> De même, l'extrême pauvreté et la discrimination des lois et des pratiques auxquelles font face les Roms dans les Balkans occidentaux constituent un autre domaine dans lequel plus de ressources et d'énergie doivent être investis.

Les pays des Balkans occidentaux sont également à la traîne dans la lutte relative aux problèmes dans les domaines de la sécurité humaine, comme la réduction de la pauvreté, la sécurité sanitaire et la sécurité environnementale.<sup>11</sup>

Enfin, la croissance de la région, tous les domaines de la politique publique ainsi que la stabilité générale de la région des Balkans occidentaux, peuvent être potentiellement affectés par une combinaison de la récession mondiale et les effets de contagion de la crise grecque. Certaines analyses sur les effets de la crise existent.<sup>12</sup> Mais une analyse plus approfondie sera nécessaire sur les effets de la crise grecque, qui n'a commencé pour de bon que cette année. Les effets de cette crise seront probablement ressentis beaucoup plus dans les pays des Balkans occidentaux qui sont liés à l'économie grecque par les travailleurs permanents et saisonniers, le recours à des envois de fonds, le commerce et les investissements grecs.<sup>13</sup>

Dans tous ces problèmes, en plus des questions politiques qui seront traitées ci-dessous, il y a le rôle de l'Union européenne et la perspective euro-atlantique des nations des Balkans occidentaux, qui demeurent indispensables. L'Union européenne de façon systématique a utilisé l'outil de la conditionnalité pour la promotion de l'agenda des réformes et l'adoption de *l'acquis communautaire*.<sup>14</sup> Tous les États des Balkans occidentaux et leurs élites, parfois de façon heureuse, parfois à contrecœur, ont adopté de nombreuses réformes essentielles. En conséquence, ont été mis en œuvre d'importants changements nécessaires pour annuler l'influence catastrophique des années 1990 et aider les régimes politiques des Balkans à créer des États modernes. Et les États des Balkans occidentaux d'une manière ou d'une autre ont progressé sur le chemin de l'adhésion à l'UE. Mais la fatigue de l'élargissement, qui est manifeste chez les élites et les sociétés européennes, menace de décevoir ce processus. Pendant des années, les principaux obstacles à la réalisation des «promesses de Thessalonique» ont été les grands problèmes auxquels faisaient face les États des Balkans, les politiques des élites nationales, et parfois l'attitude des sociétés balkaniques. Nous entrons maintenant dans une phase où la réticence des Européens eux-mêmes peuvent devenir un obstacle aussi difficile à surmonter que les problèmes des Balkans. Une grande partie de la désillusion ci-dessus mentionnée de la région est liée à des difficultés auxquelles se heurte le rêve d'adhésion européenne. Celui-ci est également dépendant des difficultés et de la lenteur des progrès dans la sécurisation des avantages tangibles à mi-chemin, comme le régime de libéralisation des visas.<sup>15</sup>

Enfin, le tableau des perspectives et des défis pour la stabilisation de la région ne peut pas être complet sans mentionner le rôle de l'Organisation du Traité de

l'Atlantique Nord (OTAN). L'élargissement de l'OTAN dans les Balkans occidentaux devrait être considéré comme complémentaire à l'adhésion à l'UE dans le cadre de la stratégie plus large de l'Occident pour la région. Le -relativement plus facile- processus d'adhésion de l'OTAN encourage les élites et les sociétés des Balkans à poursuivre la marche des réformes. Celui-ci constitue une étape importante à mi-chemin pour le long processus d'intégration dans les institutions occidentales. En outre, en étant une alliance défensive, l'OTAN peut fournir le confort de la sécurité qui fait défaut dans plusieurs pays des Balkans occidentaux. Pour cette raison, certains analystes estiment que l'élargissement accéléré de l'OTAN peut devenir le remède à court terme à l'instabilité et à la crise politique dans certains des pays troublés des Balkans aussi longtemps que l'adhésion de l'UE reste un rêve lointain.<sup>16</sup> Néanmoins, l'élargissement de l'OTAN n'est pas sans poser des problèmes et des défis sérieux. Le soutien des élites et du public à l'adhésion de l'OTAN est, en général, inférieur à celui à l'élargissement de l'UE. Par exemple, au Monténégro les élites dirigeantes sont favorables à l'adhésion, mais la majorité de la population s'oppose à celle-ci. En Bosnie, la plupart des Serbes sont contre l'intégration à l'UE, mais la majorité des Croates et des Bosniaques y sont favorables. La même chose s'applique aux élites, avec les hommes politiques serbes de Bosnie officiellement favorisant l'adhésion à l'OTAN, mais ayant, en réalité, une attitude plus ambivalente. Puis il y a le problème épineux du passé et du délicat présent des relations entre l'OTAN et la Serbie. D'autres problèmes comprennent le sort de la défense, d'autres réformes nécessaires ainsi que le débat quant à savoir si celles-ci devraient être intangibles ou si l'Alliance aurait avantage à présenter plus de souplesse que l'UE en la matière. En outre il y a le danger d'introduire des nouvelles disputes au sein de l'Alliance en acceptant des pays qui sont en grande partie des consommateurs nets plutôt que des fournisseurs nets de la sécurité. Tous ces problèmes dessinent un contexte complexe sur la question de l'élargissement de l'OTAN dans les Balkans occidentaux à une période de grandes transformations de l'Alliance elle-même.<sup>17</sup>

Avant de présenter brièvement les articles de ce numéro spécial, il est nécessaire de se concentrer sur quelques-uns des défis politiques, qui non seulement restent graves, mais même montrent des signes d'une aggravation de plus en plus grande. La question du Kosovo et de la Bosnie demeure à un niveau élevé sur l'agenda international des problèmes des Balkans. Mais, comme nous le verrons, d'autres questions touchant aux relations inter-ethniques et aux rivalités politiques menacent de devenir de nouveaux points chauds dans les Balkans.

## Kosovo

Pour le différend de longue date du Kosovo, le succès de Lady Catherine Ashton, le chef de la politique étrangère de l'UE, par la conclusion d'un accord pour le début des négociations entre Belgrade et Pristina a été une bonne nouvelle.<sup>18</sup> Toutefois, on ne peut pas être trop optimiste sur le problème du statut du Kosovo qui semble être dans une impasse. Plus de deux ans et demi depuis la proclamation de son indépendance, les Albanais du Kosovo commencent à perdre leur patience et leur optimisme de célébration et à remettre en question la stratégie de leurs dirigeants. La pulsion que la cause du Kosovo était supposée recevoir par la décision favorable de la Cour internationale de justice (CIJ) semble avoir perdu d'intensité très rapidement. Seuls deux États ont reconnu le Kosovo depuis la décision de la CIJ en Juillet 2010.<sup>19</sup> Le processus de reconnaissance est effectivement au point mort, avec le nombre actuel des Etats ayant reconnu le Kosovo s'élevant à 71 et seulement 9 d'entre eux au cours des 12 derniers mois. La plupart des Etats qui ont reconnu le Kosovo sont des pays occidentaux et ils comprennent la majorité des pays les plus puissants et prospères du monde. Mais cela n'est qu'une partie de l'histoire. La diplomatie naissante du Kosovo n'a pas réussi à convaincre les États que ce pays était moins sensible à l'influence occidentale. La campagne pour l'indépendance du Kosovo soutenue par l'Occident n'a pas réussi à convaincre les puissances mondiales émergentes du *BRIC*: Brésil, Russie, Inde et Chine. Le taux de reconnaissance est également très faible parmi les pays musulmans, le monde arabe ainsi que dans les pays du Sud. Les pays non-occidentaux semblent naturellement perturbés par l'indépendance du Kosovo et la décision de la CIJ qui a été bien accueillie par des mouvements sécessionnistes.<sup>20</sup> En général, un rapide coup d'oeil à la liste des Etats qui ont reconnu le Kosovo prouve aisément que l'indépendance du Kosovo est un projet presque entièrement pris en charge par les pays occidentaux, mais avec peu d'attrait au-delà. À l'heure actuelle, le Kosovo restera probablement pendant plusieurs années dans une «zone crépusculaire» de statut incertain.

En particulier, le fait important est que l'UE n'a pas une position unie sur la question.<sup>21</sup> Dans l'UE, 22 des 27 Etats ont reconnu le Kosovo. Les autres pays - l'Espagne, la Grèce, la Roumanie, la Slovaquie et Chypre - ne montrent aucun signe de se rapprocher d'une décision de reconnaissance, malgré les pressions exercées au sein de l'UE. Quatre de ces cinq Etats membres de l'UE se sont opposés à l'indépendance du Kosovo avec la participation active dans la procédure judiciaire à la CIJ.<sup>22</sup> L'absence d'unité de l'UE sur la question complique la politique européenne au Kosovo. Mais plus importantes encore

sont les conséquences pour la stratégie occidentale dans la région. Cette stratégie pour la stabilisation et la normalisation des Balkans occidentaux a entraîné l'indépendance du Kosovo comme le moins problématique d'une série de scénarios difficiles. Savoir si la reconnaissance a été la bonne décision ou non, est un long débat qui ne peut pas être développé ici.<sup>23</sup> Mais puisque cette stratégie a été suivie, il est impossible de revenir à l'état antérieur à l'indépendance. Le problème du statut devra suivre son propre processus lent. Mais, sans un règlement de la question du statut du Kosovo, il est difficile de concevoir comment l'ensemble de la région pourra aller de l'avant.<sup>24</sup>

Cependant, ceux qui sont opposés à la reconnaissance du Kosovo ont de solides arguments qu'il n'est pas possible d'ignorer. Ceux-ci touchent non seulement les questions juridiques et géopolitiques soulevées par la déclaration d'indépendance, mais aussi la gouvernance anémique interne au Kosovo. Les institutions du Kosovo restent particulièrement faibles, la protection des droits de l'homme et des minorités est problématique, et les liens entre la politique et les affaires informelles, voir louches, demeurent solides. Pour tous ces problèmes les élites du Kosovo, avec l'aide de la communauté internationale, doivent élaborer des politiques qui permettront de les surmonter avec une certaine créativité. Pour les tâches difficiles, elles doivent trouver des solutions qui sauront rassurer et apaiser les craintes de la minorité serbe sans s'aliéner les segments les plus impatients de la majorité albanaise du Kosovo. Dans le même temps leur effort doit convaincre les pays qui leur refusent la reconnaissance qu'ils la méritent. Ce doit être une grande tâche pour toute élite politique et encore plus pour un leadership politique immature comme celui du Kosovo. Comme on peut s'y attendre, les politiques kosovars font souvent plutôt obstacle à la solution des problèmes et à la création d'une image positive à l'étranger.<sup>25</sup>

Inutile de dire, que le problème des Serbes du Kosovo demeure une énigme politique clé. Le « pari » de la diplomatie serbe d'aller devant la CIJ, n'a pas donné des résultats positifs mais l'effet secondaire a été de soulever les enjeux du problème de Kosovo dans la société serbe et par conséquent la question de poches serbes au Kosovo. Le choix serbe de la stratégie de lutte contre l'indépendance du Kosovo semblait à l'origine sage. Les élites serbes ont choisi, sous la direction du Président Boris Tadić de faire face à l'indépendance des Kosovars uniquement par des moyens diplomatiques. Mais le gouvernement serbe a été victime de sa propre stratégie d'un succès partiel. Il a manœuvré, grâce à une diplomatie de navette, pour éviter les reconnaissances et de renvoyer le problème à la CIJ. En outre, le ministre des Affaires étrangères serbe, Vuk

Jeremic et divers responsables serbes ont porté la question du Kosovo à un tel point qu'il était devenu difficile pour la Serbie de reculer. En dépit de la volte-face que certains pensent que le président Tadić pourrait faire sous la pression de la diplomatie européenne, il est hautement improbable qu'un gouvernement serbe puisse, à court terme, admettre sa défaite et choisisse de renoncer à la cause du Kosovo en échange d'une perspective européenne encore mal définie.

La situation au Kosovo est assez délicate. Il est clair que le problème des Serbes du Kosovo n'a jamais vraiment été un problème unidimensionnel. Trois problèmes liés mais bien distincts peuvent être identifiés: la présence serbe au nord du fleuve Ibar (nord du Kosovo), la présence serbe au sud, et le patrimoine religieux et culturel serbe. Pour les Serbes dans le sud les choses sont plus simples car il est plus ou moins apparent à tous les joueurs qu'ils ne peuvent pas maintenir les liens privilégiés avec la Serbie trop longtemps. De toute évidence, la principale raison de cette situation est le manque de continuité géographique avec le continent serbe, ce qui rend ces enclaves dépendantes des structures du nouvel État. On a assisté à la réalisation progressive de ce fait et des progrès dans le processus de ré-intégration de ces domaines au Kosovo. La représentation politique des Serbes de ces régions est progressivement de plus en plus confiante dans la lutte pour leurs droits au sein du nouvel Etat. La coopération avec la Mission au Kosovo de l'Union européenne (EULEX) pour l'application de la règle de droit est en progression. En outre, la société civile a joué un rôle actif dans l'étude du problème de la division et dans l'élaboration de solutions par les programmes de réinsertion.<sup>26</sup> Dans une certaine mesure également la situation de sécurité pour les non-Albanais s'est améliorée, ce qui, selon l'explication officielle de la communauté internationale, a permis une réduction du nombre des troupes de la KFOR. Ce qui manque clairement est toutefois un plus vif intérêt pour l'élaboration des politiques de la part des autorités de Pristina. Celles-ci semblent souvent plus préoccupées par la reconnaissance formelle de leur souveraineté sur l'ensemble de la province plutôt que de créer un environnement sûr pour la réintégration de leur société divisée.<sup>27</sup> Par conséquent, demeurent toujours les problèmes de la sécurité et le manque de moyens nécessaires à la réinsertion près de trois ans après la déclaration formelle d'indépendance et plus d'une décennie depuis le départ de l'armée serbe. Une incapacité ou un refus similaire pour créer un environnement plus sûr pour une ré-intégration harmonieuse se manifeste à l'égard du patrimoine serbe. Les élites albanaises se comportent souvent d'une manière qui révèle un manque de tolérance et de compréhension à l'égard du problème complexe du patrimoine serbe.

Comme on pouvait le prévoir, encore plus complexe est le problème du nord où des éléments radicaux de la population serbe locale, sont actifs. Cette zone fonctionne *de facto* comme une extension du territoire serbe et la population serbe locale continue à participer pleinement aux structures institutionnelles de la Serbie. Le gouvernement de Pristina n'a aucun contrôle efficace sur cette zone, alors même que la présence des institutions de la communauté internationale est à peine tolérée par les structures locales serbes. Par exemple, EULEX n'est que progressivement et non sans résistance en train d'y établir sa présence et son rôle. La situation dans le nord continue d'être perçue par les Albanais et les Serbes comme un jeu à somme nulle: ce que gagne une partie ou parvient à conserver est considéré par l'autre partie comme une perte inacceptable. La communauté internationale n'a pas non plus une stratégie claire. Il y a quelques mois des espoirs avaient été placés dans le plan mal conçu, «Stratégie pour le Nord». Après la forte résistance rencontrée par les Serbes locaux, ce plan semble être maintenant dans les limbes. Ainsi, la situation est susceptible de rester dans une impasse sans signes évidents d'amélioration, mais aussi sans une grave escalade des tensions. Une telle escalade est toutefois concevable si l'EULEX tente d'étendre de force, de facto, la portée des institutions de l'Etat du Kosovo au nord, ou si des éléments albanais plus radicaux, frustrés par l'impasse, gagnent du terrain de façon significative dans cette partie du pays.

Tous ces défis du Kosovo se compliquent par le manque de leadership inspiré et par un système politique immature qui ne semble pas capable de diriger en toute confiance le nouvel Etat. La dernière des bourdes politiques qui compliquent les progrès au Kosovo est la récente crise politique à Pristina. Tout a commencé lorsque la Cour constitutionnelle du Kosovo a jugé que le président Fatmir Sejdiu a violé la Constitution en tenant à la fois la présidence du pays et celle de son parti, la Ligue démocratique du Kosovo (LDK).<sup>28</sup> Sejdiu, un professeur de droit, s'est ainsi trouvé dans la fâcheuse position de violer, en tant que président, la première Constitution après la déclaration d'indépendance du pays; ce qui n'est sûrement pas un honneur auquel on peut aspirer. L'affaire a été portée devant les tribunaux par des membres du Parlement dirigé par les politiciens du Parti démocrate du Kosovo (PDK), partenaire de la coalition gouvernementale de LDK. Certes, le mouvement des députés avait un lien avec les élections à venir, qui mit face à face la LDK et le PDK, les deux plus grands partis du pays. Sejdiu a décidé de relever le défi en ne démissionnant pas de son poste de parti, mais en démissionnant de la présidence. La démission était susceptible de causer des élections anticipées



devant se tenir en février 2011. Les raisons du choix de la présidence du parti ont à voir avec la bataille en cours pour le contrôle de la LDK, une bataille que Sejdiu peut perdre en raison du raffermissement de l'opposition interne de Bujar Bukoshi. Mais afin d'assurer sa réélection à la présidence de la LDK Sejdiu s'est fixé un nouveau «pari» politique. Il a ainsi décidé que la LDK devait se retirer du gouvernement, forçant ainsi le pays à des élections anticipées à la suite du compromis trouvé par Ashton pour les négociations avec Belgrade. En conséquence, les négociations sont maintenant susceptibles d'être reportées, retardant encore le processus de reconnaissance et en prolongeant l'agonie de la population kosovare.

De manière générale, le Kosovo n'a malheureusement pas eu des politiciens aussi inspirés que le père de la nation, Ibrahim Rugova, décédé en 2006, ayant dirigé les Kosovars depuis le début de la crise yougoslave. La LDK, le parti de Rugova, a perdu sa prédominance politique au bénéfice du PDK, un rejeton de l'Armée de libération du Kosovo. Le PDK et son leader Hashim Thaci jouissent de la confiance de la communauté internationale, mais n'ont jamais donné de bons résultats soit pour inspirer les Albanais du Kosovo soit pour rassurer les Serbes du Kosovo. En outre, des responsables gouvernementaux du PDK sont les principales cibles des enquêtes de corruption de l' EULEX, prouvant que les liens entre politique et affaires illégitimes restent intacts. Les chances électorales et un attrait politique de l'Alliance pour l'avenir du Kosovo (AAK), un autre rejeton de l'Armée de libération du Kosovo, sont affaiblis par les troubles auxquelles fait face le chef du parti Ramush Haradinaj, à La Haye. Les petits partis qui dans le passé ont avancé des plateformes politiques plus libérales n'ont jamais réussi à devenir assez populaires pour assurer leur survie électorale. Il y a enfin, *Vetevendosje* (Auto-détermination), le seul nouveau venu potentiellement influent sur la scène politique. L'ancien mouvement de jeunesse nationaliste anti-systémique, dirigé par Albin Kurti joue avec les craintes ethniques et les angoisses de la population albanaise. En outre, *Vetevendosje* depuis sa création a orienté son message et son énergie en direction de la jeunesse du Kosovo pour s'assurer de son soutien. Cette dernière est, en pourcentage de la population totale, une des plus importantes en Europe. Dans le même temps, ce mouvement est confronté à d'énormes problèmes avec le chômage, les privations économiques, le manque de représentation politique, l'absence de perspectives, les difficultés à se déplacer vers l'Europe et avec d'autres questions.<sup>29</sup> En cas de succès de son entrée en politique, *Vetevendosje* probablement va compliquer davantage les politiques internes et les

compromis nécessaires qui doivent être atteints pour résoudre les problèmes du Kosovo.

## Bosnie

La Bosnie est bien sûr l'autre point chaud dans les Balkans. Ces dernières années, ce pays troublé des Balkans revient à l'ordre du jour sur le plan international de façon vengeresse. Auparavant on croyait que la Bosnie, sous la tutelle de la communauté internationale, a été placée sur le chemin de la stabilisation sécuritaire. Cela s'est avéré être seulement une impression née de l'optimisme apporté par le régime de la sur-active Paddy Ashdown comme Haut représentant de la communauté internationale. Sous Ashdown, le Bureau du Haut Représentant (OHR) a réalisé, soit en l'imposant soit par consentement, une série de réformes, en particulier dans le sens du renforcement de l'Etat au détriment des entités étatiques ethniques. Ashdown a aussi particulièrement visé les dirigeants nationalistes locaux.<sup>30</sup> En raison de la force et la confiance que la communauté internationale a utilisées pour imposer des changements, Ashdown a été critiquée pour ses méthodes non démocratiques et pour la production d'une culture de dépendance à l'égard des politiciens locaux à la communauté internationale.<sup>31</sup> Une chose est certaine: les réformes se sont avérées être d'une douteuse durabilité et la communauté internationale a prêté peu d'attention à la culture de consensus et de coopération qui devait être un élément irremplaçable allant de pair avec la conception de nouvelles institutions.<sup>32</sup> Il a fallu moins de deux ans, la mauvaise gestion de la réforme de la police, et un successeur inactif à Ashdown pour mener le système politique bosniaque à une impasse.<sup>33</sup> Après l'échec de la campagne de la réforme constitutionnelle d'avril 2006, et sous l'influence négative du Parti des sociaux-démocrates indépendants (SNSD), le principal parti de la Republika Srpska, et accessoirement de Haris Silajdzic, alors membre bosniaque de la présidence de l'Etat, la situation dans le pays a commencé à se détériorer.

Au cours des cinq dernières années, l'escalade de la crise a provoqué de nombreux développements inquiétants. L'élaboration des politiques est sérieusement retardée par les élites politiques irresponsables. Certaines réformes clés sont bloquées ou menacées de renversement par les Serbes de Bosnie. L'autorité de la communauté internationale est à jamais affaiblie. La communauté internationale a perdu plusieurs batailles politiques et dans le pays semble se développer un syndrome de «fatigue de la Bosnie», qui l'empêche de poursuivre des efforts énergiques. La virulente concurrence

politique a continué et a été intensifiée rendant les compromis difficiles et empoisonnant les relations inter-ethniques déjà épineuses. Le consensus des élites sur la question des crimes de guerre prit fin lorsque Milorad Dodik a choisi ce terrain comme un domaine clé pour augmenter sa popularité chez les Serbes de Bosnie. En même temps, les Serbes ont continué à rencontrer l'hostilité des autres groupes quand ils ont essayé de soulever le cas des crimes de guerre commis contre eux. Généralement, l'héritage de la guerre et la question de savoir comment lui faire face, sont restés le principal obstacle au renforcement de la confiance.

À cette situation complexe, il faut ajouter le défi posé par les Serbes de Bosnie. L'idée de Milorad Dodik pour un référendum a été considérée comme une simple astuce politique pour attirer les électeurs. Cette idée a également été perçue comme une pression sur les élites bosniaques d'abandonner leurs appels à l'abolition de la Republika Srpska. Même si parler de referendum a constitué un stratagème cela a brisé un tabou, étant donné que depuis plusieurs années la position officielle des élites serbes de Bosnie n'était pas contre la souveraineté et l'intégrité territoriale de la Bosnie. Bien que la question du référendum a été oubliée pendant un temps, celle-ci revint à l'ordre du jour quand le gouvernement de Republika Srpska s'est affronté avec le Haut Représentant, et surtout quand les élections se rapprochaient. Le discours séparatiste a également été renforcé après la déclaration de l'indépendance du Kosovo et, plus tard avec la décision de la CIJ.<sup>34</sup> Après l'intervention de celle-ci, M. Dodik a déclaré que "la décision de la CIJ peut nous servir de guide pour notre lutte continue sur notre statut et notre avenir".<sup>35</sup> Dans l'état actuel, les dirigeants de la Republika Srpska semblent prêts à poursuivre leur mouvement pour l'indépendance dès que le moment se présentera. La devise adoptée par SNSD dans sa campagne pré-électorale est révélatrice: «Republika Srpska à jamais et la Bosnie aussi longtemps que nous le devons».<sup>36</sup> Depuis que la communauté internationale a rejeté à l'avance une telle possibilité, le moment opportun peut être lointain. Mais ce n'est pas nécessairement de bonnes nouvelles pour la Bosnie car les leaders des Serbes de Bosnie peuvent continuer leur stratégie de créer des tensions, en exploitant les profondes divisions ethniques et en créant des blocages politiques.

Les aspects les plus forts de la crise politique actuelle en Bosnie ne sont que les plus récents et les plus visibles.<sup>37</sup> Le séparatisme de la Republika Srpska est réapparu après une période de plusieurs années au cours de laquelle la communauté internationale n'a pas réussi à soutenir efficacement le leadership précédent, relativement modéré des Serbes de Bosnie. La crise de stratégie pour

la communauté internationale résulte d'une transition bâclée vers un rôle moins interventionniste à la suite d'un changement de priorités internationales. Mais aussi bien le séparatisme de la Republika Srpska que l'incapacité de la communauté internationale à jouer un rôle plus efficace masquent les données les plus profondes et les plus durables de la crise. La Constitution de Dayton est l'un des éléments qui entravent le progrès durable en Bosnie. L'organisation complexe de l'État est tout simplement trop lourde pour un pays faible comme la Bosnie à supporter. En outre, le compromis de Dayton, en général privilégie les droits ethniques sur les droits civiques.<sup>38</sup> Pourtant, malgré ses lacunes, Dayton ne peut pas être blâmé pour tous les maux de la Bosnie. Les autres dimensions durables de la crise, qui sont souvent négligées, sont tout aussi problématiques. La concurrence féroce infra-ethnique et inter-ethnique, l'absence d'une culture de tolérance et de collaboration, l'échec des élites pour parvenir à un consensus, l'appel électoraliste des politiciens populistes, la structure du système politique, sont des facteurs clés qui composent la complexité et la durabilité de la crise bosniaque.<sup>39</sup> Avant tout les caractéristiques des problèmes politiques sont fondées sur certains aspects inquiétants de la Bosnie contemporaine: les divisions sociales et ethniques, le peu de confiance inter-ethnique, la faible légitimité de l'État bosniaque, et le manque de «vision commune» des Bosniaques pour l'avenir de l'Etat. Cette fondation sociale constitue la toile de fond de tous les échecs politiques du pays.<sup>40</sup>

L'outil qui a été à plusieurs reprises essayé pour résoudre les problèmes de la Bosnie résulte des réformes constitutionnelles étendues.<sup>41</sup> Dès le départ, le fort désir de réforme en profondeur du produit constitutionnel de l'«impopulaire» Dayton illustre ce que les analystes nationaux et internationaux et les décideurs considèrent comme le cœur du problème. Comme il a été à juste titre mis en évidence par un expert de Bosnie, dans le discours public «le mot clé `Dayton` est évocateur de tout ce qui ne semble pas être bien en Bosnie-Herzégovine: les institutions complexes, le chômage élevé, la dépendance de l'aide et de l'intervention extérieures, et la prédominance de la politique ethnique».<sup>42</sup> Ceci révèle également dans quelle mesure les débats sur la Bosnie ont été dominés par la logique de solutions institutionnelles et des garanties pour les problèmes du pays.<sup>43</sup> Trois vagues de réformes majeures ont eu lieu au cours des cinq dernières années. Deux d'entre elles étaient dirigées par la communauté internationale - le soi-disant package d'avril 2006 et le processus de Butmir - et un par les élites locales, connu sous le nom 'processus de Prud'. Le paquet d'avril 2006 est le plus connu de ces projets et a été celui qui a été le mieux

organisé et a été réalisé de la façon la plus proche. Ce paquet a été le produit de la diplomatie active américaine qui a réussi à obtenir le consensus de presque tous les principaux acteurs en Bosnie, y compris les Serbes.<sup>44</sup> Au Parlement, il a échoué par deux voix seulement, en raison de l'opposition du Parti de Haris Silajdzic pour la Bosnie-Herzégovine (SBiH) et d'un groupe hétéroclite de députés dissidents.

Après l'échec du paquet d'avril 2006, la situation dans le pays a commencé à se détériorer. Les attentes accrues ont été frustrées créant une atmosphère politique et sociale négative. La plupart des partis ont tenté de capitaliser la réforme constitutionnelle sur leurs positions ou tenté d'investir sur la montée des tensions et des discours nationalistes. L'élément clé parmi ces tentatives a été la construction d'un solide profil de défenseur des intérêts serbes par Milorad Dodik et son parti. L'affirmation de soi des Serbes de Bosnie a été mal gérée par la communauté internationale, qui a vu ses représentants perdre une série de batailles politiques contre Banja Luka. Un cercle vicieux de blocage de la réforme, des jeux politiques et un discours nationaliste en sont résultés. Tous les partis et groupes ont contribué à ce processus négatif, mais il est juste de dire que Dodik et le SNSD y ont joué un rôle déterminant.

Le processus de Prud était une tentative vers la coordination des principaux partis des trois groupes de Bosnie. Celui-ci survient dans une période défavorable après la détérioration de la situation et a également rencontré l'opposition des Bosniaques qui, à ce moment-là sont venus à considérer Dodik comme un extrémiste avec un programme fortement nationaliste. Il était difficile pour le leader Bosniaque Sulejman Tihić de convaincre les Bosniaques d'accepter des compromis nécessaires. Celui-ci était après tout une figure politique relativement faible et son image a en outre été ternie à la suite de ses tentatives de construire un consensus avec Dodik. Le processus de Prud s'est rapidement avéré vain après avoir rencontré une forte résistance de la part de forces politiques qui ont été exclues du processus et de la société civile. Cette tentative, qui a échoué, a en outre contribué au sentiment de désillusion et de crise politique, sapant la coordination anémique de l'élite ainsi que la délicate et affaiblie confiance inter-ethnique. Dans un contexte aussi difficile, survient le processus de Butmir. Il s'agit d'un effort international, de toute évidence pas bien préparé ramenant les tentatives énergiques vers le bas pour faire des compromis. Ce processus apparaît également comme un produit de la pression pour une réponse internationale à la crise et un reflet de l'équilibre délicat au sein de la communauté internationale. Avec ces limites, et avec les prochaines élections fixées pour

octobre 2010, une date très proche, l'échec se produit comme une conséquence logique.

Les élections d'octobre 2010 ont fourni des résultats intéressants. Les Bosniaques ont élu Bakir Izetbegović du SDA, le fils d'Alija, en tant que membre bosniaque de la présidence. En cela, ils ont puni Haris Silajdžić dont la politique irresponsable a eu comme résultat l'effondrement du paquet d'avril 2006 et dont le discours nationaliste négligeant a bien joué dans les mains du séparatisme des Serbes de Bosnie. Le parti de Silajdzic SbiH a également subi un grave revers et il est fort probable que, pour la première fois depuis de nombreuses années cette formation ne sera pas au gouvernement. Le SDA de Tihic a réussi à réaliser une bonne performance mais a perdu la primauté au profit du Parti social-démocrate (SDP). Celui-ci a mené une campagne réussie faisant appel principalement aux Bosniaques, et accessoirement aux Serbes et Croates pro-Bosnie. Ces derniers ont souligné le problème de la faiblesse de l'État en Bosnie -une plainte standard pour les Bosniaques- tout en essayant de renouer avec leurs racines de l'ère socialiste. En plus de devenir le parti le plus fort, le SDP a aussi réussi à faire réélire Željko Komšić comme le membre croate de la présidence. Komšić a été élu principalement par les Bosniaques; il est effectivement le politicien le plus populaire dans le pays. Mais son élection a été détestée par la plupart des Croates qui ont vu pour la deuxième fois les candidats de leurs propres partis mis en minorité par les Bosniaques dans la course à la désignation du membre croate de la présidence. Une performance très réussie a été celle du parti du magnat des médias bosniaques Fahrudin Radončić. Son *Parti pour un avenir meilleur* (CFF) est devenu une force politique considérable quelques mois après sa formation.

Parmi les Croates, la force politique traditionnelle *Communauté Démocratique Croate* (HDZ) l'a emporté sur ses dissidents HDZ 1990. L'HDZ est le parti croate en mesure de former le gouvernement au niveau de l'entité étatique croate et devrait coopérer avec les principaux partis serbes et bosniaques. Mais la réélection de Željko Komšić et la puissance démographique et politique sans cesse affaiblie des Croates vont probablement les pousser à demander une troisième entité croate. Les choses sont clairement définies dans la Republika Srpska. Milorad Dodik et son SNSD ont remporté une grande victoire et vont former un gouvernement avec des alliés mineurs. La seule question ouverte est l'élection du membre serbe de la présidence bosniaque, car la marge entre Nebojša Radmanovic du SNSD et Mladen Ivanić de l'opposition est trop étroite et ne sera finalisée qu'après une vérification de milliers de bulletins nuls.

Bien que n'étant pas désastreux, les résultats des élections sont une recette pour la poursuite de l'impasse politique, de la politique de la peur et de la concurrence ethnique. La crise politique en Bosnie est susceptible de continuer. Dans ce contexte, la question qui vient à l'esprit de tout le monde est de savoir si cette situation tendue peut conduire à des conflits. Les analystes depuis plusieurs années ont été habitués à considérer la Bosnie comme un État faible, mais avec un potentiel peu important de violence. L'expérience traumatisante de la guerre civile de 1992-95 et la forte présence de la communauté internationale ont été considérées comme une sorte de dissuasion des radicaux. En outre, il y avait des progrès sur des questions sensibles, telles que la reconstruction du patrimoine religieux détruit, la restitution des biens, et le retour des réfugiés. En dépit de quelques escarmouches, notamment en Republika Srpska, il n'y pas eu de violence ou des actes de vengeance à mentionner. Heureusement, cette tendance s'est poursuivie la plupart du temps malgré quelques incidents isolés, comme le décès d'un jeune homme dans de violents affrontements entre supporters de football et la police dans la ville de Siroki Brijeg et la mort d'un policier lors d'une attaque terroriste islamiste dans la ville de Bugojno.<sup>45</sup> La communauté internationale estime que les évaluations de sécurité ne comportent pas de possibilités de menaces graves.

Mais les choses ne sont plus aussi tranquilles que dans le passé. Un groupe de réflexion international a été le premier à discuter de la possibilité d'un retour à la violence.<sup>46</sup> Des moniteurs réguliers des risques de sécurité n'ont pas identifié une augmentation marquée du potentiel de violence.<sup>47</sup> Mais la violence, même si elle n'est pas très probable, n'est plus inconcevable en Bosnie. Ce qui semble avoir changé, c'est l'ambiance dans le pays. L'échec du consensus au niveau des élites, l'hostilité inter-ethnique dans le discours public, le discours agressif de séparatisme de la Republika Srpska, et l'influence croissante des musulmans radicaux et des conservateurs ne sont que quelques-uns des éléments qui alarment la population. A Sarajevo et dans d'autres villes de Bosnie, les Bosniaques ordinaires parlent ouvertement d'un retour à la violence si la Republika Srpska déclare son indépendance. Inutile de dire, que les premiers à «sentir la chaleur» sont les membres rapatriés des minorités et ceux restés sur place. Surtout chez les rapatriés un véritable sentiment de sécurité dans l'après-guerre en Bosnie ne s'est jamais consolidé. Mais pour la première fois depuis des années, les questions de sécurité sont devenues le sujet de discussion pour les Bosniaques ordinaires à la maison, au travail et entre amis.

Les Bosniaques ordinaires n'ont pas seulement peur de la violence inter-ethnique, mais sont également concernés par le niveau croissant de la criminalité chez les jeunes marginalisés et désenchantés. Dans les villes de Bosnie, même parmi les endroits les plus sûrs d'Europe, la violence est de plus en plus fréquente.<sup>48</sup> L'assassinat à Sarajevo d'un adolescent par de jeunes délinquants a provoqué des ondes de choc chez les habitants ordinaires de cette ville et a mobilisé la société civile.<sup>49</sup> Dans le même temps, les réseaux criminels qui ont été créés et consolidés au cours de la guerre continuent à fonctionner sans obstacle. Les liens entre les élites politiques et le crime organisé sont toujours en place. Les Bosniaques semblent habitués à cette réalité et des récits sur ce phénomène dans les médias ne semblent pas affecter le statu quo.<sup>50</sup> Les perspectives des jeunes Bosniaques pour une meilleure vie s'effondrent victimes d'un cercle vicieux de misère économique, d'échecs politiques, de faiblesse des institutions étatiques et de la concurrence inter-ethnique. Pour beaucoup, l'attraction de la pègre est irrésistible parce qu'elle est fondée sur la rationalité et sur des raisons pragmatiques.

Les prochains mois seront cruciaux pour l'avenir de la Bosnie. Les gouvernements qui seront formés auront une grande responsabilité pour trouver des façons de collaborer, d'établir un consensus et de travailler à bâtir la confiance inter-ethnique. La communauté internationale devra renforcer son engagement politique et des garanties de sécurité en Bosnie. Elle devra également trouver des moyens créatifs pour aider et conseiller les élites nationales à trouver des solutions aux problèmes du pays, sans revenir aux contraintes insoutenables du Haut Représentant.

### **Nouveaux points chauds dans les Balkans?**

Un certain nombre d'autres régions des Balkans peuvent devenir de nouveaux points chauds. Dans la vallée de Presevo, une région voisine du Kosovo en Serbie du Sud, la situation reste fragile. Typiquement la vallée de Presevo est considérée comme comprenant trois municipalités, deux à majorité albanaise et une à majorité serbe ainsi qu'une minorité albanaise. Il y a une décennie la région a connu la violente mini-insurrection de l'armée albanaise de libération de Presevo, Medvedja et Bujanovac (UCPMB), qui a pris fin avec l'accord de Koncul.<sup>51</sup> La population albanaise locale est divisée politiquement entre des forces plus modérées dirigées par le très respecté politicien local Riza Halimi et des forces plus radicales, dont certaines proviennent des insurgés du UCPMB, commandées par les poids lourds locaux, Ragmi Mustafa et Jonuz Musliu. Ces dernières années, des tentatives ont été faites par l'Etat serbe pour



désamorcer les tensions dans la région, améliorer les relations inter-ethniques et intégrer les Albanais dans les institutions serbes. Riza Halimi a tenté avec un certain succès d'exprimer politiquement cet effort de réconciliation et d'intégration. Les démarches de l'Etat ont été prudentes et plusieurs des griefs de la population locale, dans des domaines tels que l'éducation, la culture, l'emploi et l'accès aux institutions publiques, n'ont pas été vraiment abordés. Pourtant, les forces modérées semblent être plus puissantes que les radicaux, mais ne sont pas incontestées. Lors des récentes élections pour les conseils des minorités le taux de participation était légèrement supérieur à cinquante pour cent. Seuls deux d'abord, puis l'un des huit partis albanais locaux ont participé aux élections et au processus de la formation du conseil des minorités; toutes les forces radicales ont boycotté le processus.

Le Parti de Riza Halimi, l'Action Démocratique (PVD) a obtenu 81,27% des voix. Actuellement, Halimi fait appel à la majorité des Albanais de la vallée, mais un pourcentage considérable de la population globale albanaise n'est pas particulièrement attiré par les voix plus modérées.<sup>52</sup>

Il faut également garder à l'esprit que la vallée de Preševo est fortement associée au Kosovo. Les Albanais des deux côtés, et leurs représentants politiques, n'ont jamais caché leur ambition d'unifier un jour les deux régions. Pour le moment cependant, les élites politiques du Kosovo ne veulent pas créer de problèmes dans Preševo étant donné que leur propre Etat est tout sauf sécuritaire et Pristina ne contrôle toujours pas de grandes parties du territoire de Kosovo. Mais on ne peut pas exclure un scénario à l'avenir d'une tentative d'unification du Kosovo avec la vallée de Preševo. La probabilité d'un tel scénario pessimiste va augmenter si la perspective de l'intégration européenne et euro-atlantique devient lointaine et si le problème des Serbes du Kosovo ne trouve pas de solution pacifique. Dans ce contexte, les analystes ont depuis quelques années déjà joué avec l'idée d'un éventuel échange de territoires entre la Serbie et le Kosovo. La communauté internationale a toujours fermement réfuté la possibilité d'une telle solution. Mais tant que l'impasse demeure, et la pression européenne s'affaiblit, certains analystes influents ont commencé à donner à ce scénario plus de considération.<sup>53</sup>

Sandžak peut aussi devenir le point le plus chaud des Balkans. La région frontalière de la Serbie et du Monténégro, habitée principalement par des Bosniaques, a été longtemps considérée comme une zone où potentiellement le feu des guerres yougoslaves pourrait se propager. Dans les turbulentes années 1990, la supériorité militaire de l'Etat serbe a effectivement empêché la poursuite active des rêves séparatistes. Ceux-ci étaient présents parmi les

représentants politiques des Bosniaques, principalement dans la branche de Sandžak du Parti nationaliste d'Action Démocratique (SDA). La page a été tournée après la chute de Milošević. Les Bosniaques aussi bien que l'Etat serbe ont réussi à surmonter certaines de leurs différences et à construire un niveau de confiance. Des opérations de compromis entre les deux parties ont effectivement réussi à intégrer les Bosniaques à la politique serbe. Les partis prédominants de Bosniaques, SDA de Sulejman Ugljanin et le Parti démocratique de Rasim Ljajic de Sandjak (SDP) ont créé des relations de coopération avec les partis politiques traditionnels. Pendant un certain temps il a semblé que les différends politiques et parfois des actes de violence à Sandžak constituaient un phénomène impliquant uniquement la concurrence intra-bosniaque, principalement entre partisans des deux partis ou entre groupes musulmans radicaux et traditionnels. En d'autres termes, la concurrence ne saurait impliquer l'État serbe et ses agents. Le point culminant de cette intégration des Bosniaques dans l'Etat serbe a été la participation des deux partis au sein du gouvernement Cvetković, avec Rasim Ljajic, devenu ministre des droits de l'homme et des minorités et Sulejman Ugljanin siégeant en tant que ministre sans portefeuille. La participation des deux ministres bosniaques dans le gouvernement serbe aurait pu marquer la réconciliation historique des Serbes et des Bosniaques.

Mais les choses n'ont pas évolué ainsi. Le jeu-changeur a été la montée de la présence politique de Muamer Zukorlic, le mufti de Novi Pazar et chef de la branche serbe de la Communauté islamique, l'institution officielle de l'Islam avec son siège à Sarajevo. L'ascension fulgurante de Zukorlic vers les sommets a été dans une large mesure le résultat de la concurrence entre les institutions de la foi islamique dans le pays, à savoir le courant, lié à la Bosnie, la Communauté islamique en Serbie, et son adversaire, la Communauté islamique de Serbie avec son siège à Belgrade. Ce dernier a tenté d'étendre son influence et surtout de couper les liens avec les Bosniaques de Bosnie et de ses institutions religieuses. Une bataille a été menée entre les deux institutions qui va jusqu'aux questions de l'identité de la foi, aux questions d'organisation et surtout aux intérêts matériels, puisque les deux groupes tentent de revendiquer le contrôle de biens immobiliers. La bataille est également conduite dans le contexte de l'influence croissante des cercles islamistes radicaux. Ces derniers, comme en Bosnie, font ces dernières années des percées dans des segments plus larges de la population bosniaque, menaçant potentiellement les racines séculaires et le caractère modéré de cette société. En outre, comme en Bosnie, l'attitude ambivalente des institutions officielles islamiques à l'égard de ces

groupes crée en puissance les conditions pour une croissance de leur influence.

Un important développement récent dans la politique de Sandjak a eu lieu lors des élections pour les conseils des minorités en Serbie, en juin 2010. La formation politique de Zukorlic, la Communauté Culturelle Bosniaque a obtenu une victoire en obtenant 17 des 35 sièges au sein du Conseil de la minorité bosniaque. Zukorlic a réussi à capitaliser le mécontentement croissant de la population du Sandjak. Les Bosniaques de Serbie voient peu d'amélioration dans leurs conditions de vie ces dernières années en dépit du fait que leurs représentants participent au gouvernement de Belgrade. La conjoncture économique peut même être considérée comme en train de se détériorer en comparaison avec la décennie turbulente précédente.<sup>54</sup> Les Bosniaques ordinaires ont également été perturbés par les divisions au sein de leur communauté et ont été attirés par le message patriotique radical de Zukorlic. L'Etat serbe a également contribué à la frustration du Sandžak par une mauvaise gestion de plusieurs affaires impliquant la communauté bosniaque et en essayant de saper l'autorité de Zukorlic.

Au lendemain des élections, le SDA et le SDP ont déclaré leur refus de coopérer avec Zukorlic. Mais celui-ci a réussi à attirer des transfuges des autres partis et il était prêt à former la majorité au sein du Conseil de la minorité, quand le gouvernement serbe est intervenu pour empêcher Zukorlic de prendre son contrôle. Ce fut un geste maladroit qui a contribué au mécontentement des Bosniaques. Avec les élections pour le Conseil de la minorité bosniaque et l'escalade qui a suivi, nous sommes entrés dans une nouvelle période très sensible, qui, si elle est mal gérée, peut conduire à de sérieuses difficultés. Quelques jours seulement après l'élection du Conseil de la minorité, la confrontation entre les partisans du Zukorlic et les autorités locales (contrôlées par les partis bosniaques) a provoqué l'intervention de la police. Le mufti de Novi Pazar semble être en lice pour provoquer un tollé bosniaque et attirer l'attention internationale. Cette personnalité a fait appel à la présence des observateurs européens au Sandžak, un appel qui a été rejeté par la communauté internationale.<sup>55</sup> De façon controversée, ce mufti a déclaré que l'objectif des Bosniaques en Serbie est d'acquérir leur autonomie.<sup>56</sup>

Fait important, le mufti de Novi Pazar bénéficie du plein appui de Reis Mustafa Cerić, le chef de la Communauté islamique en Bosnie. Cerić est l'une des personnes les plus influentes en Bosnie et, selon certains, le Bosniaque le plus important. De manière également contestée Cerić a parlé pour la première fois des Bosniaques comme constituant une «nation constitutive» en Serbie. Il

reste à savoir où mènent la ou les stratégies de Zukorlic et Ceric. Et si celles-ci fonctionnent pleinement à l'unisson, ou si elles se bornent tout simplement à augmenter le rôle et l'influence politique des Bosniaques en Bosnie, ou si encore elles considèrent Sandžak comme un nouveau front potentiel qui peut contrebalancer le séparatisme croissant de Banja Luka. Une chose est sûre: Sandžak exige plus d'attention, de la diplomatie et des compromis afin de ne pas devenir une nouvelle poudrière dans les Balkans.

L'espace limité de cette introduction ne nous permet pas d'analyser un certain nombre d'autres points chauds potentiels. L'ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine est l'un de ces points. En dépit des espoirs d'une résolution du litige de longue date avec la Grèce, relatif au nom du pays, le gouvernement de Nikola Gruevski semble poursuivre une attitude intransigeante, qui rend difficile un accord. Le gouvernement grec, pour sa part, est également très prudent, car il sait que s'il parvient à un accord dans une période de grave crise financière il sera très certainement sévèrement critiqué par l'opposition. Mais les pressions internes au sein de l'ARYM ne sont pas non plus mineures. Les relations entre le gouvernement de Skopje et les représentants politiques de la population albanaise sont dans une situation désespérée. Malgré le fait que les Albanais continuent de participer au gouvernement Gruevski, leur présence semble tenir à un fil. Des divisions graves au sujet des priorités internationales, l'importance du différend avec la Grèce, et les droits de la communauté albanaise demeurent dans l'impasse. Dans la société elle-même, les divisions ethniques, qui n'ont jamais été vraiment mineures, se creusent. La majorité slave et la communauté albanaise ont des divergences extrêmes sur une série de questions d'intérêt majeur pour l'avenir de l'Etat. Il s'agit notamment de l'Union européenne et de la perspective euro-atlantique du pays: pour les Albanais cette perspective est la priorité absolue au-dessus de toutes les questions, tandis que pour la majorité slave cette perspective ne peut pas être plus importante que la question nationale et le problème de l'identité macédonienne et de la culture.<sup>57</sup> Avant tout, la préoccupation du gouvernement de Skopje sur les questions d'identité a d'importants effets secondaires négatifs. Par exemple, le programme gouvernemental pour imposer l'histoire et la culture de la majorité sur le paysage urbain, sape l'équilibre délicat des relations inter-ethniques.<sup>58</sup>

Ce numéro spécial *d'Etudes helléniques/Hellenic Studies* vise à contribuer aux débats académiques et politiques sur les problèmes et les défis auxquels se heurte la région de Balkans occidentaux. Les diverses contributions de ce numéro spécial vont des questions de politique étrangère et des objectifs

stratégiques des grandes puissances dans la région, aux questions de la démocratisation, du parlementarisme, de la réforme constitutionnelle en Bosnie, de l'intégration des transports et des infrastructures, et enfin du régionalisme ainsi que de la coopération régionale.

L'article de Janusz Bugajski offre un aperçu du contexte international des débats sur l'Europe du Sud-Est. L'analyse de Bugajski s'attache à l'état des relations transatlantiques depuis que le président américain Barack Obama est arrivé au pouvoir. Avec celui-ci des attentes ont surgi pour une nouvelle ère dans les relations américano-européennes. Bugajski fait valoir que ces espoirs et ces attentes ont été rapidement frustrés. Les deux parties continuent d'avoir des opinions divergentes sur une série de questions mondiales, tandis qu'elles n'ont pas répondu les premières aux attentes des secondes en ce qui concerne des ajustements de politique considérées comme nécessaires par les deux parties. Les affaires sur lesquelles les deux parties ne parviennent pas à un consensus et à se coordonner entièrement, vont de l'engagement de l'Europe dans la guerre en Afghanistan, aux capacités de «pouvoir dur» de l'Europe et de son aptitude à répondre efficacement aux problèmes mondiaux, à l'élargissement de l'OTAN et au rôle futur de cette organisation, ainsi qu'aux relations avec la Russie. Dans le même contexte des considérations globales de la diplomatie américaine, Bugajski considère aussi le cas des Balkans occidentaux. La région ne figure pas au centre de l'attention de l'administration américaine et ses problèmes sont considérés comme étant essentiellement de la responsabilité européenne, les Etats-Unis jouant un rôle de soutien. Pourtant, il y a des voix qui mettent en garde contre les dangers de ne pas prêter l'attention voulue aux problèmes des Balkans et une certaine activité diplomatique de haut niveau a entrepris des correctifs en réponse à ces menaces potentielles. La responsabilité principale, cependant, relève des Européens et la diplomatie américaine soutient l'intégration de tous les Etats des Balkans occidentaux dans l'UE. Enfin, Bugajski pose la question de savoir si un émissaire américain devrait être envoyé dans les Balkans. L'auteur de l'article estime qu'il est peu probable qu'un émissaire soit nommé et pose d'autres questions sur la nécessité et la pertinence d'une telle initiative diplomatique dans le contexte des problèmes des Balkans d'aujourd'hui.

Ilija Roubanis et Marilena Koppa fournissent un autre aperçu du contexte plus large de l'environnement politique des Balkans. Cette fois, cependant, l'accent est mis sur deux acteurs développant des rôles autonomes dans la région: la Russie et la Turquie. Ces rôles sont analysés par Roubanis et Koppa dans le contexte de la stratégie de l'Occident et de sa vision pour la région mais

aussi par rapport à la fatigue de l'élargissement croissant de l'UE. Les auteurs retracent les origines et l'évolution de cette vision avant d'expliquer l'évolution historique récente qui a créé la toile de fond pour des rôles autonomes de la Russie et la Turquie. Ils passent également brièvement en revue les politiques que les deux pays poursuivent en particulier dans les Balkans. Roubanis et Koppa font valoir que, tandis que pour l'instant les visions russe, turque et celle de l'Occident ne sont pas mutuellement exclusives pour la région, les rôles autonomes de la Russie et de la Turquie ont un potentiel pour devenir une alternative autonome aux plans de l'Occident. Dans un tel cas, les pays des Balkans auront le choix des paradigmes diplomatiques autres que la norme euro-atlantique, celle offerte par la diplomatie américaine et européenne.

Ce numéro spécial passe ensuite à l'examen des thèmes particuliers qui concernent les Balkans occidentaux. Fotini Bellou met l'accent sur l'impasse politique bosniaque. Son article fournit un aperçu utile de l'évolution qui a conduit à l'impasse actuelle. Bellou décrit les principales caractéristiques du cadre institutionnel des accords de Dayton ainsi que les dilemmes qui ont entouré sa formulation originale. Elle présente ensuite les réformes qui ont été mises en œuvre par la communauté internationale ou sous son influence. Elle passe brièvement en revue les deux tentatives infructueuses de réforme constitutionnelle proposées après la réforme constitutionnelle majeure d'avril 2006 et qui a aussi échoué. Pour mieux illustrer les éléments de l'impasse, Bellou présente les positions divergentes des trois peuples constitutifs de Bosnie sur ces questions ainsi que les points de vue divergents des principaux acteurs internationaux. L'image complexe ci-dessus présentée de la structure politique de la Bosnie et de ses acteurs politiques a conduit Bellou à son argument principal. Malgré une forte incitation sous la forme de l'adhésion à l'UE et l'existence des mécanismes nécessaires à celle-ci, les principales caractéristiques sont encore absentes: une vision commune pour l'avenir du pays, des perspectives européennes et une cohésion dans l'action pour la poursuite de l'adhésion à l'UE de la part des élites de Bosnie.

Dia Anagnostou et Dina Karydi mettent l'accent sur la qualité de la démocratie en Europe du Sud-Est, et plus spécifiquement sur la question de la transparence et l'obligation de rendre de comptes au Parlement. Leur article est basé sur une comparaison entre la Grèce et les pays post-communistes d'Europe du Sud-Est. Le point de départ des deux auteurs est la crise grave de légitimité évidente des Parlements dans la région, qui enregistrent de faibles niveaux de confiance et la perte de la confiance du public. Les deux auteurs analysent le degré d'ouverture et de transparence tant au niveau des

dispositions juridiques qu'au niveau de leur mise en œuvre effective. Anagnostou et Karydi constatent que les pays de la région disposent de dispositions légales et constitutionnelles robustes. Ces dispositions comprennent tous les outils nécessaires pour assurer la responsabilisation et le contrôle des parlementaires. En fait, il est intéressant de noter que les États post-communistes de la région, ont une meilleure panoplie de dispositions juridiques que la Grèce, sans doute en raison des influences externes sur leur processus de transition. Cependant, ce n'est qu'une partie de l'histoire. Malgré la présence de ces dispositions juridiques l'image réelle de la responsabilité et de la transparence reste problématique. Anagnostou et Karydi soutiennent que cela est dû à une mise en œuvre délicate des dispositions légales, à la forte influence des éléments partisans sur le processus parlementaire, et à la plus que puissante influence de l'exécutif sur le législatif. En outre, le processus d'eupéanisation semble avoir pour effet d'accorder plus de pouvoirs à l'exécutif qu'au Parlement. Dans l'ensemble, Anagnostou et Karydi soutiennent, que ces facteurs contribuent à l'élargissement du fossé entre les lois et leur application ainsi qu'à l'affaiblissement de la légitimité des Parlements nationaux dans l'Europe du Sud-Est.

L'article de Gerasimos Tsourapas traite les questions de la coopération régionale. Tsourapas utilise une seule étude de cas, celle de l'intégration des transports dans les Balkans occidentaux, pour discuter de l'interaction complexe entre les autorités locales et les acteurs étatiques et internationaux dans leurs efforts pour promouvoir la coopération régionale. En plaçant l'intégration des transports dans son contexte historique approprié, l'étude de cas de Tsourapas souligne le caractère incomplet du processus global de transition des pays des Balkans occidentaux. Malgré les retombées potentielles importantes d'intégration des transports, économiques ou autres, Tsourapas suggère que les pays préfèrent perpétuer une variété de distorsions du marché que de procéder à la résolution des obstacles à la coopération régionale, qui sont d'ordre historique, politique ou social. Plus important encore, Tsourapas critique également le rôle des acteurs internationaux. Ces derniers incapables de coordonner leurs nombreux, souvent contradictoires, projets régionaux et objectifs globaux. Ils maintiennent également un réseau complexe d'accords bilatéraux et multilatéraux qui entravent-au lieu de les promouvoir- les efforts vers le régionalisme. Pour Tsourapas, la nature de délabrement des réseaux de transport, après les guerres de Yougoslavie a mis en lumière d'importantes possibilités pour la reconstruction et le développement ultérieur d'un réseau de transport intégré. Dix ans plus tard, l'improbabilité d'établir un tel réseau offre

un aperçu précieux des épreuves et des tribulations de la promotion du régionalisme dans les Balkans occidentaux.

Enfin, Dimitar Bechev met l'accent sur le régionalisme dans le Sud-Est de l'Europe. Dans un effort visant à fournir un compte rendu exact des origines, du développement et de l'avenir de la coopération régionale, Bechev analyse comment le régionalisme a touché des secteurs vitaux: l'énergie, le commerce, la justice et les affaires intérieures. Le choix de Bechev de se concentrer sur des domaines assez différents lui permet de mieux rendre compte de l'omniprésence apparente du régionalisme à travers la péninsule. Des développements dans les domaines clés ci-haut mentionnés sont analysés à travers le prisme de trois facteurs primordiaux qui, selon Bechev, affectent la coopération régionale: le degré d'interdépendance entre les pays eux-mêmes, l'impact des acteurs extérieurs, et la formation d'une identité régionale. Bechev fait valoir qu'une coopération régionale plus forte apparaît dans des domaines qui sont directement fonction du cadre d'action à l'intérieur de l'UE. Par conséquent, c'est l'Union européenne comme une puissance normative, plutôt que ses Etats membres individuels ou d'autres acteurs internationaux, qui constitue le facteur le plus important dans la promotion de la coopération régionale. Les acteurs locaux, jouent donc un rôle secondaire, quoique important, dans le processus de coopération régionale. Pour Bechev, le régionalisme à travers l'Europe du Sud-Est constitue un phénomène complexe, qui pourrait ne pas être une panacée pour les problèmes de la région, mais une pièce du puzzle qui mérite sans doute une analyse plus poussée.

## NOTES

1. L'auteur voudrait remercier Gerasimos Tsourapas, George Mesthos et Bledar Feta pour leurs commentaires et leurs suggestions.
2. Voice of America, "Serbia marks 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Milošević ouster", 5 October 2010, available at: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Serbia-Marks-10th-Anniversary-of-Milošević-Ouster-104347024.html> [accessed in October 2010].
3. La région des Balkans occidentaux comprend l'Albanie, la Bosnie et Herzégovine, la Croatie, le Kosovo, l'ancienne République yougoslave de la Macédoine, Montenegro et la Serbie, tous des pays post-communistes de la région qui n'ont pas encore rejoint l'Union Européenne.



4. Pour les problèmes politiques de l'Albanie voir: Bledar Feta "The vicious circle of the Albanian political crisis", Hellenic Centre for European Studies, 25 April 2010, disponible à: [http://www.ekemprogram.org/csis/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=87:the-vicious-circle-of-the-albanian-political-crisis-&catid=3:articles&Itemid=69](http://www.ekemprogram.org/csis/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87:the-vicious-circle-of-the-albanian-political-crisis-&catid=3:articles&Itemid=69) [accessed in October 2010].
5. Sur l'élargissement de l'Union Européenne et des Balkans de l'Ouest, voir le site de la Commission Européenne sur: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm) [accessed in October 2010].
6. Voir le texte et plus de détails sur: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement\\_process/accession\\_process/how\\_does\\_a\\_country\\_join\\_the\\_eu/sap/thessaloniki\\_agenda\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_agenda_en.htm) [accessed in October 2010].: <http://www.esiweb.org/> [accessed in October 2010].
7. US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans, "Confronting unconventional threats in Southeast Europe", Policy Report 2, Center for Strategic and International Studies & Hellenic Centre for European Studies, April 2010.
8. *Ibid.* p. 2.
9. *Ibid.* Pour une analyse des problèmes étudiés des différentes régions ainsi que, pour les développements positifs, les succès et les recommandations à destination des décideurs occidentaux.
10. Voir par exemple, *The Economist*, "Hate in Belgrade", 10 October 2010, disponible sur: [http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/10/belgrades\\_gay\\_pride\\_riots](http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/10/belgrades_gay_pride_riots) [accessed in October 2010]; BBC, "Clashes at Bosnia's gay festival", 25 September 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7635197.stm> [accessed in October 2010]; Radio Sarajevo "Homofobija i rodni stereotipi u srednoškolskim udžbenicima", 21 October 2010, available at: <http://www.radiosarajevo.ba/content/view/35794/32/> [accessed in October 2010]
11. Pour une révision des problèmes de sécurité humaine dans les Balkans occidentaux aussi bien que pour les recommandations aux décideurs occidentaux voir le rapport *The US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans "Assessing human security in the Western Balkans"*, qui sera publié en novembre 2010.
12. Voir par exemple, Jens Bastian, "Falling behind again? Southeast Europe and the global crisis", *ELIAMEP Thesis* No. 2, March 2009.
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Importantly, the region itself is divided over the Kosovo independence. But on the plus side for the Western and the Kosovo diplomacy, most Western Balkan

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# Southeastern Europe at the Crossroads

Ioannis Armakolas\*

In October 2010 Serbia marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Milošević's fall from power.<sup>1</sup> Speaking in Belgrade on a special event organized for the occasion, President Boris Tadić outlined the accomplishments of Serbia, previously a pariah nation in the region, and especially the progress in the country's European Union (EU) accession process.<sup>2</sup> But it was more the indifference and the lack of any celebratory mood by the wider public that set the tone of the anniversary. The indifference about the anniversary of this turning point event in a way reflects the situation in post-Communist South East Europe. In Serbia, as in the rest of the region, disappointment and pessimism about the future abounds. Although elites and people are not of course nostalgic of the traumatic 1990s, the Western Balkans' current difficulties and future challenges do not allow over-optimistic views either.<sup>3</sup>

Surely the Western Balkans have made progress in recent years. In Serbia, after the dramatic event of Milošević's downfall, progress was made in the direction of dismantling his regime, democratization and development. But there were obstacles and backward steps such as the assassination of reformist Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003. The region passed through some potentially destabilizing events, such as the arrest and transfer to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) of Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, the assassination of Zoran Đinđić, or Kosovo's declaration of independence, with limited or no violent incidents. The record of the region's human and minority rights has significantly improved. Extensive and relatively successful return programmes have been implemented in the former Yugoslav countries. The Western Balkan countries' cooperation with the ICTY is generally satisfactory, with the notable exception of the two remaining fugitives Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić. Electoral

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cycles continue in all Western Balkan countries with very few problems. Party life is vibrant; the fierce political competition often creates problems of political instability, as was recently the case in Albania and Bosnia, but in general it very rarely does get completely out of control.<sup>4</sup> Generally, some progress was made in virtually all areas in which the region was facing serious problems in the past.

Above all, the region's countries have made significant progress in the direction of their integration in Western organizations. Albania and Croatia have joined NATO in 2009, few years after Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria entered both the European Union and NATO. Croatia in all certainty will soon be the first Western Balkan country to join the EU and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) is an official candidate country. The rest of the Western Balkan countries, currently 'potential candidates', aspire to attain the same status in the not-too-distant future.<sup>5</sup> The hopes of the Western Balkans' are based on the European vision and strategy of incorporating the region in the EU, a vision that was codified into the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans of June 2003.<sup>6</sup>

But important challenges remain. Key among these challenges are some enduring political and minority problems in the region, which will be analysed briefly below. But it would be misleading to isolate political and minority issues as the only or even the main challenges. In recent years, international organizations and think tanks have highlighted the pervasiveness and persistence of problems inherited from the turbulent transition to democracy and market economy in today's South East Europe. For example, a recent policy report on unconventional threats by the *US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans* identified a series of important problems that hamper the region's European and Euro-Atlantic integration prospects.<sup>7</sup> Tackling threats like organized crime and corruption has become a priority in the West's strategy for reforming the Balkans and integrating them into Western institutions. This strategy was coupled with significant investment of political capital and funding channeled into economic support and technical guidance programmes as well as in the realization of regional and bilateral initiatives. But the report found that recovery from the ills of the last two decades "has been slow and the initiatives yielded varying results...while political commitment has been lagging in many countries".<sup>8</sup> Lingered threats can be found in problematic areas such as corruption, the legacy of the Communist Security Services, human trafficking, drug trade, illicit trade of legal and stolen goods, illicit arms trade, illegal immigration, Islamist

radicalism, and cyber warfare. In all these areas, despite progress, key problems and challenges for the future remain. The international community can assist the countries of the Western Balkans in combating these unconventional threats by building on the success of the EU integration process in the region and of regional initiatives for inter-state cooperation in the field.<sup>9</sup>

Important challenges also remain in issues pertaining to human security, which have the distinctive characteristic of having direct impact on ordinary peoples' lives much more than any issue of high politics or traditional security. For example, the displacement of thousands of people and their return to their former homes is a lasting legacy of the 1990s conflicts. Problems that need to be addressed by domestic policy makers and the international community remain despite the energetic efforts and the enormous investment in political capital and money in the past. Additional problems are the discrimination and human rights which persist in some areas of South East Europe despite the good progress that the countries of the region have made since the 1990s. Importantly, most of the efforts in the past were directed towards ethnic and minority issues that threatened the stability of states and the region or to the protection of vulnerable groups affected by the conflicts, such as refugees and displaced persons, returnees and others. But it has recently become more apparent that more attention has to be paid to groups that have faced discrimination but were not typically prioritized by the domestic elites and the international community. For example, the problem of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity became more evident in recent years as a result of anti-gay violence in Belgrade and Sarajevo.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the extreme poverty and the discrimination laws and practices that Roma face in the Western Balkans is another area in which more resources and energy have to be invested. Likewise, the countries of the Western Balkans are lagging behind in the tackling of problems in human security areas, such as poverty reduction, health security, and environmental security.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the region's growth, all areas of public policy as well as the general stability of the Western Balkans region can potentially be affected by a combination of the global recession and the contagion effects of the Greek crisis. Some analyses on the effects of the global crisis exist.<sup>12</sup> But more analysis will be required on the effects of the Greek crisis, which began in earnest only this year. The effects of this crisis will likely be felt much more in Western Balkan countries that are linked to the Greek economy through permanent and seasonal workers, reliance on remittances, trade and Greek investment.<sup>13</sup>

In all of these problems, and more political issues that will be dealt with



below, the role of the European and Euro-Atlantic prospect of the Western Balkan nations remains indispensable. The European Union has been systematically using the tool of conditionality for promoting the reform agenda and the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*.<sup>14</sup> All Western Balkan states and their elites, sometimes happily and sometimes grudgingly, adopted many key reforms. As a result, important changes necessary for undoing the catastrophic influence of the 1990s and for helping the Balkan polities to create modern states were implemented. And the Western Balkan states one way or another progressed along the EU accession path. But the enlargement fatigue evident among European elites and societies threatens to disappoint this process. For years, the main obstacles for fulfilling the ‘Thessaloniki promise’ were the big problems facing the Balkan states, the policies of domestic elites, and sometimes the attitudes of the Balkan societies. We are now entering a phase in which reluctance on the part of the Europeans themselves may become an obstacle as difficult to overcome as the Balkan problems. Much of the region’s above-mentioned disillusionment is connected to the difficulties that the dream of European accession is encountering. It is also connected to the difficulties and slow progress in securing tangible mid-way benefits, such as the visa liberalization regime.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the picture of the prospects and challenges for the stabilization of the region cannot be full without mentioning the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO enlargement in the Western Balkans should be seen as complementary to the EU accession in the context of the wider Western strategy for the region. The (relatively) easier NATO accession process encourages Balkan elites and societies to continue the process of reforms. It is an important mid-way milestone for the long process of integration into the Western institutions. In addition, being a defensive alliance, NATO can provide the security comfort that is missing in several Western Balkan countries. For that reason some analysts argue that an expedited NATO enlargement can become the short-term remedy to instability and political crisis in some of the troubled Balkan countries for as long as EU accession remains a distant dream.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, NATO enlargement is not without its problems and serious challenges exist. Public and elite support for NATO accession are typically lower than those of EU enlargement. For example, in Montenegro the governing elites are in favour but the majority of the public is against accession. In Bosnia, most Serbs are against but most Croats and Bosniaks are in favour. The same applies to the elites, with Bosnian Serb politicians officially favouring NATO accession but in reality having a more

ambivalent stance. Then there is the problem of the thorny past and tricky present in the relations between NATO and Serbia. Other problems include the fate of defence and other necessary reforms and the debate about whether these should be sacrosanct or whether the Alliance should exhibit more flexibility than the EU in that matter. Furthermore, there are the problems of incorporating new disputes into the Alliance and accepting countries that are largely net consumers rather than net providers of security. All these provide a complex backdrop to the issue of NATO enlargement in the Western Balkans in a period of great transformation for the Alliance itself.<sup>17</sup>

Before briefly introducing the articles in this special issue, it is necessary to focus on a few of the political challenges, which not only remain serious, but even show signs of becoming greater. Kosovo and Bosnia remain high on the international agenda of Balkan problems. But, as we will see, a series of other issues of inter-ethnic relations and political competition threaten to become new Balkan hotspots.

## Kosovo

For the long standing Kosovo dispute, the success of Lady Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief, to strike a deal for the start of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina was welcome news.<sup>18</sup> However, one cannot be too optimistic about the problem of the Kosovo status which seems to be in a deadlock. More than two and a half years since the declaration of Kosovo's independence, the Kosovo Albanians are starting to lose their patience and their celebratory optimism and begin to question their leaders' strategy. The push that the Kosovo cause was expected to receive by the favourable ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) may prove to have lost steam very quickly. Only two states have recognized Kosovo since the ICJ ruling in July 2010.<sup>19</sup> The recognition process is effectively stalled, with the current number of states having recognised Kosovo at 71 and only 9 of them in the last 12 months. The majority of states that recognized Kosovo are Western states and they include the majority of the world's most powerful and prosperous countries. But this is only part of the story. Kosovo's nascent diplomacy has been unsuccessful at convincing states that are less susceptible to Western influence. The Western-backed Kosovo independence drive has failed to convince the emerging global powers of the so-called *BRIC*: Brazil, Russia, India and China. The recognition rate is also very low among Muslim countries, the Arab world as well as in the Global South. Non-Western

countries seem understandably disturbed by the Kosovo independence and the ICJ ruling which was welcomed by secessionist movements.<sup>20</sup> Generally, a quick look at the list of states that have recognized Kosovo easily proves that Kosovo independence is a project almost fully supported by Western states but with little appeal beyond them. As things stand now, Kosovo is likely to remain for several years in the 'twilight zone' of unclear status.

Particularly, important is the fact that the EU does not have a united position on the matter.<sup>21</sup> In the EU, 22 out of the 27 states have recognized Kosovo. The remaining countries – Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Cyprus – do not show signs of moving closer to a decision of recognition, despite pressure within the EU. Four out of these five EU member states have been vocal opponents of Kosovo independence with active participation in the legal proceedings at the ICJ.<sup>22</sup> The non-unity of the EU on the matter complicates European policy making in Kosovo. But even more important are the consequences for the Western strategy in the region. The Western strategy for the stabilization and normalization of the Western Balkans entailed Kosovo independence as the least problematic of a series of difficult scenarios. Whether recognition was the correct move or not is a long debate that cannot be elaborated here.<sup>23</sup> But since this strategy was followed it is impossible to go back to the pre-independence state of affairs. The status problem will have to follow its own slow process. But, without a closure of the Kosovo status issue it is difficult to conceive how the whole region may move on.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time though, the non-recognisers have strong arguments which cannot be disregarded. They can easily point, not only to the legal and geopolitical issues raised by the declaration of independence, but also by the anemic internal governance in Kosovo. Kosovo institutions remain particularly weak, the protection of human and minority rights is problematic, and the linkages between politics and informal business remain strong. For all these problems Kosovo elites, with the assistance of the international community, need to devise policies that will overcome the existing problems with creativity; for the difficult tasks, they have to come up with solutions that will reassure and allay the fears of the Serbian minority, that will not alienate the more impatient segments of the Kosovo Albanian majority, and at the same time convince non-recognisers that they deserve to be extended recognition. This would be a tall task for any political elite let alone for a politically immature Kosovo leadership. As probably expected Kosovar policy-making often hampers rather than facilitates the resolution of the problems and creation of a positive image abroad.<sup>25</sup>

Needless to say, a key policy riddle remains the problem of the Kosovo Serbs. The ICJ 'gamble' of Serbian diplomacy may have been unsuccessful, but the side effect was the raising of the stakes on the Kosovo problem in Serbian society and consequently the Serb pockets in Kosovo. The choice of strategy for fighting the Kosovo cause originally seemed wise. The Serbian governing elites under the leadership of President Boris Tadić vowed to confront the independence drive of Kosovars only through diplomatic means. But the Serbian government became a victim of its own strategy and partial success. It managed through shuttle diplomacy to prevent recognitions and to refer the problem to the ICJ. Furthermore, the Serbian foreign minister Vuk Jeremić and various Serbian officials discursively elevated the Kosovo issue to such an extent that it has become difficult for Serbia to back down. Despite the U-turn that some believe that President Tadić may be pursuing under the pressure of European diplomacy, it is highly unlikely that any Serbian government can in the short run admit defeat and opt to drop the Kosovo cause in exchange for a still unclear European prospect.

The situation within Kosovo itself is quite tricky. One has to be clear that the problem of Kosovo Serbs was never really a uni-dimensional issue. Three inter-locking but clearly separate problems can be identified: the Serb presence to the north of the river Ibar (North Kosovo), the Serb presence in the south, and the Serb religious and cultural heritage. For the Serbs in the south things are more clear-cut because it is more or less apparent to all players that they cannot possibly sustain the special links with Serbia for too long. Obviously, the main reason is the lack of geographic continuity with the Serbian mainland, which makes these enclaves dependent on the state structures of the new state. There has been gradual realization of this fact and some progress in the process of re-integrating these areas into Kosovo. Serb political representation from these areas is gradually becoming more confident in the fight for the rights of Serbs in the new state. Cooperation with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is increasing. Moreover, civil society has been active in studying the problem of division and devising solutions for re-integration programmes.<sup>26</sup> To some extent also the security situation for non-Albanians has improved, which, according to the official explanation of the international community, made possible a reduction in the number of KFOR troops. What is clearly missing however is a more spirited policy-making on the part of authorities in Pristina. The latter often seem more preoccupied with the formal recognition of their sovereignty over the entire province rather than with

creating a secure environment for the re-integration of their divided society.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, problems of security and lack of necessary means for re-integration clearly remain almost three years after the formal declaration of independence and more than a decade since the departure of the Serbian army. Similar inability or unwillingness to create a safer environment for a smooth re-integration is exhibited towards the Serb cultural heritage. Albanian elites often behave in a manner that reveals the lack of tolerance and understanding towards the complex problem of the Serb heritage.

As expected, even more complicated is the problem of the north where radical elements of the local Serb population are active. This area functions *de facto* as an extension of Serbian territory and the local Serb population continues to partake fully in Serbian institutional structures. The Pristina government has no effective control over it, while even the presence of the international community's institutions is hardly tolerated by the local Serb structures. For example, EULEX is only gradually and not without resistance establishing its presence and role in the area. The situation in the north continues to be perceived from both Albanians and Serbs as a zero sum game: whatever one side wins or manages to hold on to is considered by the other side as an unacceptable loss. The international community also does not have a clear strategy. Several months ago many efforts were placed in the direction of an ill-conceived 'Strategy for the North'. After the strong resistance encountered by local Serbs, this plan seems to be in limbo now. Thus the situation is likely to remain in a deadlock without clear signs of improvement but also without a serious escalation of tensions. Such escalation, however, is conceivable if the EULEX attempts to forcefully extend the *de facto* reach of Kosovo state institutions to the north or if more radical Albanian elements, frustrated by the deadlock, gain significant ground in the country.

All of Kosovo's challenges are complicated by the lack of inspired leadership and by an immature political system which does not seem capable to confidently lead the new state. The latest of the policy blunders that complicate Kosovo's progress is the recent political crisis in Pristina. It all started when the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that president Fatmir Sejdiu was in violation of the Constitution by holding at the same time both the office of the presidency and the chair of his party, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK).<sup>28</sup> Sejdiu, a professor of law, was found in the unfortunate position to violate, as President, the first Constitution after the country's declaration of independence; surely not an honor that many would aspire to. The case was brought to the court by members of the parliament led by the

politicians of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), government coalition partner to LDK. Surely the move by the MPs was connected with the coming elections which would face LDK and PDK off as the two largest parties in the country. Sejdiu decided to respond to the challenge not by resigning from his party post but by resigning from the presidency. The resignation was likely to cause early elections that would be held in February 2011. The reasons for choosing the party presidency have to do with the ongoing battle for the control of LDK, a battle which Sejdiu is likely to lose due to the strengthening of internal opposition under Bujar Bukoshi. But in order to secure his re-election in the LDK presidency Sejdiu proceeded with yet another political 'gamble'. He decided that LDK should withdraw from the government, effectively forcing the country into snap elections in the wake of the compromise reached by Ashton for negotiations with Belgrade. As a result, the negotiations are now likely to be postponed, further delaying the recognition process and prolonging the agony of the Kosovar population.

Generally speaking, Kosovo has unfortunately lacked politicians as inspired as the father of the nation, Ibrahim Rugova, who died in 2006 having led Kosovars since the start of the Yugoslav crisis. LDK, Rugova's party, lost the political predominance to PDK, an offspring of the Kosovo Liberation Army. PDK and its leader Hashim Thaci enjoy the trust of the international community but they never proved successful in either inspiring the Kosovo Albanians or reassuring the Kosovo Serbs. In addition, PDK's governmental officials are prime targets of the EULEX corruption investigations proving that the link between politics and illegitimate business remain intact. The electoral chances and political appeal of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), another offspring of the Kosovo Liberation Army, are weakened by party leader Ramush Haradinaj's troubles at The Hague tribunal. The smaller parties that in the past advanced more liberal political platforms never managed to become popular enough to secure their electoral survival. There is finally, *Vetevendosje* (Self-determination), the only potentially influential newcomer in the party scene. The formerly anti-systemic nationalist youth movement led by Albin Kurti plays to the ethnic fears and anxieties of the Albanian population. Also, *Vetevendosje* since its inception has directed its message and energy to attract the support of Kosovo youth. The latter is, as a percentage of the total population, one of the largest in Europe. At the same time, it faces huge problems with unemployment, economic deprivation, lack of political representation, lack of prospects, difficulty in travelling to Europe and other issues.<sup>29</sup> If successful

in its entry into politics *Vetevendosje* is highly likely to further complicate internal policy-making and the necessary compromises that have to be reached for resolving Kosovo's problems.

## Bosnia

Bosnia is of course the other Balkan hotspot. In recent years, the troubled Balkan country returned to the international agenda with a vengeance. Before that it was believed that Bosnia, under the tutelage of the international community, was placed on a secure avenue of stabilization. This proved to be only an impression sprung from the optimism brought by the tenure of over-active Paddy Ashdown as the international community's High Representative. Under Ashdown, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) achieved, either through imposition or consent, a series of reforms, especially in the direction of strengthening the state to the detriment of the largely ethnic sub-state entities. Ashdown also particularly targeted the local nationalist leaderships.<sup>30</sup> Due to the force and confidence that the international community employed to impose changes Ashdown was criticized for undemocratic methods and for producing a culture of local politicians' dependency to the internationals.<sup>31</sup> One thing is certain, the reforms proved to be of questionable sustainability and the international community paid little attention to the culture of consensus and cooperation that should be an irreplaceable feature on par with the design of new institutions.<sup>32</sup> It took less than two years, the mismanagement of the police reform, and an inactive successor to Ashdown to lead the Bosnian political system to a deadlock.<sup>33</sup> After the failed April 2006 constitutional reform drive, and under the negative influence of the Party of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD), the leading Republika Srpska party, and secondarily of Haris Silajdžić, then Bosniak member of the state presidency, the situation in the country went downhill.

In the last five years, the escalating crisis brought about many disturbing developments. Policy-making is seriously delayed by irresponsible political elites. Some key reforms are blocked or threatened with reversal by Bosnian Serbs. The authority of the international community is ever weakening. The internationals have lost several political battles in the country and seem to develop a 'Bosnia fatigue' syndrome, which prevents them from pursuing energetic efforts. Virulent political competition continued and escalated making compromise difficult and poisoning the already thorny inter-ethnic relations. The elite consensus on the issue of the war crimes collapsed when

Milorad Dodik chose this field as a key area for raising his popularity among Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, Serbs continued to encounter hostility by the other groups when they tried to make the case for the war crimes committed against them. Generally, the legacy of the war and the issue of how deal to with it, remained the central obstacle in building trust.

To that complex picture, one has to add the challenge posed by the Bosnian Serbs. Milorad Dodik's idea for a referendum was originally believed to be just a political trick to attract voters. It was also seen as a pressure to Bosniak elites to quit their calls for the abolishment of Republika Srpska. Even as a trick the referendum talk broke a taboo, since for several years the official position of Bosnian Serb elites was not against Bosnian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although the referendum talk was forgotten for a while it came back as Republika Srpska government clashed with the High Representative, and especially as the elections drew closer. The separatist discourse was also strengthened after the declaration of Kosovo independence and later the ICJ ruling.<sup>34</sup> After the latter, Dodik declared that "the ICJ decision can serve us as guidance for our continuing fight over our status and our future".<sup>35</sup> As things stand, the leaders of Republika Srpska appear ready to proceed with their move for independence when the timing is right. The motto adopted by SNSD in its pre-election campaign is telling: 'Republika Srpska for ever and Bosnia for as long as we have to'.<sup>36</sup> Since the international community has well in advance rejected any such move, the opportune moment may be distant. But this is not necessarily good news for Bosnia since the Bosnian Serb leadership may continue its strategy of raising tensions, exploiting the deep ethnic divisions and creating policy deadlocks.

The stronger aspects of the current political crisis in Bosnia are only the more recent and visible ones.<sup>37</sup> Republika Srpska separatism re-emerged after a period of several years during which the international community failed to effectively support the previous, relatively moderate Bosnian Serb leadership. The crisis of strategy for the international community came as a result of a sloppy transition to a less interventionist role as a result of changed international priorities. But both Republika Srpska separatism and the inability of the international community to play a more effective role hide the deeper and more enduring elements of the crisis. The Dayton constitution is one of the enduring elements hampering progress in Bosnia. The complex organization of the state is simply too burdensome for a weak country like Bosnia to bear. Furthermore, the Dayton compromise typically privileges ethnic over civic rights.<sup>38</sup> Still, despite its deficiencies, Dayton cannot be



blamed for all the ills of Bosnia. Equally problematic are the other enduring dimensions of the crisis, which are often overlooked. The fierce intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic competition, the lack of a culture of tolerance and collaboration, the failure of elites to reach consensus, the societal and electoral appeal of populist politicians, the structure of the political system are key factors that make up the complexity and durability of the Bosnian crisis.<sup>39</sup> Above all, the problematic political characteristics are founded on some troubling features of contemporary Bosnia: the societal and ethnic divisions, low inter-ethnic trust, weak legitimacy of the Bosnian state, and the lack of Bosnians' common vision for the future of the state. This social foundation constitutes the backdrop of all political failures in the country.<sup>40</sup>

The tool that was repeatedly tried for solving Bosnia's problems was extensive constitutional reform.<sup>41</sup> From the outset, the strong desire for extensive reform of the constitutional product of the 'unpopular' Dayton illustrates what domestic and international analysts and policy makers view as the core problem. As was rightly put by a Bosnia expert, in public discourse "the key word 'Dayton' is suggestive of everything that appears not to be well in Bosnia and Herzegovina: complicated institutions, high unemployment, dependency on external aid and intervention, and the predominance of ethnic politics".<sup>42</sup> It reveals also the extent to which debates on Bosnia have been dominated by the logic of institutional solutions and safeguards to the country's problems.<sup>43</sup> Three major reform drives took place in the last five years. Two of these were led by the international community – the so-called April 2006 package and Butmir process – and one by local elites, known as the 'Prud process'. The April 2006 package is the most well known of these attempts and was the one that was best organized and came closest to realization. It was the product of active American diplomacy and managed to bring on board almost all major players in Bosnia, including the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>44</sup> In parliament it failed by only two votes having encountered the opposition of Haris Silajdžić's Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) and a motley group of dissident MPs.

After the failure of the April 2006 package, the situation in the country started deteriorating. The heightened expectations were frustrated creating a negative political and social atmosphere in the country. Most parties tried to capitalize on their postures in the constitutional reform or attempted to invest on the rising tensions and nationalist discourse. Key among these attempts was the building of a strong profile of the defender of Serb interests by Milorad Dodik and his party. The Bosnian Serb assertiveness was mismanaged by the

international community, which saw its representatives effectively losing a series of political battles against Banja Luka. A vicious circle of blocking of reform, political games and nationalist discourse was generated. All parties and groups contributed to this negative process, although it's fair to say that Dodik and SNSD had the lion's share.

The Prud process was an attempt toward coordination of the main parties of the three Bosnian groups. It came in an unfavourable period after the deterioration of the situation. It also encountered opposition from Bosniaks who by that time have come to view Dodik as an extremist with a strongly nationalist agenda. It would be difficult for Bosniak leader Sulejman Tihić to convince Bosniaks of the necessary compromises. He was after all a relatively weak political figure and his image was further tarnished as a result of his attempts to build a consensus with Dodik. The Prud process quickly proved futile after encountering strong resistance by political forces that were excluded from the process and by the civil society. The failed attempt further contributed to the sense of disillusion and political crisis, undermining the anemic elite coordination as well as the delicate and ever weakening inter-ethnic trust. In such a difficult context, came the Butmir process. It was an evidently not well prepared international effort bringing back the forceful top-down attempts to compromise. It also seemed like a product of the pressure for an international response to the crisis and a reflection of the delicate balances within the international community. With these limitations, and with the next elections set for October 2010 fast approaching, the failure came as a logical consequence.

The October 2010 elections brought about interesting results. The Bosniaks elected SDA's Bakir Izetbegović, the son of Alija, as Bosniak member of the presidency. In that they punished Haris Silajdžić whose irresponsible policy led the April 2006 package to collapse and whose careless nationalist discourse played well in the hands of Bosnian Serb separatism. Silajdžić's party SBiH also had a serious setback and it is highly likely that for the first time in many years it will not be in government. Tihić's SDA managed to have a good showing but lost primacy to the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The latter had a successful campaign appealing mainly to Bosniaks and secondarily to pro-Bosnia Serbs and Croats. They stressed the problem of the weak Bosnian state, a standard complaint for Bosniaks, and they also tried to reconnect with their socialist era roots. Apart from becoming the strongest party, SDP managed also to re-elect Željko Komšić as the Croat member of the presidency. Komšić was voted in mainly by Bosniaks and he is effectively the most popular politician in the

country. But his election was detested by most Croats who saw for the second time the candidates from their own parties outvoted by Bosniaks in the race for the Croat member of the presidency. A very successful showing was that of the party of the Bosniak media magnate Fahrudin Radončić. His Party for a Better Future (SBB) became a considerable political force months from its formation.

Among Croats, the traditional political force Croat Democratic Community (HDZ) won over its splinter party HDZ 1990. HDZ is likely to be the Croat party to form government at the entity and state level and will have to cooperate with the main Bosniak and Serb parties. But the re-election of Željko Komšić and the ever weakening demographic and political power of the Croats will likely push them further towards demanding a third Croat entity. Things are clear cut in Republika Srpska. Milorad Dodik and his SNSD scored a great victory and will form a government with minor allies. The only open question is the election of the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, since the margin of SNSD's Nebojša Radmanović and the opposition's Mladen Ivanić is too small and will be finalized after the recount of thousands of invalid ballots.

Although not disastrous, the election results are a recipe for the continuation of the policy deadlock and of the politics of fear and ethnic competition. The political crisis in Bosnia is likely to continue. In that context, the question in everybody's mind is whether this tense situation can lead to conflict. For several years analysts were accustomed to viewing Bosnia as a weak state but with low potential for violence. The traumatic experience of the 1992-95 civil war and the heavy presence of the international community were believed to deter radicals. In addition, there was progress in sensitive issues, such as the reconstruction of destroyed religious heritage, property restitution, and the return of refugees. Despite some skirmishes, especially in Republika Srpska, there was no noteworthy violence or acts of revenge. Fortunately, this trend mostly continued despite some individual incidents, such as the death of a youngster in violent clashes between football fans and the police in the town of Siroki Brijeg and the death of a policeman in an Islamist terrorist attack in the town of Bugojno.<sup>45</sup> The international community reassures that the security assessments executed do not bring up the possibilities of serious threats.

But things are no longer as quiet as in the past. An international think tank was the first one to discuss the possibility of a return to violence.<sup>46</sup> Regular monitors of security risks have not identified marked increase in the violence potential.<sup>47</sup> But violence, even if not highly likely, is no longer inconceivable in Bosnia. What seems to have changed is the mood in the country. The failure

of elite consensus, the inter-ethnic hostility in public discourse, the aggressive discourse of separatism from Republika Srpska, and the growing influence of Muslim radicals and conservatives are only a few of the elements that alarm the population. In Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities, ordinary Bosniaks talk openly of a return to violence if Republika Srpska declares independence. Needless to say, the first to 'feel the heat' are minority returnees and stayees. Especially among returnees, a genuine feeling of security had never really consolidated in post-war Bosnia. But for the first time in years, issues of security have become the topic of discussion for ordinary Bosnians at home, in the workplace and among friends.

Importantly, ordinary Bosnians do not only fear inter-ethnic violence but are also concerned by the growing levels of criminality by marginalized and disenfranchised youth. In the Bosnian cities, once among the safest places in Europe, violence is becoming more frequent.<sup>48</sup> The killing in Sarajevo of a teenager by young delinquents sent shockwaves to ordinary Sarajevans and mobilised civil society.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the criminal networks that were created and consolidated during the war continue to operate unobstructed. The links between the political elites and organized crime are still in place. Bosnians seem accustomed to this reality and the frequent media stories about the phenomenon do not seem to affect the *status quo*.<sup>50</sup> Young Bosnians' prospects for a better life fall victims to a vicious circle of economic deprivation, failed politics, weak state institutions and inter-ethnic competition. For many, the attraction of the underworld is irresistible because it is based on rational, pragmatic grounds.

The coming months are crucial for the future of Bosnia. The governments that will be formed will have a great responsibility to find ways to collaborate, build consensus and work towards building inter-ethnic trust. The international community will have to strengthen its political commitment and security guarantees to Bosnia. It will also have to find creative ways to assist and advise the domestic elites in finding solutions to the country's problems, without returning to the unsustainable impositions of the High Representative.

### **New Balkan hotspots?**

A number of other Balkan areas can potentially become new hotspots. In the Preševo Valley, a neighbouring to Kosovo area in South Serbia, the situation remains delicate. Typically Preševo Valley is considered to comprise three

municipalities, two with an Albanian majority and one with a Serbian majority and Albanian minority. A decade ago the area experienced the violent mini-insurgency of the Albanian Liberation Army of Preševo, Medveđa and Bujanovac (UCPMB), which ended with the Koncul agreement.<sup>51</sup> The local Albanian population is divided politically between the more moderate forces led by the respected local politician Riza Halimi and the more radical forces, some of which spring from the insurgent UCPMB, led by local heavyweights Ragmi Mustafa and Jonuz Musliu. In recent years, attempts were made by the Serbian state to de-escalate the tensions in the region, improve inter-ethnic relations and integrate Albanians into Serbian institutions. Riza Halimi attempted with some success to express politically this effort towards reconciliation and integration. The moves by the state were cautious and several of the local population's grievances, in areas such as education, culture, employment, and access to public institutions, were not truly addressed. Still, the moderate forces seem to be more powerful than the radicals, although not uncontested. In the recent elections for the minority councils the turnout was just above fifty percent. Only two initially, and then one of the eight local Albanian parties participated in the elections and the process of the formation of the minority council; all the more radical forces boycotted the process. Riza Halimi's Party of Democratic Action (PVD) secured 81.27 percent of the vote. Presently, Halimi appeals to the majority of Albanians in the Valley but a considerable percentage of the overall Albanian population is not particularly attracted by the more moderate voices.<sup>52</sup>

It also has to be kept in mind that Preševo Valley is strongly associated with Kosovo. The Albanians from both sides, and their political representatives, never hid their ambition to one day unify the two regions. For the time being though, the Kosovo political elites do not want to create problems in Preševo since their own statehood is anything but secured and Pristina still does not control large parts of the Kosovo territory. But one cannot preclude a future scenario of an attempt for unification of Kosovo with Preševo Valley. The likelihood of such a pessimistic scenario will increase if the prospect of European and Euro-Atlantic integration becomes distant and if the Serb problem in Kosovo does not find a peaceful solution. In that context, analysts have for some years now been toying with the idea of a possible exchange of territories between Serbia and Kosovo. The international community has always strongly refuted the possibility of such solution. But as the deadlock remains, and the European pull weakens, some influential analysts have started to give this scenario more consideration.<sup>53</sup>

Sandžak may become the newest of the Balkan hotspots. The border region of Serbia and Montenegro inhabited mainly by Bosniaks was for long considered an area to which potentially the fire of the Yugoslav wars could spread. In the turbulent 1990s, the military superiority of the Serbian state effectively prevented any active pursuit of separatist dreams. The latter were present among the political representatives of the Bosniaks, mainly in the Sandžak branch of the nationalist Party of Democratic Action (SDA). The page was turned after the fall of Milošević. Both the Bosniaks and the Serbian state managed to overcome some of their differences and build a level of trust. Compromising moves by both sides effectively incorporated Bosniaks into mainstream Serbian politics. The predominant parties of Bosniaks, Sulejman Ugljanin's SDA and Rasim Ljajić's Democratic Party of Sandžak (SDP) created cooperative relations with the mainstream political parties. For a while it seemed as if the political disputes and occasional violent acts in Sandžak would be a phenomenon involving only intra-Bosniak competition, mainly between supporters of the two parties or between the more radical and more traditional groups of Muslim faithful. In other words, the competition would not involve the Serbian state and its agents. The culmination of this integration of Bosniaks into the Serbian state was the participation of both parties in the Cveticović government, with Rasim Ljajić becoming the minister for human and minority rights and Sulejman Ugljanin serving as minister without portfolio. The participation of two Bosniak ministers in the Serbian government could have signaled the historical reconciliation of Serbs and Bosniaks.

But things did not develop in that way. The game-changer was rise of the political presence of Muamer Zukorlić, Mufti of Novi Pazar and head of the Serbian branch of the Islamic Community, the official institution of Islam with its seat in Sarajevo. Zukorlić's meteoric rise to prominence was to a large extent a result of the competition between the institutions of the Islamic faith in the country, namely the more mainstream, and linked to Bosnia, Islamic Community in Serbia and its opponent, the Islamic Community of Serbia with its seat in Belgrade. The latter attempted to spread its influence and especially to sever the ties with the Bosniaks of Bosnia and its religious institutions. A battle is being waged between the two conflicting institutions extending to incorporate expressions of identity and faith, organizational matters, and importantly material interests, since both groups are trying to claim rightful ownership and control of immovable property. The battle is also being waged in the backdrop of the growing influence of radical Islamist

circles. The latter, like in Bosnia, are in recent years making inroads in the larger segments of the Bosniak population potentially threatening the secular roots and moderate character of this society. Also, as in Bosnia, the official Islamic institutions' ambivalent attitude towards these groups potentially creates conditions for a growth in their influence.

A recent important development in Sandžak politics took place during the elections for the minority councils in Serbia in June 2010. Zukorlić's political formation, the Bosniak Cultural Community, stroke a victory securing 17 out of the 35 seats in the Bosniak minority council. Zukorlić managed to capitalize on the growing dissatisfaction of the Sandžak population. Bosniaks of Serbia see little improvement in their living conditions in recent years despite the fact that their representatives participate in the Belgrade government. Economic conditions may even be seen as deteriorating comparing to the previous turbulent decade.<sup>54</sup> Ordinary Bosniaks were also disturbed by the divisions within their community and were attracted by Zukorlić's radical patriotic message. The Serbian state also contributed to Sandžak's frustration by mismanaging several affairs involving the Bosniak community and by trying to undermine Zukorlić's authority.

In the aftermath of the elections, SDA and SDP declared their unwillingness to cooperate with Zukorlić. But the latter managed to attract defectors from the other parties and was ready to form the majority in the minority council when the Serbian government intervened to block Zukorlić from taking control of the council. This was a clumsy move that further contributed to the Bosniaks' discontent. With the elections for the Bosniak minority council and the escalation that followed we entered a new very sensitive period which, if mismanaged may lead to serious trouble. Only days after the minority council election confrontation between supporters of Zukorlić and local authorities (controlled by Bosniak parties) brought in intervention by the police. The Novi Pazar Mufti seems to be vying to provoke Bosniak outcry and attract international attention. He called for European monitors to be brought in Sandžak, a call which was rejected by the international community.<sup>55</sup> In a controversial move he declared that the goal of Bosniaks in Serbia is to acquire autonomy.<sup>56</sup>

Importantly, the Novi Pazar Mufti enjoys the full support of Reis Mustafa Cerić, the head of the Islamic Community in Bosnia. Cerić is one of the most influential individuals in Bosnia and, some would argue, the most influential Bosniak. In another controversial move, Cerić for the first time

spoke of Bosniaks as ‘constituent nation’ in Serbia. It remains to be seen what the strategy or strategies of Zukorlić and Cerić are. Whether they function fully in unison, whether they simply want to raise the influence and political role of Bosniaks in Bosnia, or whether they see Sandžak potentially as a new front that can counter-balance the growing separatism of Banja Luka. One thing is for sure, Sandžak requires more attention, diplomacy and compromise in order for not becoming the new Balkan hotspot.

The limited space of this introduction does allow us to analyse a number of other potential hotspots. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one. Despite hopes for the resolution of the long-standing name dispute with Greece, the government of Nikola Gruevski appears to pursue an uncompromising stance that makes a deal difficult. The Greek government on its part is also quite cautious; it knows that if it reaches an agreement in a period of serious financial crisis it will most certainly be severely criticized by the opposition. But internal pressures within FYROM are not minor either. The relations between the Skopje government and the political representatives of the Albanian population are in dire straits. Despite the fact that the Albanians continue to participate in the Gruevski government, their presence seems to hang from a thread. Serious divisions about international priorities, the significance of the dispute with Greece, and rights of the Albanian community remain. In the society itself, the ethnic divisions, which were never really minor, are deepening. The Slavic Macedonian majority and the Albanian community have extremely diverging views on a series of matter of key interest for the future of the state. These include the European and Euro-Atlantic prospect of the country: for Albanians this prospect is of absolute priority above all issues, while for the Slavic majority this prospect cannot be allowed to confound the national cause of the name issue and the Macedonian identity and culture.<sup>57</sup> Above all, the preoccupation of the Skopje government with identity issues has important negative side-effects. For example, the governmental programme for imprinting the majority’s history and culture on the urban landscape clearly undermines the delicate balance of inter-ethnic relations.<sup>58</sup>

This special issue of *Études helléniques/Hellenic Studies* aims to contribute to academic and policy debates on the problems and challenges that the region is encountering. The diverse contributions to the special issue range from issues of foreign policy and strategic objectives of great powers in the region, to issues of democratization and parliamentarism, constitutional reform in Bosnia, transport integration and infrastructure, and finally regionalism and regional cooperation.



Janusz Bugajski's paper offers insights into the international context of the debates on South East Europe. Bugajski's analysis focuses on the status of the Trans-Atlantic relations since US President Barack Obama came to power. With President Obama in power, the expectations were raised for a new era in the US-Europe relationship. Bugajski argues that these hopes and expectations were quickly frustrated. Both sides continue to hold diverging opinions on a series of global issues, while the two sides failed to live up to each others' expectations with regards to policy adjustments seen as necessary by each side. The matters in which the two sides fail to reach consensus and fully coordinate range from Europe's engagement in the Afghanistan war, to Europe's 'hard power' capabilities and its capacity to effectively address global problems, NATO's enlargement and future role, and relations with Russia. In the same context of American Diplomacy's global considerations, Bugajski considers also the case of the Western Balkans. The region does not feature at the centre of the US administration's attention and the region's problems are considered to be primarily a European responsibility, with the US maintaining a supporting role. Still, there are voices that warn about the dangers of not paying adequate attention to Balkan problems and some remedial high-level diplomatic activity has been undertaken in response to these potential threats. The main responsibility, however, remains with the Europeans and US diplomacy supports the integration of all Western Balkan states into the EU. Finally, Bugajski considers the question of whether an American envoy should be deployed in the Balkans. Bugajski believes there is little likelihood of an envoy being appointed and he further questions the necessity and adequacy of such a diplomatic initiative in the context of today's Balkan problems.

Iliia Roubanis and Marilena Koppa provide another piece of the wider context for the Balkan political environment. This time, however, the focus is on two players developing autonomous roles in the region: Russia and Turkey. These roles are considered by Roubanis and Koppa against the background of the Western strategy and vision for the region but also in relation to the growing EU enlargement fatigue. The authors track the origins and the evolution of Western vision for the Western Balkans before they explicate the recent historical developments that created the backdrop for the autonomous roles of Russia and Turkey. They also briefly review the particular policies that the two countries are pursuing in the Balkans. Roubanis and Koppa argue that, while for now Western, Russian and Turkish visions for the region are not mutually exclusive, the autonomous roles of Russia and Turkey have the potential to become a stand-alone alternative to the Western plans. In such a

case, the Balkan states will be presented with the choice of diplomatic paradigms other than the standard Euro-Atlantic one offered by American and European diplomacy.

The special issue then moves to consider particular Western Balkan themes. Fotini Bellou focuses on the Bosnian political deadlock. Her article provides a useful overview of the developments that led to the current deadlock. Bellou outlines the main features of the Dayton institutional set up as well as the dilemmas that surrounded its original formulation. She presents the reforms that were implemented by the international community or under its influence. She then briefly reviews the two failed attempts to a constitutional reform that came after the major, and also failed, April 2006 constitutional reform package. To better illustrate the elements of the deadlock Bellou presents the three constituent peoples' divergent positions on the issues as well as the divergent perspectives of the key international players. The above 'mapping' of the complex picture of Bosnia's political structure and actors leads Bellou to her main argument. Despite the presence of a strong incentive in the form of the EU accession and the existence of the necessary mechanisms for Bosnia's accession trip, key features are still absent: a common vision for the future of the country and its European prospects and a cohesion in action for pursuing EU accession on the part of the Bosnian elites.

Dia Anagnostou and Dina Karydi focus on the quality of democracy in South East Europe, and more specifically on the issue of transparency and accountability in parliament. The paper is based on a comparison between Greece and the post-communist countries of South East Europe. The starting point of the two authors is the evident serious crisis of legitimacy of the parliaments in the region, which register low levels of trust and loss of public confidence. The two authors investigate the degree of openness and transparency both at the level of the legal provisions and at their actual implementation. Anagnostou and Kayrdi find that the countries of the region have robust relevant legal and constitutional provisions. These provisions include all the necessary tools for ensuring accountability and control over parliamentarians; in fact, it is interesting to note that the post-communist states of the region, have a better panoply of legal provisions than Greece, no doubt due to the external influences on their transition process. However, this is only part of the story. Despite the presence of these legal provisions the actual picture of accountability and transparency remains problematic. Anagnostou and Karydi argue that this is due to an awkward implementation of the legal provisions, the strong influence of partisanship on parliamentary

processes, and the overpowering influence of the executive over the legislature. In addition, the process of Europeanization seems to have the side effect of further empowering the executive over the parliament. All in all, Anagnostou and Karydi argue, these factors contribute to a widening gap between the relevant laws and their application as well as to an ever decreasing power and legitimacy of the national legislatures in South East Europe.

With the paper by Gerasimos Tsourapas this special issue enters the issues of regional cooperation. Tsourapas utilizes a single case-study, that of transport integration in the Western Balkans, to discuss the intricate interplay between local, state and international actors in their efforts to promote regional cooperation. Placing transport integration into its appropriate historical context, Tsourapas's case study underlines the incomplete nature of the Western Balkan countries' overall transition process. Despite the significant potential spillovers of transport integration, economic or otherwise, Tsourapas suggests that countries prefer to perpetuate a variety of market distortions than to proceed with the resolution of outstanding historical, political or social hindrances to regional cooperation. More importantly, Tsourapas also criticizes the role of international actors. The later exhibit inability to coordinate their numerous, oftentimes conflicting, regional projects and overall goals. They also maintain a complex web of bilateral and multilateral agreements that impede, rather than promote, efforts towards regionalism. For Tsourapas, the dilapidated nature of transport networks after the Yugoslav wars pointed to significant opportunities for reconstruction and subsequent development of an integrated transport network. Ten years on, the improbability of establishing such a network provides valuable insight to the trials and tribulations of promoting regionalism in the Western Balkans.

Finally, Dimitar Bechev focuses on regionalism in South-East Europe. In an effort to provide an accurate account of the origins, development and future of regional cooperation, Bechev analyzes how regionalism has affected three vital sectors: energy, trade and justice and home affairs. Bechev's choice of focusing on issue areas rather individual institutions allows him to better account for the apparent pervasiveness of regionalism across the peninsula. Developments in the aforementioned key areas are analyzed through the prism of three broader, overarching factors which Bechev believes affect regional cooperation: the degree of interdependence between the countries themselves, the impact of outside actors, and the formation of a regional identity. Bechev argues that regional cooperation appears strongest in areas that directly feature inside the EU's action framework. Therefore, it is the European Union as a

normative power, rather than its individual member-states or other international actors, that constitutes the single most important factor in promoting regional cooperation. Local actors, consequently, play a secondary, albeit important, role in the process of regional cooperation. For Bechev, regionalism throughout South-East Europe constitutes a complex phenomenon, one which might not constitute a panacea for the region's problems, but a piece of the puzzle that merits greater analysis nonetheless.

### NOTES

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5. On EU enlargement and the Western Balkans see the website of the European Commission: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/index_en.htm) [accessed in October 2010].
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# Obama's Europe: An Alliance in Flux

Janusz Bugajski\*

## RÉSUMÉ

L'optimisme initial de l'élection du président Barack Obama ne s'est pas traduit en un renouveau complet des relations trans-atlantiques. Alors que Washington a recentré ses priorités internationales, l'Union européenne doit encore redéfinir son rôle mondial. Le gouvernement américain est frustré par les divisions persistantes de l'UE dans la formulation d'une politique étrangère cohérente et la réticence de celle-ci à assumer des charges de sécurité plus rigoureuses, ainsi que par ses capacités chancelantes dues à une soft power. Inversement, la Maison Blanche d'Obama a été critiquée pour sa négligence à l'égard de ses Alliés et sa réticence à exprimer clairement les intérêts de sécurité et les objectifs stratégiques des États-Unis au sein de l'Europe élargie. Certains analystes estiment qu'un nouveau paradigme est nécessaire puisque les mantras de la liberté et de la démocratie ne sont plus un facteur de motivation important. La question reste à savoir ce que le contenu d'un nouveau paradigme entraînerait s'il devait inspirer les Américains et les Européens à travailler ensemble pour une cause commune.

## ABSTRACT

Initial optimism surrounding the election of President Barack Obama has not translated into a comprehensive revival of trans-Atlantic relations. While Washington has refocused its international priorities, the European Union has yet to redefine its global role. The U.S. administration is frustrated with the EU's persistent divisions in formulating a coherent foreign policy, its unwillingness to assume more onerous security burdens, and its faltering soft power capabilities. Conversely, the Obama White House has been criticized for its neglect of Allies and its unwillingness to clearly articulate U.S. security interests and strategic goals in the wider Europe. Some analysts believe that a new paradigm is needed as the mantras of freedom and democracy are no longer a major motivator. The question remains what the content of a new paradigm would entail and whether it would inspire Americans and Europeans to work together again in devotion to a common cause.

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Trans-Atlantic relations under the Barack Obama administration have not developed in the optimistic manner that was initially predicted. Rather than an exhilarating and comprehensive revival of the American-European relationship, many of the fundamental disputes and divisions between the allies have been even more starkly exposed since Obama's inauguration in January 2009 and EU officials can no longer lay the blame principally on President George W. Bush.

While the new U.S. administration has restructured and refocused its international priorities and adopted a more conciliatory form of diplomacy worldwide, the European Union (EU) needs to soberly reevaluate its global role and its impact on major international developments. Many U.S. analysts have concluded that while the Union is respected for its internal stability, relative prosperity, and trading potential it is no longer viewed as an ascending power.

The Obama White House has been criticized by several EU capitals for its neglect of Europe, for its narrower international focus, and its preoccupation with Afghanistan and Iran. Conversely, the U.S. administration is frustrated with the Union's fixation on perpetual internal problems and complex institutional arrangements, its persistent divisions in formulating a coherent foreign policy, its unwillingness to partner with the U.S. by assuming more onerous security burdens, and its faltering soft power capabilities.

### **Tradition Does Not Bind**

The U.S. and the EU maintain an extensive economic relationship and together generate approximately 60% of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The value of U.S. goods and services exported to the EU is over five times the value of U.S. exports to China and between 2000 and 2008 over half of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was located in Europe.<sup>1</sup> In the security arena, the U.S. and Europe maintain the strongest military-political alliance in history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that has expanded during the past decade to include 27 European and North American states. However, traditionally strong trans-Atlantic economic, political, cultural and social connections do not ensure a radiant future of problem-solving cooperation.

Following the election of President Barack Obama in November 2008, both sides harbored high expectations about their trans-Atlantic partner and what could be achieved together. Overblown hopes can lead to disenchantment and

EU leaders have become increasingly disappointed by Obama even while most European publics continue to hold the U.S. President in high esteem. Many EU capitals claim that Washington conducts insufficient consultation or actually ignores the views of its European allies in a less confrontational but still visible form of unilateralism. Paradoxically, while the EU was pressing for a diminished U.S. role under the Bush administration it is now complaining that Washington has scaled down its international agenda and is focusing more on Asia and the Middle East than on Europe.

As a result of more restricted resources and a focus on regions beyond Europe, Washington is not investing significantly in developing relations with the EU and is no longer prodding Union enlargement. Obama's non-appearance at the U.S.-EU summit in Washington in February 2010 was interpreted as a poignant snub regarding the limited results such summits bring. Tellingly, the President also missed the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations of the start of World War Two in Gdansk, Poland, and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Pundits speculated that this underscored Obama's shifting international priorities in dealing primarily with Afghanistan, Iran, China, Russia, and other security and economic challenges that transcended Europe and trans-Atlantic relations. Washington's approach was underscored by the focus on the Group of Twenty (G-20) economic format rather than the narrower Group of Eight (G-8) forum to include the rising powers and diminish the prominence of European participants.

The climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2009 was also a setback for the EU. The fact that the discussions culminated in a closed-door session between Obama and his counterparts from China, India, Brazil, and South Africa, "compounded the sense of rapidly declining European influence."<sup>2</sup> For its part, EU leaders were disappointed that Obama has not done more to curb carbon emissions and address climate change.

Probably the main motive for EU criticisms of the Obama administration is its exposure of persistent weaknesses and divisions within the Union itself when dealing with foreign and security policy. According to some European analysts, Brussels, Berlin, and Paris no longer have the excuse of President Bush for their own inaction, but subconsciously blame Obama for revealing their own inadequacies.<sup>3</sup> The conventional rhetoric of shared values and common interests rings increasingly hollow as there seems to be no real impetus or momentum in the relationship.

The Obama team is frustrated and disappointed by EU capitals which are unwilling to play a larger global role in support of the U.S. and more effectively deploy their substantial resources. The most telling example has been the war in Afghanistan where most EU governments have been loathed to increase their military contributions especially in volatile combat areas. Several countries have applied “caveats” that restrict where their troops can be deployed and what missions they can conduct, thus undermining flexible, adaptable, and effective Allied operations. This also indicates a diminution of EU hard power to a softer and non-lethal variety.

Washington is convinced that EU leaders lack willpower, are increasingly inward looking, seem to spend more time on process than substance, and take little foreign policy initiative. For example, while the Obama administration deliberated for three months on its policy in Afghanistan the EU did not issue any proposals while waiting for the U.S. to assume the lead. The choice of the EU’s new President of the European Council and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy has also demonstrated that EU capitals prefer slow and laborious consensus-builders and institutional coordinators rather than strong, ambitious, and charismatic leaders.

The Lisbon Treaty was welcomed by Washington as a mechanism to strengthen Europe’s role in world affairs and concretize the partnership with the U.S. However, after years of debate there is a dawning realization that the treaty will take years to clarify and implement. In many respects, it has created even more confusion in Washington as to who will make foreign policy decisions for the EU, to what degree the consensus principle will apply, and whether national governments will diminish in importance. The Treaty itself has merely glossed over major differences between EU capitals on important foreign policy and security issues.

In the context of these mutually critical observations, the trans-oceanic relationship can be usefully examined through three prisms: the debate on the future of NATO and of trans-Atlantic security in general; the search for a common and coherent EU foreign policy; and the impact of Washington’s détente with Russia on the EU and the wider European region.

## **Divisions Over NATO's Future**

Internal debate about the future of the Alliance assumed some urgency following the Russo-Georgia war in August 2008, especially for new NATO members concerned about the effectiveness of territorial defense and the

viability of Article 5 security guarantees.<sup>4</sup> The importance of defining NATO's *raison d'être* was further reinforced by the focus of the Obama administration on pacifying Afghanistan and using the Alliance as the primary tool.

Two main positions on NATO's future have emerged: the traditionalist and the globalist. For traditionalists, a regionally anchored NATO must focus on its main functions of defending allies and securing the European theater. Traditionalists do not believe NATO is equipped or capable of effective nation building and failure could discredit the Alliance. In contrast, globalists assert that the Alliance must manage a range of crises and unconventional threats and engage with non-NATO countries and international organizations; otherwise the organization would lose its rationale.

Supporters of NATO enlargement include several globalists, such as the U.S. and the UK, while some traditionalists such as Germany and Belgium oppose further expansion. The Central-East European (CEE) states are both enlargers and traditionalists although willing to participate in a globalist framework primarily to maintain an active alliance with the U.S. In the European context, one can distinguish between enlargers, who support an expanding and effective NATO that can defend its members, and restrictors, or proponents of a smaller and less militarized organization with a reduced American role and more primacy given to European security structures.<sup>5</sup>

Fears are evident in CEE that the transformation of NATO into a globally active organization could undermine the validity of article five guarantees and the future of European security. Paradoxically, many of these countries have contributed significantly to U.S. and NATO operations in Iraq and Afghanistan to demonstrate that they are dependable allies and as an insurance payment for their own future security. They fear that any perceived failure of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan could endanger U.S. commitments to NATO in general as a credible security and defense organization.

Even while NATO debates its future role, it faces internal problems stemming from the limited political and financial commitments of member states. This has been highlighted by the Obama administration. In February 2010, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates challenged European allies to stop cutting support for NATO in the face of current and emerging threats.<sup>6</sup> In his estimation, "the demilitarization of Europe, where large swaths of the general public and political class are averse to military force and the risks that go with it," has become an obstacle to long-term security. Shortfalls in funding and

capabilities make it difficult for the Alliance to operate in confronting security threats. According to Gates, only five of 28 allies have achieved the established target of spending two percent of GDP on defense.

Voices on both sides of the Atlantic have been calling for closer NATO-EU cooperation and several governments in CEE see the forging of a deeper partnership as essential for deterring threats against any European state. Such collaboration would need to be enacted at both the consultative and operational levels so there is no competition between NATO and the EU in the security arena. Ideally, NATO's hard power and the EU's soft power capabilities could be combined in conflict prevention, counter-insurgency operations, peace enforcement, and post-conflict reconstruction. However, relations between the two organizations remain undeveloped in terms of joint planning and integrated operations, while the financial crisis has focused attention on the limited resources available and the necessity to avoid duplication in military capabilities. In addition, some EU capitals remain suspicious that a closer NATO-EU partnership would enable Washington to play a more prominent role in European affairs.

### **Elusive Common European Policy**

From an American perspective, the EU needs to reevaluate its global role and impact on major international developments. Despite attempts to centralize and better coordinate EU foreign policy, the results of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), initiated under the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, have been limited. In an effort to ensure greater coordination and consistency in EU foreign policy, the Lisbon Treaty, which went into effect on December 1, 2009, created a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *de facto* merging the post of High Representative for CFSP with the European Commissioner for External Relations. Additionally, the security-oriented European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was renamed as the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).

Unfortunately, these structural and institutional alterations may have generated more confusion than clarity concerning the Union's foreign policy decision-making and implementation. Although the new EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, will eventually have at her disposal a separate diplomatic corps, the External Action Service (EAS), decisions on major foreign policy questions will evidently remain tethered to the principle of consensus among 27 national foreign

ministries rather than operating through qualified majorities.

The EU's most obvious security failure has been its inability to develop a large deployable combat force, even though it has conducted small-scale peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in several conflict zones. Defense budgets have shrunk across Europe, with only a handful of countries spending above 2 percent of GDP, and the CSDP has not encouraged EU governments to boost their military capabilities. Even while the Obama administration is open to NATO-CSDP cooperation, the latter lacks sufficient credibility and muscle and avoids "hard power" tasks. Its main point of complementarity with NATO seems to be in post-conflict peace keeping, policing, and humanitarian response.

The EU has planned for several years to develop a Europe Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) with readily available battle groups. However, despite formal EU approval for such units in 2004, progress has not been rapid. The initial idea was for member states to contribute 60,000 combat troops to assemble for training and operations outside the EU, including civilian assistance, contributions to UN peacekeeping forces, and intervention to separate warring factions. In all these areas the EU would deploy if NATO decided not to be involved. The ERRF force, consisting of several units of 1500 deployable troops, was supposed to be available by 2007, and planning was initiated to prepare 13 battle groups ready for action within ten days of a policy decision.

However, problems have bedeviled the ERRF from the outset. It is difficult to convince EU members to mobilize forces for EU missions while they are simultaneously boosting contributions to NATO operations around the world. NATO itself has not been able to establish an effective 25,000 strong rapid reaction Response Force (NRF) because member states lack the money, troops, and equipment to contribute to various UN, EU, and NATO missions. The EU's ERRF faces the same problems and is in competition with NATO for scarce resources. Critics of the ERRF also contend that it will undermine NATO and discourage U.S. involvement in Europe. In addition, the U.S. has expressed concerns about a separate EU military planning apparatus which could draw on military resources currently at NATO's disposal.

With regard to foreign and security policy, despite the passage of the Lisbon Treaty and the consolidation of some EU institutions a more unified approach is not imminent. On the contrary, it may highlight even greater differences between member states unwilling to be bound by a single decision-maker. Among a multitude of problems, the EU remains uncertain on how to deal



with its “eastern neighborhood” or with Russia. While its failures as a hard power have been evident in its disunited foreign policies and its shrinking military capabilities, the EU’s political and economic model may also wane as a soft power instrument if it closes its doors to further enlargement, a sentiment that has grown among EU publics during the economic recession.<sup>7</sup>

The EU will be severely tested over the coming decade as it has failed to ensure its position as a global power and even its long-term economic growth is under question given the economic downturn, the heavy indebtedness of several EU governments, and questions over the future of the Euro monetary zone. According to Ivan Krastev, a prominent Bulgarian analyst, it was due to America’s global hegemony that the EU emerged on to the world stage as a superpower.”<sup>8</sup> The U.S. security umbrella enabled the EU to focus on economic development and political integration without developing military power. However, as America’s dominance diminishes, the EU will become more exposed to global security competition, but without its own coordinated “hard power” capabilities and with steadily weakening soft power tools.

### **Obama's Rapprochement with Russia**

The George W. Bush administration did not consider Russia as a major international player but as a relatively weak post-imperial state that could be ignored in many policy decisions. Although Russia regained some of its strength during the last decade, it still contributed little to international problem-solving, exaggerated its capabilities, and resisted constructive engagement.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Russia could be viewed as a declining power benefiting from a brief resurgence driven by temporarily high energy prices and with a leadership that sought to stifle the development of a more secure Europe tied to NATO and the U.S.

During the first half of the Obama administration Russia has been publicly depicted as a key partner for the U.S. However, in looking more closely at Obama’s approach, Russia is courted in a narrow range of security-related issues and is not viewed as strategically or economically ascendant. Washington’s purpose in highlighting a Russian partnership appears aimed at placating its elite’s sense of global importance while tapping Moscow’s cooperation and preventing its leaders from sabotaging U.S. interests.<sup>10</sup> The absence of extensive economic connections, where trade with Russia amounts to less than 1% of the U.S. total, indicates that in the event of renewed political conflicts common material interests are unlikely to reduce tensions.<sup>11</sup>

The notion has been widely disseminated that improved U.S.-Russia relations enhance security throughout Europe. This is certainly true if it helps restrict Russia's aggressive moves to undermine the sovereignty of neighboring states and results in a less confrontational relationship with NATO. However, the practical long-term impact of the U.S.-Russia détente needs to be more thoroughly assessed and counter arguments may also be valid.

For instance, Moscow may calculate that bilateral cooperation over Afghanistan and Iran are such paramount U.S. interests that Washington would be willing to retreat in other arenas to make sure that it succeeds. The Obama "reset" button in itself raised Russia's global stature. It was initially viewed with some suspicion and distrust in Moscow, although several pro-Kremlin analysts claimed that Washington had finally acknowledged that Russia had recovered from its post-Cold War torpor and would again be treated as a great power.<sup>12</sup> A number of analysts believed that the "reset" actually indicated U.S. weakness in the midst of two wars and an economic recession.

Some analysts even asserted that Obama's policies signaled a "grand bargain" with Moscow in which the U.S. would permanently halt further NATO enlargement and accede to a Russian sphere of primary influence in the former Soviet Union in return for Russia's diplomatic and practical help with Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea, and other security concerns. To demonstrate closer consultations at high official levels, a U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission with thirteen working groups was established in the aftermath of President Obama's visit to Moscow in July 2009. When Washington announced in May 2010 that Russia's military occupation of Georgia presented "no obstacle" to U.S.-Russian civilian nuclear cooperation and other collaborative ventures, Moscow understood that the new détente was clearly working to its advantage.<sup>13</sup>

Warming U.S.-Russia ties raised suspicions in parts of CEE, especially in the Baltic states and Poland, over Washington's potential concessions to Moscow. As a result, U.S. officials made strenuous efforts to underscore that they did not support direct security trade-offs with Russia or the consolidation of Russian and American spheres at the expense of other states. Vice President Joe Biden's visit to Kyiv and Tbilisi in July 2009 was intended to reinforce such arguments. Biden's remarks that Russia was a country in economic crisis and needed an arms control agreement much more than the U.S., was interpreted in Moscow as "plan B" to the Obama "reset button." Russian analysts believed that if Moscow did not make the required compromises and the U.S. did not

gain benefits from the Kremlin over Afghanistan and Iran, then Washington would aim to push Russia to the periphery of world politics.<sup>14</sup>

However, Biden's assumptions that Russia's economic difficulties ensured that the government will be more accommodating are debatable. Indeed, in the short-term Moscow could become more belligerent to disguise and deflect from its internal problems unless treated as an important international player. Furthermore, the White House left unclear what it considered to be the "red lines" of Russia's behavior in Kremlin attempts to re-establish demarcated spheres of influence. Red lines become blurred and diluted where Russia's influence seeps in through unconventional instruments such as energy blackmail, corrupt business connections, conflict manipulation, and peace-keeping deployments.

Obama's announcement of a new *détente* with Russia in early 2009 had little immediate impact on concrete policy making in Moscow. The Kremlin eventually approved the transit of logistical supplies across Russia to NATO forces in Afghanistan and backed a new set of UN sanctions against Iran in June 2010. However, Moscow reserved the right to close its territory to NATO passage and continued developing economic relations with Tehran. Moreover, Russia's leaders periodically tested American reactions by ratcheting up tensions with selected pro-Western neighbors, such as drafting legislation to make it easier to send troops abroad to avowedly defend Russian citizens.

Michael McFaul, the U.S. National Security Council's senior director for Russian and Eurasian affairs and the chief architect of Obama's Russia policy, stated that Washington harbored no illusions about the worldview of Russian officials who consider the U.S. as the primary adversary.<sup>15</sup> Given this official assessment, U.S. policy was presumably intended either to pacify Moscow through strategic engagement or to outmaneuver Moscow through diplomatic cunning. Leaders in Moscow may not fully grasp that Russia no longer occupies a central position in American strategic thinking or in its foreign and security policy.<sup>16</sup> However, an acknowledgement of its reduced status in the U.S. worldview may encourage Russia's belligerence to provoke Washington's reaction. And this may be a useful argument for the Obama team in purposively raising Russia's esteem through bilateral arms control agreements and other forms of cooperation and thereby deflating Moscow's anti-American and conflict promoting agendas.

Rather than elevating Russia to a global power, the war with Georgia in August 2008 may have demonstrated Russia's preoccupation with relatively

minor territorial issues and its limited military capacities. Additionally, in the post-war setting the Obama White House was much more concerned in gaining Moscow's support in pressing international disputes and forging strategic arms agreements than in challenging Russia's neighborhood influence. For instance, in May 2010 Washington revived an accord with Moscow in which the two countries would cooperate on civilian nuclear energy; the initiative had been shelved after the August 2008 war.

An effective U.S. policy toward Russia needs to combine cooperation in arenas of common interest while tempering Moscow's assimilationist approach toward its neighbors. A failure to oppose Russia's assertive regional behavior could revive several dormant conflicts. Washington should not exaggerate what the Russians can offer in reducing regional threats and global crises.<sup>17</sup> For instance, it was doubtful whether the diplomatic energy expended in gaining Moscow's support for moderate sanctions against Iran through the UN Security Council in June 2010 actually made any major difference to Tehran's intent to develop nuclear weapons. At some point the White House needs to take full stock of what the new *détente* has accomplished for international security and for U.S. and NATO strategic interests.<sup>18</sup>

The notion of a "strategic partnership" between the U.S. and Russia is premature. It assumes that Moscow and Washington share strategic objectives in terms of their global role.<sup>19</sup> Strategic partners not only cooperate in particular endeavors, they are also bound by common interests, values, and goals. While Russia can be a tactical partner with the Alliance in dealing with specific threats such as nuclear proliferation or in negotiating arms control accords, the government in Moscow does not share the long-term strategic targets of either NATO or the EU. NATO allies respect the will of sovereign states to enter multinational institutions of their choice. They also favor and support the development of democratic systems and legitimate governments that combine national stability with respect for human and civil rights. The same principles do not apply for the Russian authorities.

### **Impact of New West-East *Détente***

In general terms, when U.S.-Russian relations improve, pressure is eased within Europe as the EU becomes potentially less divided in its Russia policy, especially if Moscow is not engaged in some stark new aggression in its neighborhood. This appeared to be the case after President Obama took office in January 2009 and Washington stressed the importance of collaborating with

Moscow in pursuing common security interests in Afghanistan and Iran, and in the control of nuclear weapons. The new U.S. approach was seen as generating stability in Russia at a time when the EU also seemed less focused on promoting democratic reforms. For Berlin, Paris, and other EU capitals, stability in Russia was more important than the country's systemic transformation.

Although some EU officials remained concerned that closer U.S.-Russia ties could lead to a downgrading of Moscow's relations with the EU, countries that had upheld cooperative relations with Russia throughout the George W. Bush administration felt relieved and even vindicated by Obama's policies. Indeed, policy makers in Berlin and Paris believed that the previous U.S. government was the main culprit in unsettling relations with Moscow through its actions in the Middle East and had provoked the war in Georgia by giving Tbilisi the prospect of NATO membership which convinced the Saakashvili government to act with impunity against Russia's alleged national interests. They choose to ignore Moscow's intent to recreate a regional condominium under its supervision or considered it a benign hegemony that would unburden the EU of having to support and integrate the former Soviet republics.

In the wake of the White House "reset" with the Kremlin, several EU governments who had been most outspoken about Russia's policies appeared to soften their stance and new avenues of cooperation were pursued. For example, since early 2009 London has focused on manageable questions with Moscow seeking gradual bilateral improvements.<sup>20</sup> Several CEE governments were willing to give the new U.S. President the opportunity to curtail Russia's aggressiveness and make it a more constructive international player. This was especially visible in the stance of Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk who sought to improve Polish-Russian relations even before Obama's election.

Russian authorities calculated that it would be more difficult to drive political wedges between the EU and the U.S. under the Obama administration as there were fewer obvious points of disagreement that they could exploit whether over Iraq, counterterrorism, human rights, or missile defense. On the other hand, a lessened U.S. focus on trans-Atlantic relations could serve Russia's long-term goal of disconnecting the Alliance. Moscow also decided to settle some enduring disputes with selected European states in order to gain greater leverage within the Union or with particular European states outside the EU to further its strategic and economic ambitions.

Poland's Donald Tusk government sought to improve relations with Moscow after assuming office in November 2007. Indeed, several CEE capitals believe

that the Obama administration may be taking credit for improving their relations with Moscow, whereas the Polish case demonstrates that such bilateral revivals were already underway before the U.S. “reset.”<sup>21</sup> The rapprochement is largely driven by strategic considerations as Moscow views Poland as a rising power within the EU, as evident in the revival of the Weimar Triangle, a French-German-Polish initiative to coordinate their European policy. It is therefore offering closer business and energy connections between the two states to increase Russia’s influence within the Union.<sup>22</sup> However, the bilateral thaw is not irreversible as a great deal depends on Russia’s internal developments and its external behavior during a period of outreach in pursuit of economic modernization.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, a new crisis in U.S.-Russia relations is likely to have negative ramifications in parts of CEE, particularly in Poland.

### **Wider Europe in Question**

One shortcoming of Obama’s approach has been the President’s inability or unwillingness to clearly articulate U.S. security interests and strategic goals in the wider European, Caucasian, and Central Asian regions, even if these are not currently overarching national priorities. These interests can be encapsulated in at least four policy objectives: first, consolidating bilateral partnerships and regional alliances to prevent the emergence of weak, fractured, or conflicted states that undermine regional security; second, precluding the expansion of any dominant regional power or regional alliance that challenges broader American interests and even the American presence; third, involving a diverse array of states to assist Washington and NATO in combating common threats stemming from the broader Middle East and South Asia; and fourth, ensuring the development of energy resources and their secure transportation from the Caspian Basin to Europe via the Caucasus and Black Sea region to uphold the stability of America’s European allies.

Despite its assurances that it will not support the delineation of interest spheres, in practice the Obama White House concluded that it would not vigorously challenge Moscow in its immediate neighborhood and could share influence in some regions. It calculated that even if Ukraine and other countries slipped under Russia’s security and economic umbrella, this would not damage U.S. interests which center on much more vital concerns over Afghanistan, Iran, and nuclear proliferation. Indeed, closer Russian supervision over the post-Soviet republics was considered beneficial by some Western officials as such arrangement would purportedly generate fewer

conflicts with Moscow. In effect, this constituted an informal concordat with Russia over respective zones of interest. However, the effectiveness of such an agreement will be tested particularly where resistance to Moscow's pressures and encroachments results in violent conflict or impacts more directly on one of the new NATO members.

Perceptions that President Obama has disengaged from the south Caucasus grew during 2010, as evident in several missteps, including: the failure to appoint a U.S. ambassador to Azerbaijan for almost a year; public indifference or lack of a coherent strategy regarding Moscow's purchase of a French Mistral ship that will help project Russian power in the Black Sea; a fixation on opening the Armenian-Turkish border without tackling the more important and inter-linked territorial disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan; and a growing perception that the U.S. favored Armenia in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh because of pressures on the White House from America's Armenian lobby.<sup>24</sup>

Washington has not intensified its security cooperation with either Azerbaijan or Armenia or provide more impetus in mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Baku in particular felt frustrated that it had been taken for granted by Washington despite its stellar record in providing transit for coalition forces to Central Asia and Afghanistan; contributing troops to U.S.-led operations; and spearheading Caspian energy development. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to the region in the first week of July 2010 was intended to dispel perceptions of U.S. disengagement, but the practical result of her presence remained unclear.

In the case of Ukraine, during the first half of 2010, U.S. reactions were barely audible to the closer integration of Russia and Ukraine, as evident in plans to absorb key sectors of the Ukrainian economy and extending the presence of Russia's Black Sea fleet. While President Viktor Yanukovich endeavored to bring Kyiv closer to Moscow, calculating that a less disruptive relationship would enhance the country's economic performance, both Washington and Brussels calculated that such moves did not threaten Western interests and could bring stability to Ukraine. Western disengagement in turn emboldened the Russian authorities and weakened Kyiv's potential bargaining position vis-à-vis Moscow. Such a short-sighted approach by the U.S. and the EU ignored the potential radicalization of Ukrainian politics precipitated by Yanukovich's policies and the likelihood of serious domestic conflicts in the years ahead.

## The West Balkan Puzzle

Despite substantial military, diplomatic, and economic investment over the past 15 years, the West Balkan region does not feature at the center of U.S. government attention.<sup>25</sup> Under both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations, South East Europe has been absent from Washington's top foreign policy priorities. From a White House perspective the West Balkan region has evolved into a primary responsibility of the EU, although America can still play a supportive role. Growing EU involvement is understood through the reduction of the U.S. troop presence, the increase of EU security instruments, EU incentivized structural reforms, and a roadmap toward eventual Union accession. In this regard, Slovenia was the first comprehensive success story and Croatia is now on track to join its northern neighbor in the EU. However, the rest of the former Yugoslavia remains more problematic.

Some voices, including Balkan experts and former officials in Washington, continue to warn about unresolved problems and potential new instabilities in the region. They have been urging Obama and Vice President Joseph Biden, who was a key player in shaping U.S. policy toward the region during the Clinton administration, to stay engaged and not allow the EU to preside over any possible deterioration in regional stability. There is a lingering suspicion among former U.S. policymakers who witnessed the horrific anti-civilian wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo concerning EU capabilities and political willpower. What they fear is that the preoccupation with the EU's internal restructuring and the focus on economic and fiscal challenges within the EU zone will lead to complacency and the neglect of niggling problems that could escalate in the years ahead, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo.

To defuse a potential Bosnian crisis, the visit of Vice President Biden to three Balkan capitals in May 2009 has been followed by attempts by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, together with Sweden's Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, to mediate a new agreement on constitutional and structural reform between the three Bosnian protagonists. However, the effort seems to have stalled and some observers argue that occasional high level visits and short-term mediation efforts without sustained involvement may be interpreted as signs of desperation or detachment without sufficient pressure or inducements for the protagonists.

Kosovo's ongoing domestic and international problems also remain a source of concern in Washington. Internally, the danger of partition of northern Kosovo still hangs over the new country and some leaders in Belgrade favor



such a scenario having understood that Kosovo in its entirety will not return under Serbian government control. Internationally, Kosovo is making slow progress in gaining access to international institutions. Kosovo may be in danger of becoming a "frozen state" that cannot move toward UN, NATO, or EU membership. This paralysis may be the recipe for public unrest and new conflicts that could be exploited by militants.

Following the 2003 EU summit in Thessaloniki EU leaders recognized all the West Balkan countries as prospective Union members. Since that time, Croatia is on the final track for entry, FYROM has candidate status, while Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA) have been arranged with all other states, except Kosovo, to accelerate reform programs and promote integration. However, the continuing economic storm rumbling through Europe may indefinitely postpone the entry of candidates and aspirants from the Western Balkans after the expected entry of Croatia by 2011. Indeed, the Balkan states could find themselves in a vicious circle, whereby denial of EU entry combined with economic stagnation and uncertainty may stall the necessary reform process. This will in turn retard economic growth and lessen each country's qualifications for EU accession by stimulating the negative forces that hinder accession.

Despite U.S. urging to include the entire West Balkan region in all pan-European institutions, some EU governments may become less supportive of the membership of West Balkan countries, arguing that they may prove to be fiscally profligate and require rescue packages at a time when support for EU enlargement is dissipating among the general public in the member states. A great deal will depend on the depth and longevity of the economic malaise and how economic improvements affect specific social sectors in individual states. Prolonged economic hardship can produce assorted extremist movements and may mobilize a frustrated segment of the younger generation. The rise of militancy may push some mainstream parties to adopt more radical and discriminatory programs toward minorities, immigrants, or political opponents. We may witness the election or inclusion in government of a greater number of populists or nationalists while widespread economic dislocation could also increase ethnic polarization and conflict.

Given this inauspicious environment two questions remain: is the EU equipped and prepared to help resolve the most pressing problems, and what will be the extent and effect of U.S. involvement? Brussels needs to find the right balance between effective incentives and effective conditionality in terms

of West Balkan membership in the EU. Too short a timeframe and weak conditionality will result in superficial reform, while an indefinite timeframe for Union accession may prove to be an insufficient incentive to reform.

Economic recovery and development will also necessitate more concrete regional cooperation through joint business projects, free trade, open borders, and the liberal movement of labor. Such measures would make the Balkans more competitive in the global market and more attractive as an investment destination. In several economic sectors, from manufactures and services to tourism the region may have comparative future value for old and new investors. Investment and reform could then reinforce economic development and speed up each country's path through the SAA agreements toward EU membership.

While the EU is being prodded to take a more active role in the West Balkans, there is speculation about an urgent need for a special U.S. envoy to the region. Although there is little immediate likelihood that Washington will appoint a presidential envoy, some important questions need to be answered about the precise role such a potentially high-level representative would play. It is common wisdom to assume that American leadership is necessary if anything serious or long-term is to be accomplished. It remains evident that leaders of all nations in ex-Yugoslavia are convinced that EU institutions do not exert sufficient leadership, are deeply divided by national agendas, and are loathed to use force or even threaten tough actions against aggressors.

In the absence of resolute U.S. political and military intervention in the 1990s the wars and mass slaughters in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosova would most probably have continued for several more years and resulted in additional separatist and annexationist agendas. Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina may not have regained their territorial integrity, Montenegro and Serbia would probably have been at war, and FYROM may not have survived at all. However, we are now in a different era. Washington is heavily engaged elsewhere and in much more pressing trouble spots and has inevitably handed over more responsibilities to Brussels. The EU, despite its obvious shortcomings, is much more self-confident than it was in the 1990s and has developed a plan for the gradual inclusion of all countries on the peninsula.

But above all, there is no imminent threat of bloodshed, war, ethnic expulsion, armed insurgency, or mass terrorism in the Balkans. The new post-Yugoslav states may not all be fully stable but they are no longer chronically insecure. Officials in the Obama administration contend that there is no urgent

need for a special envoy as they are already closely engaged in the region. U.S. officials also ask a number of pertinent questions: what exactly would a special envoy do, in terms of their mandate and priorities, and how would he or she interact with EU representatives? After the headline announcements and photo opportunities are concluded, what would be the order of business and how effective a role could a regional envoy play? Indeed, there are pluses and minuses to such a position. On the plus side, an envoy would presumably have the direct ear of the U.S. President; he or she could launch various regional initiatives and benefit from the close attention of Brussels to such prominent American involvement. And conversely, regional players would take more seriously a high official with a well-known name and appointed directly by Obama.

However, there are also some major minuses in the appointment of a special U.S. envoy. When a war was raging or the threat of war was looming the envoy's role was clear – to end or prevent violent conflict by forcing or cajoling the competing parties into compromises and negotiating a stable peace. Absent a war, the envoy's task would be much more complex, without clear end points and with no quick fixes. This could in turn undermine the envoy's credibility as high expectations may be unfulfilled. One needs to be practical and determine what a U.S. envoy could actually accomplish in stitching Bosnia-Herzegovina into one functioning state and pressuring Serbia into accepting Kosovo's independence. In other words, what would be the consequences if Bosnia's Serb leaders continue to resist constitutional reforms or Serbia and Russia continue to block Kosovo's admittance to international institutions?

Bosnian Serb opposition to EU and U.S. requirements for functional statehood and international institutional integration will not be resolved by diplomacy, statements, conferences, or even threats of exclusion from the EU, NATO, or other beneficial multi-national bodies. An envoy would need to have teeth to be effective but what could the teeth consist of and where would they bite? NATO will not bomb Banja Luka to ensure constitutional reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina and American troops will not invade Serbia to ensure its recognition of Kosovo's statehood. Although progress can be made at the margins and a high-level envoy may initially gain more local attention, ultimately it is up to the actors in conflict to reach a compromise that is perceived as beneficial by both sides. Alternatively, they may never agree and actually stumble into outright conflict that could provoke outside intervention. Paradoxically, such a scenario may enable Washington working in tandem with the EU to play a more effective role in hammering out novel regional agreements.

## What Future for Trans-Atlanticism?

In a telling speech in Strasbourg on April 4, 2009, President Obama made it plainly clear that Europe is not indispensable to the U.S. while the U.S. does remain indispensable for Europe, especially in guaranteeing the continent's ultimate security.<sup>26</sup> Such a strong message indicates two core principles for the current administration. First, trans-Atlantic relations will be primarily result oriented and measured by the concrete contributions made by each capital and the Union as a whole to specific security challenges. And second, there may no longer be any special bilateral trans-Atlantic relationships but a balance between EU states offering issue-specific partnerships to Washington.

Some analysts who criticize both sides of the Atlantic believe that a new paradigm is needed in the relationship and that the mantras of freedom, NATO, democracy, unity, and prosperity no longer convince or motivate either the public or the political leadership. However, the question remains what the content of a new paradigm or a novel vision would entail and whether it would inspire the Americans and Europeans to work together again in devotion to a common cause.

One would first need to determine concrete all-encompassing goals that are genuinely shared by the allies before establishing a strategy for achieving them. Process without purpose is demoralizing, time-consuming, and ultimately wasteful. Climate protection, fiscal reform, economic recovery, energy rationality, or counter-terrorism do not have sufficient inspirational value on either side of the Atlantic. On the other hand, grander visions such as bringing Europe and Asia closer together through extensive and intensive economic and energy linkages would require resolute and convincing leadership that may be lacking on both sides of the Atlantic.

Quite possibly, grand causes such as national liberation, freedom, and democracy only appear every few generations thus making the current phase one of blander and often disunited problem-solving. Grand goals and paradigms are usually pursued either to build or expand essential structures that benefit the entire alliance or to avert, manage, and resolve crises that threaten the entire alliance. Although the European project is incomplete and is riddled with problems, for the foreseeable future it neither generates the security nor the insecurity that would attract deeper American engagement.

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18. Friedman contends that "START talks are from a world long passed. The issues now revolve around Russia's desire for a sphere of influence, and the willingness and ability of the West to block that ambition. In George Friedman, "The Western View of Russia," *Stratfor*, September 10, 2009, [http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=14443&Itemid=132](http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14443&Itemid=132)
19. Robert Legvold, "The Russia File," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009, Vol.88, No. 4, pp.78-93. Legvold asserts that Russia needs to "invest in promoting progressive change in its neighborhood" but does not specify what that would entail and why Moscow would support democratization among adjacent states if this pulls them away from Russia's orbit.
20. Based on the author's discussions with UK government officials in London in October 2009.
21. A point made repeatedly to the author during meetings with officials and analysts in Warsaw, Poland between July 1 and 3, 2010.
22. Adam Newman, "Is Russian Energy Dependence Threatened by Poland?" *O&G*,

*Next Generation*, Sunday May 2, 2010, available at: <http://www.cisoilgas.com/news/polands-shale-gas-deposits>. Moscow is concerned that exploitation of vast reserves of Polish shale gas could challenge the economic viability of Nord Stream. Hence, it is seeking new energy deals with Warsaw. With an estimated 1.36 trillion cubic metres of shale gas Poland has the potential to increase the EU's reserves by almost half and offer a long-term alternative to Gazprom as a major energy provider to the EU.

23. Based on the author's meetings with officials and non-governmental experts in Warsaw, Poland, between July 1 and 4, 2010.
24. Vladimir Socor, "Is the United States Losing Azerbaijan? (Part Four)," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 7, No. 80, April 26, 2010. Socor points out that "The linkage between border opening and troop withdrawal had been a fundamental element in the negotiating process for almost a decade, and is Turkish policy since 1993 (when Armenian forces crossed from Karabakh into Azerbaijan's interior). Breaking that linkage –as per the October 2009 Turkey-Armenia protocols, strongly encouraged by the U.S.– would undermine Baku's patiently constructed diplomatic strategy for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Baku proposes opening all borders to trade and transit as part of the first stage in the conflict resolution process, linked with the Armenian troop withdrawal."
25. For a more detailed discussion of U.S. policy toward the region see the first issue of *The Western Balkans Policy Review*, published in September 2010 by the Lavrentis Lavrientiadis Chair in South East European Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C.
26. "Transcript: Remarks By President Obama At Strasbourg Town Hall," April 4, 2009, available at: [http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/news/2009/04/transcript\\_remarks\\_by\\_president\\_obama\\_at\\_strasbourg.php](http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/news/2009/04/transcript_remarks_by_president_obama_at_strasbourg.php)

# **Dark Knights in the Balkans: for how long will the EU remain the only 'game' in town?**

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## **RÉSUMÉ**

Cet article analyse la transformation de l'environnement de la politique étrangère des Balkans à partir du milieu des années 1990 jusqu'à aujourd'hui. L'argument avancé est que l'UE et l'OTAN ont essentiellement opéré comme deux piliers d'un régime unique euro-atlantique dans la région de façon incontestée pendant près de deux décennies. La politique des deux organisations internationales a été, à bien des égards, révisionniste et basée sur des principes utilitaires plutôt que sur des principes normatifs internationaux pour la révision du statut quo territorial et la reconnaissance des États successeurs de l'ex-Yougoslavie.

L'article expose aussi les conditions historiques qui ont favorisé l'émergence de ce qui est considéré comme un paradigme unipolaire-multilatéral dans les Balkans, ayant surgi dans les années 1990. Il évoque ensuite la résurgence des options diplomatiques traditionnelles multipolaires-bilatérales en matière de politique étrangère dans des Balkans pendant la première décennie de ce siècle, principalement associées à un effet de levier croissant de la Turquie et la Russie dans la région. Enfin, il y a un débat sur les conditions propices à une friction entre ces deux approches culturellement distinctes de la politique étrangère.

## **ABSTRACT**

This article analyses the transformation of the Balkan foreign policy environment from the middle of the 1990's until today. The argument put forward is that the EU and NATO have essentially operated as twin pillars of a single Euro-Atlantic regime in the region that has for nearly two decades been uncontested. The policy of the two international organizations had in many ways been revisionist in that utilitarian principles rather than established normative international principles were employed for the revision of the territorial status quo and the recognition of successor states in the former Yugoslavia.

The article introduces the historical conditions that were conducive to the emergence

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of what is hereby referred to as a unipolar-multilateral paradigm of diplomacy in the Balkans, which emerged in the 1990s. It then goes on to discuss the resurgence of traditional multipolar-bilateral diplomatic options in Balkan diplomacy in the first decade of this century, which is mainly associated with the increasing leverage of Turkey and Russia in the region. Finally, there is a discussion of the conditions that are conducive to a paradigmatic friction between these two culturally distinct approaches to foreign policy.

The choice with which small, economically weak and war tormented Balkan states are presented today is not alignment with one hegemonic alliance or another; such were the dilemmas of the Cold War. Nowadays the critical dilemma is between diplomatic paradigms. The argument put forward in this paper is that the Balkan region is gradually shifting away from a diplomatic regime where the diplomatic paradigm of *unipolar multilateralism* was simply unchallenged. In the current transitional phase, Balkan states may have to resume a traditional, *multipolar-bilateral* approach to foreign policy, that is, a diplomatic paradigm informed by the traditional hypothesis of a basically anarchic system of international relations.

What is meant by the term 'unipolar multilateralism' is a diplomatic paradigm associated with a Euro-Atlantic identity, which goes hand in hand with the objective of joining NATO and the EU. This paradigm is unipolar in that it is founded upon the assumption that Washington will remain a 'political Rome' that promotes and guarantees democratic pluralism and an open market economy in global governance. In turn, it is a multilateral paradigm in that states committed to a Euro-Atlantic identity are coextensively committed to acting in concert rather than unilaterally through the *fora* of NATO and the EU; in turn, this implies an explicit commitment to the vision of ever deepening socioeconomic integration in the European continent.

By contrast multipolar bilateralism refers to the cultivation of traditional bilateral relations with emerging regional powers, such as Russia and Turkey; such an approach assumes that the role of the USA in global governance is less than hegemonic. It is a multipolar paradigm in that it assumes that there is no single hegemonic centre that enforces a single set of values and institutional blueprints, which means that foreign policy experts must explore all options in foreign policy. In sum, this more traditional approach to foreign policy assumes that the common vision for a united Europe has been called into question. Thus diplomacy becomes the art of forming bilateral, short lived and issue-specific alliances.

The coexistence of the two diplomatic paradigms in the Balkans increases the likelihood for the emergence of the 'dark knight' dilemma. The image of the 'dark knight' is associated with the philosophical conflict between a moral principle and an overwhelming utilitarian consideration.<sup>1</sup> Thus any position of power is founded upon a normatively delineated mandate, which maybe anything from a treaty to a simple code of conduct. This foundation is expected to be comprehensive, covering a number of situations; but, there are always situations emerging where following the rules as given creates a conflict with a more fundamental duty. For instance, 'collateral damage' is often seen as an inescapable consequence of any and every military intervention, although civilian casualties are by definition illegal casualties; this is a conflict of rules of conduct with utilitarian considerations all generals learn to live with. In this scheme, everyone in a position of responsibility will sooner or later confront the 'dark knight's dilemma.

In foreign policy the 'dark knight's' dilemma is usually associated with hegemonic power-politics. More often than not, it is a great power that can decide to either operate within the normative framework of the existing status quo or, alternatively, to act on the basis of a utilitarian principle and – in a revisionist fashion – redefine its normative mandate. On the contrary, the choice for peripheral or 'weak' states is usually more dramatic: alignment with the status quo or systemic marginalization. But, when great power competition is dynamic or, in other words, if the norms of the international system are themselves in a transitional phase, then small states are confronted with a single utilitarian or indeed existential dilemma, namely to find themselves on the victor's side or suffer the consequences. The choice of diplomatic paradigms today is in many respects a choice between status quo diplomacy or revisionism. And it is a dilemma increasingly pressing in the Balkans, because the political commitment of the Euro-Atlantic community in the region has been called into question.

This paper introduces the historical conditions that were conducive to the emergence of what is hereby referred to as a unipolar-multilateral paradigm of diplomacy in the Balkans, which emerged in the 1990s. It then goes on to discuss the resurgence of traditional multipolar-bilateral diplomatic options in Balkan diplomacy in the first decade of this century, which is mainly associated with the increasing leverage of Turkey and Russia in the region. Finally, there is a discussion of the conditions that are conducive to a paradigmatic friction between these two culturally distinct approaches to foreign policy.

## The Emergence of Unipolar Revisionism

The violent dissolution of Yugoslavia was a mutually constitutive experience, both for the nature and scope of the Euro-Atlantic identity and for individual Balkan states. In Yugoslavia it became evident that the former Cold War allies of 'the West' would follow a revisionist policy in the region, which would capitalize on the receding influence of Russia to advance democratic values, market economy and a new security architecture. Driven mainly by utilitarian and ideological principles this policy was by necessity in friction with the established normative foundations of global governance and, in this sense, it constituted a risky response to the dark knight's dilemma. What ameliorated the effects of this value-driven revisionist strategy was that both the EU and NATO engaged the region in a gradual member-state-building process. Thus a new status quo was being constructed as soon as old systemic certainties were being revised.

Typically, receding Russian influence is the foundation of every classical transition narrative in former communist Europe. Such narratives begin with Gorbachev's triple policy of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and military withdrawal from Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Conventional wisdom holds that once communist autocrats were deprived of the implicit 'stick' of a possible or probable Russian invasion, they could no longer tame domestic opposition<sup>3</sup> and, therefore, the collapse of communism was a matter of time. In the Balkans this remains a potent, albeit not totally convincing argument for two reasons: first, because only Bulgaria fitted the description of a 'Soviet satellite' where the Russian troops could and potentially would come marching in, if the polity was to significantly deviate from Moscow's orbit; secondly, because the most traumatic transitional experience in the Balkans was experienced in the leading metropolis of the non-aligned movement, namely Yugoslavia.

Surely, the ethnic decomposition of Yugoslavia was not dictated by international actors, including receding Russian influence. Since 1974, Tito had become an institution by himself, because during his lifetime the rotational character of the Yugoslav Presidency had been suspended. In making himself an institution, Tito also attached to his office a sense of biological mortality. With the coming to power of Milosevic a different project of Yugoslav recentralization began, founded on hijacking the rotational character of the regime. Mobilizing the forces of Serbian nationalism, Milosevic placed the autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, as well as the Republic of Montenegro, within the 'orbit' of the

Republic of Serbia. In placing stooge representatives of his trust in leadership positions of these territories, he effectively appropriated their federal leverage, thereby acquiring the possibility to dictate or bring to standstill the decision-making process in the collective Presidium.<sup>4</sup> In sum, the Yugoslav deferral process was institutionally de-substantiated and, coextensively, ethnic regimentation and politics of secession gained eminence.

However, as the Yugoslav crisis unfolded, the 'international system' did not move to preserve its own normative foundations; instead, the Euro-Atlantic actors, empowered by uncontested geopolitical and ideological leverage, condoned if not encouraged the revision of the territorial status quo. As early as July 1991, Austria and Germany had declared their preference for an early recognition of the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Initially the EC members resisted this notion on a normative-systemic basis, arguing that the recognition of any seceding republics should only be the result of an overall negotiated settlement;<sup>5</sup> the same view was shared by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. However, the argument put forward by Germany and Austria was that as long as violence in Yugoslavia was treated as a civil conflict, it would escalate. Thus, on January 15, 1992 the European Council's presidency declared that the Community and its member states would proceed with the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.

This decision made by the European Council is a typical case of the 'black knight' dilemma. This single act of recognition forfeited the possibility of international law providing stability by limiting the political options of the national(ist) actors involved in favour of systemic or normative stability; instead EC member states condoned secession on the basis of a morally utilitarian argument. The argument was straightforward: the security of human lives took precedence over the established international principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs; human security was thus deemed of greater benefit to the preservation of sovereignty. In making this choice EC member states were, perhaps, not fully aware of the consequences. For instance, it was at the time suggested that border settlement could have been based on the *uti possedetis* principle (have what you have had) which, based on the precedent of decolonization in Africa, would have allowed the gradual 'upgrading' of former regional-republican administrative boundaries to international borders.<sup>6</sup> But, the orderly decomposition of Yugoslavia was no longer possible for a twofold reason: because inter-ethnic 'bargaining' took place through 'blood and iron,' because a signal was sent to all interested parties that the creation of a status quo by other than legal means could gain *post-facto*

international validation. Therefore, the utilitarian objective was not served by the violation of normative principles.

On retrospect, it is doubtful that refusing to recognize the secession of Croatia and Slovenia in 1992 would have allowed for the return to a *status quo ante*. However, it should be remembered that the idea of a loose Yugoslav Confederation within the EU was discussed at the time as a legitimate option. After all, Yugoslavia which was outside COMECON, had a long and privileged relationship with the EC, with a range of economic agreements dating as far back as the 1970s. But, Germany moved to recognize Slovenia and Croatia in December 17, 1991, albeit postponing the implementation of this recognition, effectively threatening to act unilaterally. And what Chancellor Kohl called a 'great triumph for German foreign policy' was the establishment of a precedent whereby certain member-states of particular weight would be able to enforce their foreign policy priorities by threatening to undermine the multilateral consent that the EC aspired to create as an international actor; clearly, France, Greece, Spain and Italy only reluctantly joined the German-driven 'consensus.'<sup>7</sup> But, the consensus was formed and it was a revisionist consensus.

The message was clear: state making on the basis of national self-determination was now possible. This legal possibility gave rise to a normative abomination known as quasi-states which, prior to 1989, was reduced to the occupied territories of northern Cyprus. Much like Nagorno-Karabagh in Azerbaijan,<sup>8</sup> Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia, and Transnistria in Moldova, ethnic military forces in former Yugoslavia sought to turn *de facto* controlled territories into permanent and internationally recognized state-like entities or protectorates. Guerilla groups in Republika Srpska (1991), in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Republic of Krajina in Croatia (1991-1998), and the Republic of Kosovo in Serbia (1999) have been involved in activities designed to present the international community with a *fait accompli*.

- i. Krajina was a case where the Serbian minority found in a compact mass within Croatia declared its loyalty to the federal Constitution of Yugoslavia, refusing to become a minority in the realms of a unitary state.
- ii. In November 1991, the outcome of a Bosnian Serb plebiscite reflected support for BiH to remain within the SFRY. However, from 29 February to 1 March 1992 an overwhelming majority of Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats voted for independence. Indeed, on 3 March 1992 independence was proclaimed. This was followed on 27 March 1992 by

the formal proclamation of the Serbian Republic of BiH, later renamed Republika Srpska.

- iii. Kosovo was in turn a clear-cut case of secession following an armed struggle, which would not have been viable without NATO's decision to bomb Serbia.<sup>9</sup>

In most of the aforementioned cases the initial Euro-Atlantic decision to pursue a strategy of utilitarian revisionism has led both the EU and NATO to endorse, promote, or tacitly compromise with the emerging territorial status quo. Clearly, when dealing with the phenomenon of quasi-states, the Euro-Atlantic partners no longer had the option of impartiality, for what defines partiality amongst other things is a sense of making rules as you go along. Thus the initial decision in 1992 has in many ways committed 'the West' to subsequent developments. Time and again the dark knight dilemma haunts policy makers from Washington to Brussels, presenting them with the trivial task of deciding whether 'this case' is, once again, 'exceptional' or should be dismissed as 'illegal.' And in post-facto validating the emerging status quo, the EU and NATO must also assume the responsibility of essentially institutionalizing their utilitarian preferences and through normative revisionism redefine the status quo; for no stable international order can maintain stability without the effective predictability of diplomatic action provided by international norms.

Institutional revisionism has largely failed to fulfil its utilitarian objectives in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the beginning of the 1990s 'the West' was confronted with the repeated failure of mediation attempts by the United Nations, the European Union, NATO and individual states. The reason seems clear: ethnic factions would accept nothing less than the creation of a unitary nation-state, annexation to a motherland or, at the very least, a self governed autonomous territory. Thus the Dayton-Paris agreements (1995) were little more than an admission of conflict resolution failure, aiming instead at conflict transformation by means of complex constitutional engineering. The result was the institutionalization of ethnic regimentation via a Byzantine structure of two semi-sovereign entities, three constituent peoples, five presidents, four vice presidents, 13 prime ministers, 14 parliaments, 147 ministers and 700 members of Parliament. Thereby, this status agreement ensured that any substantially federative process would almost certainly be derailed by an ethnic veto, revealing the office of the High Representative, who was originally envisaged as merely an interethnic broker of compromise, as the *de facto*

dictator. In sum, the permanent engagement of both NATO and the EU in the region became permanent, necessary and even constitutionally required.

The sterility of this engineering was made abundantly clear when in 11 March 2005 the Council of Europe's European Commission for Democracy, better known as the Venice Commission, recommended that the Bosnian government pursues a process of constitutional reform. At the time, it was envisaged that a consensus might be reached prior to the 2006 legislative elections. However, between Brussels, New York, and Sarajevo, numerous formal and informal meetings, nothing concrete was ever produced. Over the years, each party, each MP, each assembly, each ministerial position, has been linked with the ethnically defined interests of a specific constituent nationality.<sup>10</sup> In a sense, the dark knight dilemma is as haunting today as it was fifteen years ago.

Another case of the dark knight's dilemma is Kosovo. Following the bombardment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by NATO in 1999, Serbian troops were forced to withdraw from the region. This military intervention was justified on the utilitarian basis of humanitarian-civilian protection, without prior authorization from the UN's Security Council.<sup>11</sup> Predictably, the violation of international legal norms generated a number of normative challenges, including the complete absence of a valid legal basis for the governance of Kosovo. For instance, it was impossible in 1999 to decide by whose law one should be imprisoned, prosecuted, or released.<sup>12</sup> This is the closest one could get to a Hobbsian Leviathan, since there was no law to rule by and thus very difficult to specify what rule of law meant. In the years to come the process of negotiating a final status agreement acceptable to all negotiating parties, mediated by Ahtisaari, failed, not least because the international community was more than the honest broker and mediator. Instead, Ahtisaari emerged as a *deus ex machine*, burdened both with the mission of creating a normative foundation for the governance of the territory *ex nihilo* and with the enforcement of an inter-ethnic ceasefire.

## The Emergence of Unipolar Multilateralism

But, what appears to be as a normatively revisionist strategy in the Balkans has gained post-facto legitimacy by means of EU and NATO expansion. This parallel expansion of the two organizations in the region has created a multilateral framework of cooperation, which has all the credentials of a thorough normative mandate. Thus a Euro-Atlantic identity is emerging in the

Balkans, which appears to be unipolar in terms of identity and multilateral in the sense of diplomatic means; and indeed, the EU-NATO architecture is simply unmatched in the Balkans when it comes to economic, social, political and military leverage. Through a strategy of member-state building, utilitarian considerations that emerged in the early 1990s are becoming institutionalized, laying the normative foundations for a new status quo.

Thus NATO is pushing forward with a fast track accession process in the Balkans; the EU remains politically committed to the full integration of the region as well, although not until member-states have been sufficiently reformed. Deviance in the pace of enlargement is in part understandable due to diverging institutional agendas, structures, cultures, competencies and objectives of the two organizations. However, no one can seriously question that the two organizations are laying the foundations of a single regional Euro-Atlantic regime.

In principle NATO has yet to acquire 'fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new member states to join the Alliance,'<sup>13</sup> although democratic governance seems to weigh increasingly more as a criterion and with good reason. Of course, historically, NATO was not a democracy promoting organization. The Cold War's military arm of the 'free world' originally enlisted its members by assessing first and foremost their geopolitical weight and anti-communist credentials. This should be self-evident given the fact that Portugal, Greece, and Turkey have been dictatorial regimes while, simultaneously being NATO members. However, since 1989, Turkey is the only member state whose democratic credentials have been questioned by Freedom House Indicators. And, besides the chiliastic neo-Wilsonian calls for the completion of a democratic world-order, there is a functional-utilitarian rationale underlying this change of normative-systemic priorities over the last two decades.

Following the 9/11 events, the institutional agenda of NATO has moved from traditional 'defense cooperation' to 'defense and security.' The term 'security' connotes the preparation of each member state against asymmetrical threats, including terrorism, laying the foundations of organizational interoperability for the preservation of 'human security.' Clearly, coordinating security rather than merely defense anchors 'democratic interoperability' firmly in the organization's agenda. For this level of cooperation brings to the fore challenges that are explicitly linked to democratic governance. In this respect, the scope of Security Sector Reform for NATO is limited, merely involving the harmonization of security gathering practices. However, the democratic



challenges are concrete such as, for example, the need to balance the right to security with the protection of individual freedoms. Thus all former communist states undergoing a democratic transition are provided with a Euro-Atlantic roadmap of reforms.

Towards this democratic end, NATO employs universally accepted normative yardsticks for the assessment of a regime’s democratic consolidation: the UN charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, etc. However, the assessment of a state’s democratic credentials is also ‘contextually sensitive,’ that is, sensitive to utilitarian requirements. Specifically, the process whereby a state joins the Partnership for Peace program (Pfp) entails the initial drafting of a Framework Document, setting specific undertakings of democratic reform, which are tailor made for each aspirant member state. To a great extent, gaining Pfp membership is considered as a ritual of passage where ‘peer states’ recognize demonstrated commitment to reforms; thus, more often than not, it is followed by a NATO membership application that requires deeper level institutional transformation. At this point, the institutional cooperation evolves into an Individual Partnership Program, which is designed to create the foundations of political and military interoperability. Specifically, individual programs are analyzed into annual Partnership Work Programs (PWP), developed through a Planning and Review Process (PARP). Currently, all the states in the Balkans are either full NATO members or Pfp partners (Table 1).

**Table 1: Pfp Membership in the Balkans**

<b>The Scope of Partnership for Peace (Pfp)</b>	<b>Balkan Pfp Membership</b>
Facilitating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency in national defense planning &amp; budgeting</li> <li>• Ensuring democratic control of defense forces</li> </ul>	Bulgaria 1994, full membership 2004 Slovenia 1994, full membership 2004 FYROM 1995 Albania 1994, full membership 2009 Croatia 2000, full membership 2009 Bosnia-Herzegovina 2006 Montenegro 2006 Serbia 2006

A similar step-by-step approach has been ingrained in the process of European integration since its inception. Since the mid-1990's, across the former socialist bloc, democratization is often likened to a race with laggards and frontrunners in a continuous race towards EU membership,<sup>14</sup> complete with regular reports being compiled by the Commission to mark 'progress' or 'challenges.' Indeed, it has been noted that the political geography of former socialist regimes in Europe has been reformulated along the lines of 'ins,' 'pre-ins' and 'outs.'<sup>15</sup> In this unidirectional and purposeful progress-race, the yardstick of success is the adoption of the EU's *acquis communautaire*, that is, a body of legislation no smaller than 80.000 pages.

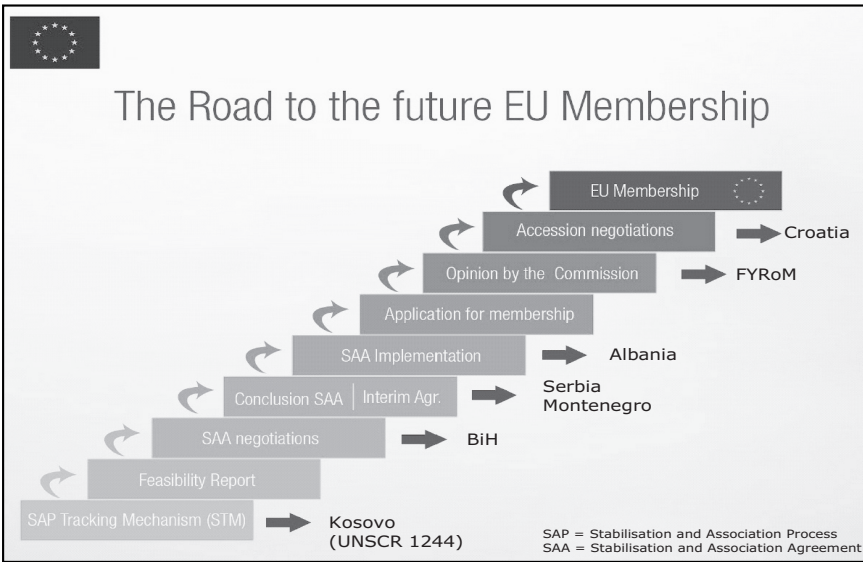
EU membership was explicitly proposed to all Western Balkan States in the Feira European Council (June 2000). In the following Zagreb Summit (November 2000), the EU established a 'contract' with the States of the Western Balkans: in return for the prospect of accession – and assistance to achieve it – the countries of the region would undertake to implement a rigid agenda of political and economic reforms. Thus specifically for the Western Balkans, the EU created a framework of Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA). It should be noted that SAA agreements are considered an exploratory phase of pre-accession negotiations, which is why they are covered by DG Enlargement rather than DG External Relations. Finally, the Thessaloniki Summit (June 2003) bolstered EU's commitment to integrate the Western Balkans by enriching the SAA process with new instruments for the promotion of institutional reform, including European Partnerships, which contribute to the generation of a more detailed roadmap with short and medium-term benchmarks.<sup>16</sup>

In fact, the very term 'conditionality' seems to have become part of the communitarian daily vocabulary when the EU engaged the Western Balkans, although it was coined in the 1990s. The reason is clear: integration in this part of Europe was considered an open-ended process rather than limited by specific deadlines. The premise is that states in the region will surely become members, but only when ready to do so. The objective of this member-state building strategy is, initially, to create the institutional foundations for the fulfillment of the Copenhagen accession criteria (1993), that is, to demonstrate 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities.' Incidentally, many of these criteria have also been the utilitarian principles of status quo revisionism during the 1990s.

Moving from value-alignment to institutional alignment each state in the

region is then expected to reach a deep level of functional-institutional competences which, in NATO's parlance, could be referred to as *interoperability*. This final stage of functional and political alignment is assumed to be completed through a chapter-by-chapter accession negotiation process (Table 2).

**Table No.2:** Road to EU Membership for the Western Balkans



Undoubtedly, therefore, the expansion of both EU and NATO has become increasingly parallel over the last decade. Of course not all NATO members are automatically accepted as EU members. However, all NATO members are EU candidate members with the sole exception of Norway and this is by choice not by exclusion. In fact, EU aspirant members today must develop an institutional link with NATO. This is because a state wishing to join the EU must align itself with a specific chapter of the *acquis*, namely the structures and mechanisms of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), including its military dimension. Ever since the signing of the Berlin Plus agreement (December 16<sup>th</sup> 2002), EU member states must either be full NATO members or, at the very least, participate in the PfP program. Otherwise known as the comprehensive package of agreements or the CJTF mechanism, Berlin Plus effectively facilitates the use of NATO's military

assets for the purposes of EU peacekeeping operations. In sum, an EU member that does not have an institutional link to NATO is automatically excluded from ESDP operations confirming the role of 'Europe' as an international (Euro-Atlantic) security actor.

### **The Emergence of Multipolar Bilateralism: Russia**

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Russia has never challenged the role of 'Europe' as a socioeconomic or political actor; in fact, Russian attempts have been made to join the EU in fulfillment of De Gaulle's prophecy for a united continent from the Atlantic to the Urals. In the early 1990s it was speculated that the disintegration of *Pax Sovietica* and of communist regimes would lead to great power cooperation, especially in the Balkans. In this scheme, Russia did join the PfP program and was even a party to a permanent Joint Council with NATO. Moreover, when the UN-declared no-fly zone over Bosnia and the arms embargo on former Yugoslavia was imposed, the Yeltsin government was engaged to exert pressure on Belgrade in order to stop the bloodshed in Sarajevo in 1994.<sup>17</sup>

But, time and again, final resolutions excluded Russia from the decision making process, starting from the Dayton agreements. Russian objections have been raised against both the principle of utilitarian revisionism and the unequivocal commitment of the EU to a 'Euro-Atlantic' security architecture. And with good reason, for the preeminence of the UN Security Council would guarantee a Russian veto in global governance. But, during the 1990s, Russian objections were met in Brussels in a condescending manner: as Moscow came close to an economic meltdown in 1998, as its repeated objections against 'humanitarian intervention' against Serbia in 1999 were simply inconsequential, Russia appeared as a second-rate power of no particular consequence in the Balkans and, perhaps, beyond.

But, this is no longer the case. Russia is now undermining European multilateralism by cultivating a nexus of ever-deepening bilateral economic relations, not merely with Balkan states but, perhaps more significantly, with EU member states. Moreover, Moscow is now claiming the sovereign prerogative to act upon the precedent of normative violations initiated by the Euro-Atlantic axis in what it considers to be its own geopolitical 'breathing space.' In sum, Russia is reclaiming its role as a geopolitical pole amongst many, questioning the dominance of a multilateral-unipolar regime in the Balkans, in Europe and, perhaps, beyond.

In any event, for Russia it was Kosovo that was felt as a slap in the face. Upon receiving the news that the bombing campaign was about to begin, Foreign Minister Primakov ordered his plane to turn around as he was flying to Washington; Moscow then attempted to supply Belgrade with military equipment and Russians exploded with national pride as their paratroopers marched from Bosnia to Kosovo in June; Russia swiftly moved to suspend its participation in NATO's PfP program and the Permanent Joint Council (PJC);<sup>18</sup> last but not least, Kosovar Albanians were branded 'terrorists' and Moscow dismissed the intervention as a neocolonial and illegal venture, threatening to derail the whole international rule of law regime.<sup>19</sup> In sum, Kosovo was perceived in Moscow's strategic circles as a unilateral declaration by NATO of the right to act in Europe outside the normative mandate of the UN and OSCE, over and beyond the territory of NATO's member states; perhaps more significantly, to act as if Russia did not exist. In the words of Alexei Arbatov, a member of the Russian *Duma* Defense Committee and security analyst, the message of Kosovo was clear:

*The main lesson learned is that the goal justifies the means. The use of force is the most efficient problem solver, if applied decisively and massively. Negotiations are of dubious value and are to be used as a cover for military action. Legality of state actions, observation of laws and legal procedures, and humanitarian suffering are of secondary significance relative to achieving the goal. Limiting one's own troop casualties is worth imposing massive devastation and collateral fatalities on civilian populations.<sup>20</sup>*

It might have been argued that Russia's relation to NATO was in crisis following the bombardment of Kosovo (1999), but this was not necessarily the case for relations with the EU. After all, the launch of ESDP soon after the Kosovo crisis was received in Moscow with the hope that Europe might have been pursuing a multipolar rather than merely multilateral approach to security in the continent. However, subsequent NATO enlargement, the expansion of the PfP program<sup>21</sup> and, eventually, the Berlin Plus protocol made abundantly clear that the EU was firmly anchored in its Euro-Atlantic identity.

But, it was not only a sense of growing skepticism vis a vis the emergent multilateral architecture in Europe that changed the Muscovite mindset since 1999. From 1999 to 2005 the Russian GDP tripled. Moreover, Russia abandoned its plans for CIS reintegration and promoted its own version of multilateral cooperation projects in the former soviet space via the Common

Economic Space project, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and, further east, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Moreover, Russia began to explore the possibility of cultivating its 'soft power' leverage as a host country of millions of immigrants from the former Soviet space, sponsoring specific political factions in electoral campaigns, cultivating the influence of the Russian language and relations with the Diaspora, whilst making extensive use of its central position in the fossil fuel production and distribution market.<sup>22</sup>

But, Russian 'soft power' was not only felt in the former soviet space. Upon assuming the presidency, President Putin was quick to recognise the importance of energy as a political tool. According to the Russian Federation's 'Energy Strategy of Russia to 2020' (August 2003), 'the role of the country in world energy markets to a large extent determines its geopolitical influence.' Putin thus swiftly nationalized the oil and gas sectors, gaining a near monopoly leverage in the European fossil fuel market by promoting two major pipeline projects (North Stream and South Stream) that would bypass Ukraine. Simultaneously, Russia seems to be presenting the EU with a soft-power Trojan horse designed to infringe upon the Union's multilateral solidarity. In 2007 the European Commission published its policy paper 'An Energy Policy for Europe' and in 2008 a Strategic Energy Review. There the Commission produced proposals that would loosen the grip of Gazprom upon the European market. But, little action has been taken to that effect. Putin made deals with major German energy companies and secured the services of former German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, as chief lobbyist. Thus the Baltic Sea pipeline project seems secure, despite the Commission's objections. And on the South Stream front, Putin made deals with Austria, Bulgaria and Greece, as well as Turkmenistan, with the aim of sabotaging the Commission-preferred Nabucco pipeline.<sup>23</sup>

Granted that the Balkan region is the gate for fossil fuels from the Caspian basin to the European market, one should expect growing Russian interest in the region. Hence, one should also note that these two regions present coextensive strategic dilemmas for Europe, since these are the most decisive geopolitical fronts for the energy security of the European Union. However, rather than taking this development into account and engage Russia constructively in both regions, the Euro-Atlantic community seems to be estranging Russia.

The USA and its leading EU allies bypassed, once again, the UN Security Council to grant Kosovo independence in February 2008. But, this time Moscow was far stronger than it had been in 1999 and responded in a twofold

manner: first, it lobbied other countries who worry about that precedent with regard to their own secessionist-minded minorities, including a number of EU member states; second, Russia stepped up its support for secessionist movements in Georgia, only to follow up with full-scale military intervention. In taking these measures Russia is anything but isolated. China and India have worried about the Kosovo precedent. And EU-three assurances (London, Berlin, Paris) that Kosovo is a unique case were less than convincing to a number of states.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the recent ruling by the International Court of Justice on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral secession<sup>25</sup> will probably deepen the cynical attitude of Russia and Serbia vis a vis the emerging international normative regime.

### **A Decisive Front for Diplomatic Paradigms: Turkey**

Between an increasingly ineffective framework of multilateral unipolarism and an ascending paradigm of multipolar bilateralism there is one country that has managed to combine the better of two worlds, namely Turkey. Turkish soft-power grand strategy is founded upon its vision to emerge as an indispensable energy hub, equally significant to both Moscow and Brussels. Rather than being consumed by the fear of estranging traditional allies, Turkey is boosting its geopolitical significance as a complementary building block to Russia's mastering role in the European energy-security architecture. Meanwhile, it maintains all options open for future business ventures that may deviate from Moscow's preference. The key objective for Turkey is to become an indispensable catalyst for the promotion of any and every diplomatic initiative rather than passively choose sides. In the words of the former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer and chief Nabucco-project lobbyist:

*It can't be said often enough: Turkey is situated in a highly sensitive geopolitical location, particularly where Europe's security is concerned. The eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, the western Balkans, the Caspian region and the southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East are all areas where the West will achieve nothing or very little without Turkey's support. And this is true in terms not only of security policy, but also of energy policy if you're looking for alternatives to Europe's growing reliance on Russian energy supplies. (...)*

*Europe's security in the 21st century will be determined to a significant degree in its neighborhood in the southeast – exactly*

*where Turkey is crucial for Europe's security interests now and, increasingly, in the future. But, rather than binding Turkey as closely as possible to Europe and the West, European policy is driving Turkey into the arms of Russia and Iran.<sup>26</sup>*

It should be noted that all competing scenarios for the emerging European energy architecture are built around the notion of Turkish centrality; and this is the result of Turkish diplomacy, not merely location. Not putting all its eggs in one basket, Turkey only reluctantly endorsed the official Russian offer for the Blue Stream II project in 2005, giving priority to the US-EU sponsored Nabucco project intended to connect Turkey and Austria via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. Russia thus turned to the Balkans, established an alliance with Italy, and pursued the design of an alternative route from the Russian Black Sea coast via an offshore pipeline to Bulgaria;<sup>27</sup> however, Bulgaria is stalling the project either on the basis of economic or environmental considerations, which seems to be favoring the Nabucco project.<sup>28</sup> While a final investment decision on either the Nabucco or the South Stream project is yet to be made, neither Russia nor the EU can afford to exclude Turkey from their fossil fuel grand strategy.

However, given that Turkey has made little progress in EU accession negotiations since 2003, the argument for seeking opportunities for growth in the East are indeed compelling. Energy is not the only dimension of the Russo-Turkish axis: since 2008 Russia became Turkey's biggest trading partner; Russia is a major market for Turkish manufactured goods and a major tourist source market. And the potential of this relationship is only beginning to be explored: in the recent visit of President Medvedev to Turkey, no less than 17 agreements were concluded, opening new roads for cooperation in the tourist industry, nuclear energy projects, education, trade and, of course, pipelines.<sup>29</sup> Still, this deepening relation with Russia does not imply a strategic decision to ignore either US or EU interests; Turkey maintains the position of a broker, or 'a bridge' to use the term of preference for Turkish diplomats, which seems well founded on both shores.

Meanwhile, President Sarkozy of France and Chancellor Merkel still live in a day and age when Turkey could be treated as the 'sick man of Europe,' making essentialist claims about European borders, responding more to their xenophobic constituents, rather than the real geopolitical challenges at hand.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, there seems to be diminishing leverage by the US in Turkey and the Caucasus region, not only because the Nabucco pipeline network does not



have guaranteed access to gas supply, but also because the Georgian incident proved the US unwilling, if not unable, to project its military power in the wider region. When in August 2008 the Russian campaign against South Ossetia and Abkhazia was met in Washington with little more than a verbal condemnation; Ankara could not be accused for being 'out of tune' by pursuing precisely the same diplomatic line.

In conservative circles, it is actually hoped that Turkey's central position as the bridge between Russia, the Black Sea basin, Central Asia and the Middle East will eventually weaken. Those who still adhere to Huntingtonian notions of inevitable civilizational encounters, prophesize that Turkey will eventually be confronted with Orthodox solidarity, which is destined to rise against Muslim solidarity. This apocalyptic prophecy points to the Balkans as the zone where this tectonic-civilization encounter will be fulfilled. In this scheme, Russia is supposed to be cultivating a deep relationship with the Orthodox Serbian brother, whilst Turkey is considered a traditional ally of Muslim minorities, Bosniaks and Albanians.<sup>31</sup> But, should the Russo-Turkish civilizational encounter prophecy fail to be fulfilled, Turkey may always be singled out as the next Islamic threat for the West. Indeed, in the realm of neoconservative conspiracy theories, Turkey is identified as the next 'neoconservative other' – along with Iran and Syria – in yet another version the dark trinity chiliastic fantasy inaugurated by G.W. Bush.<sup>32</sup>

This line of reasoning is not completely unfounded. Turkey's soft power is often cultivated as the logical extension of its historic role as the Muslim motherland in the Balkans.<sup>33</sup> For instance, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) invests in social infrastructures with a 'Muslim-Turkic brotherhood' undertone: the restoration of the Gorazde State Hospital in Bosnia, the creation of the Canakkale Martyrs Reading Room of the Dragas Municipal Library in Kosovo, the Renovation of Suleyman Demirel Turkish Secondary School for the Gagauz in Romania, and the renovation of the 90-years-old headquarters of the Muslim community in Tirana, are only some examples that testify to this implicit strategy.<sup>34</sup>

And Russia does cultivate the image of the Orthodox motherland. Apart from Russia's stand vis a vis Serbia in 1999, today, Belgrade counts on Moscow for opposing Kosovo's independence and no doubt welcomed the geopolitical significance of Serbia's inclusion in the South Stream pipeline project. And while the President and Foreign Minister of Russia were condemning the recognition of Kosovo as a sovereign entity, the streets of Belgrade were stormed by a rioting crowd throwing Molotov cocktail bombs

to the US, Croatian and, of course, the Turkish embassies;<sup>35</sup> for Turkey was, after all, the first state to formally recognize the independence of Kosovo. And Turkey has expressed Muslim solidarity in other fronts as well; in April 2010, Turkey played a key role in persuading NATO to grant Bosnia-Herzegovina a Membership Action Plan, widely seen as the first step prior to full membership.<sup>36</sup>

But, for all the aura of an Orthodox motherland, Russia has set its foot in Serbia with more of a cut-throat business instinct than a maternal attitude. Belgrade chose Gazprom Neft without holding an international tender for the sale of 51% of NIS shares, that is, the national oil and gas company and one of the biggest employers in the country. And it agreed to sell this controlling stake for a mere €400 million, even after the international consultants Deloitte & Touche had valued NIS at €2.2 billion. No doubt Belgrade 'rewarded' Moscow for its stand on the Kosovo affair, but this was not merely an expression of gratitude: by selling the controlling stake in NIS at a deeply undervalued price the Serbian government expected Gazprom to reciprocate the favor by building a section of the South Stream gas transportation project in Serbian territory. But, this is merely a hope. Moscow pocketed those concessions but broke the linkage between the NIS sale and the South Stream project, which may be seen as a violation of the January 2008 Russian-Serbian agreement treating the NIS sale and the South Stream project as inseparable aspects of the transaction. So, if there is such a thing as Slavic-Orthodox solidarity, it comes at a dear price.<sup>37</sup>

And for all the Turkish rhetoric of Muslim solidarity, Turkey has entered the Balkans in other capacities as well. Turkey is gradually weaving an industrial, communication, finance, and transport web of economic leverage that complements its cultural-Islamic prestige.<sup>38</sup> Nor should Turkish pro-Islamic diplomacy in the Balkans be immediately perceived as anti-Orthodox. On the contrary, Turkey has capitalized on its good-faith credentials with the Bosniak community in order to emerge as a broker of political compromise with the Serbian community in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In April 2010 President Gul persuaded Serbia's President, Boris Tadic, and the Bosniak member of Bosnia-Herzegovina's tripartite presidency, Haris Silajdzic, to sign the so-called 'Istanbul Declaration,' which reaffirmed a shared "commitment to take all necessary steps to ensure regional peace, stability and prosperity." Tadic, empowered by the Serbian Parliament's formal recognition of the Srebrenica genocide (30.03.2010), visited the city on July 11 to mark its 15th anniversary; in turn, Silajdzic agreed to make his first trip to Belgrade since

1992. Though Silajdzic's scheduled May visit was ultimately cancelled, probably due to Serbia's refusal to grant Silajdzic access to Ilija Jurisic, who was convicted of war crimes charges, both countries immediately called upon Turkey to again intercede to resolve their differences.

And Turkey's newfound diplomatic leverage in Belgrade is not only 'a show,' but a complete business proposal. Specifically, Turkish investment in strategic sectors in both Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – spanning from the defence industry to aviation – has the potential to merge former Yugoslav strategic sectors of the economy under Turkish tutorship.<sup>39</sup>

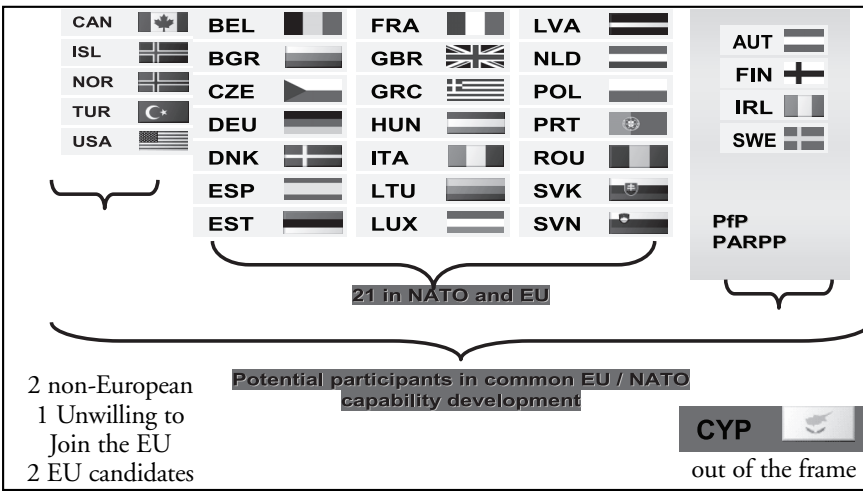
Still, the Turkish presence in the Balkans evokes Huntingtonian chiliarism for a number of reasons. For instance, the visit of Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu in October 2009 in Bosnia did cause scepticism. His romanticized and highly nostalgic vision of the regeneration of *Pax Ottomanica* in the Balkans with 'common political values, economic interdependence, cooperation and cultural harmony' was received by the Orthodox commentators of the region – mainly Bosnian-Serb and Greek – as little more than an neo-imperialist ploy<sup>40</sup>. And these fears are not completely unfounded. Turkey's top diplomat book, 'Strategic Depth'(2001), is time and again quoted as the new testament of Turkish foreign policy and the source of its motto: "zero problems and maximum cooperation with neighbours."<sup>41</sup> But, apart from the catchy motto, the very same book often spells out a vision for the Balkans as little more than a *lebensraum*, envisaging Ankara as having a veto power and the prerogative of military intervention for the protection of Muslim minorities, making references to the precedent of Cyprus.<sup>42</sup>

But, Turkish emerging diplomatic capability has little to do with Islam and more to do with its consistent aspiration to be a broker; in this scheme, it has even acquired an actual veto power in the Euro-Atlantic community. This is because amongst the traditionally neutral states that have gained EU membership (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden), it is only Cyprus that is not a member of the Pfp program and this is an institutional exception that is heatedly debated both in Nicosia and in Brussels.<sup>43</sup> Thus, paradoxically, Turkey, which is a NATO member and an EU aspirant member, is able to veto the participation of Cyprus in ESDP missions. The veto is possible because Turkey, unlike Cyprus, has corporate ownership of NATO infrastructures and, more significantly, ownership of military intelligence that is unwilling to share with a regime it does not even recognize (see Table 3).

### Discussion: the Uncertainty of Europe's Diplomatic Architecture

The engagement of many Balkan states in the process of Atlantic integration is conditioned upon the perception that this is a *sine qua non* condition of participating in the process of European integration. Indeed, in many Balkan constituencies, NATO's popularity is not exactly thriving and if it were not for the associated understanding of 'a package deal,' it is highly doubtful that NATO expansion would have proceeded as it did. But, the EU is haunted by enlargement fatigue and thus the whole unipolar-multilateral integration project is called into question; moreover, multilateral solidarity within the EU has been called into question vis a vis Russia and Turkey. In sum, the unipolar-multilateral architecture constructed in the 1990s suffers a deficit of credibility, as it is no longer clear that the states engaged in this diplomatic framework can be certain of their full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

Table No.3: Berlin Plus Participants



In the Balkans, the most obvious example of an emerging 'dark knight' dilemma is faced by Serbia. Serbia's PfP Presentation Document (July 2007) constitutes a clear political commitment to developing a partnership with NATO. However, Serbia Individual Partnership Programme (IPP) (2009) detailed a relatively modest security and defense agenda of reform. It is worth noting that unlike other IPP documents submitted by other Western Balkans states, Serbia's does not envisage membership in the Alliance as an end-stage

of cooperation with NATO, a choice leading to its exclusion from Membership Action Plan participation (MAP). In fact, Serbian officials have been straightforward in linking the possibility of NATO membership to the future status of Kosovo. And Kosovo seems like a lost battle in the Euro-Atlantic context. According to recent surveys, 50.1% of Serbian citizens claimed that Serbia should not seek NATO membership and only 26.1% are in support of this prospect.<sup>44</sup> And Kosovo is expected to remain an issue central to the Serbian political landscape, since the new Constitution (2006) includes a controversial provision stating that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia. Hence, the skepticism on Serbia's Euro-Atlantic prospects is not likely to recede in the foreseeable future.

Montenegrin public opinion might have been expected to be more favourable to Euro-Atlantic integration. After all, Milo Đukanović is currently in his fifth consecutive term as a Prime Minister (1991-1993, 1993-1996, 1996-1998, 2009-currently), which indicates a relative focused commitment to a single political vision. And, although Đukanović began his career as a close ally of Slobodan Milošević and a prominent Serbian nationalist, in 1998 he emerged as the voice of the 'West' in outcast Yugoslavia; and he honoured his profile in 2008 by moving swiftly to recognize Kosovo's independence. But, while Montenegrin loyalty is not in question, the Euro-Atlantic integration process is a costly endeavour.

One of the major dilemmas encountered after the declaration of secession in 2006 was whether or not a country of nearly 700,000 people needed and/or could afford to have Armed Forces. Having armed forces is of course an imperative to join a military alliance such as NATO. The decision was subsequently made to create a modest defence establishment (approximately 2,400 troops). But, the legitimating discourse of military 'formation' was specifically linked to the prospect of EU membership. In sum, a fading prospect of EU membership will no doubt imply disillusionment with Euro-Atlantic multilateralism.

In Croatia there were also certain roadblocks to NATO membership. The Croatian public associated NATO with the war in Iraq, which was widely opposed. NATO's role in the wars of the 1990s was not embraced either, nor its role in pressing for the arrest of Ante Gotovina, who is still considered a 'hero' by a non-negligible number of Croats. Some domestic critics even charged that NATO membership could lead to a militarization of Croatia's highly reputed coastline. Thus a special committee to promote the potential benefits of Croatia's membership in the Alliance to the public was needed.

These efforts were not altogether inconsequential, for backing for NATO membership rose from as low as only one third of Croatians in 2006 surveys to approximately 52% in 2009.<sup>45</sup> Of course the main argument put forward from successive Croatian administrations has, time and again, been the same: NATO membership is the lobby to EU membership.<sup>46</sup>

The problem at hand then is that public consensus on the unidirectional road to European Integration should not be taken for granted. 'What if,' for example, a certain number of EU member states held the view that the EU has 'reached its limits?' This no doubt would cause Turkey to change its foreign policy priorities and, perhaps, call into question the notion that the EU and NATO should be seen as the twin pillars of a single European architecture. Indeed, the decision to incorporate or exclude Turkey from the EU may emerge as a central dilemma threatening to decouple the perceived unity of the Euro-Atlantic community. But, even if the Turkish accession process remains on track – and this is a big 'if' – the question at hand remains 'what if' EU conditions for full accession are revealed as unrealistic, unacceptable or simply impossible to fulfill for other states. In this case, enlargement fatigue may turn into candidacy fatigue.

Moreover, in the Western Balkans organized crime continues to thrive; this maybe due to a close synergy or, at best, apathy of the political elite in states such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. But, if this is the case, it remains unclear whether a top-down approach to democratic reform is possible, precisely because certain elites may have vested interests in the organized crime market. For if membership eventually implies a top-down process of lustration, it is unclear why those that stand to lose the most by this process should pursue this course. Alternative, a more flexible but increasingly beneficial cultivation of economic relations with countries like Turkey and Russia provide an alternative framework for the pursuit of market access, economic development, the attraction of foreign direct investment and, in time, even security cooperation. It should be noted that this option has already been domesticated by the nationalist and largely anti-Western opposition in Serbia. Perhaps, more significantly, 'what if' such an alternative diplomatic framework is presented as an 'either-or' choice, where Euro-Atlantic cooperation appears as a 'possibly-probably' option whilst bilateral choices emerge as a 'here-and-now' possibility.

In this scheme, there is no rational reason to dismiss an alternative diplomatic paradigm founded on multipolar bilateralism. After all, it is the EU suffering from enlargement fatigue. And should one count on the solidifying

role that Washington has as a hegemonic broker, one maybe tempted to note that the USA is no longer willing or able to be the main security provider in the region and, during the unfolding economic crisis, there is little evidence to suggest that an economic policy consensus exists between the two shores of the Atlantic. In sum, all options are open for Balkan states and the 'dark knight dilemma' is now haunting those less-than-hegemonic states who still wonder how to pursue utilitarian national interests on the basis of a multilateral diplomatic framework that is less-and-less convincing in its ability to deliver collective benefits, stability and systemic predictability to its members, let alone its perspective members.

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# Winning Hearts and Minds in Bosnia and Herzegovina\*\*

Fotini Bellou\*

We are now in a dangerous dynamic... and if we fail to operate in a cohesive fashion we could end up with the de facto disintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>1</sup>

## RÉSUMÉ

La Bosnie-Herzégovine est le pays qui, malgré sa très onéreuse reconstruction internationale de quinze ans, éprouve encore des difficultés à identifier son avenir en tant qu'Etat unitaire fonctionnel. La nécessité de réformes institutionnelles qui allaient changer les principales dispositions constitutionnelles impliquées dans l'Accord de paix de Dayton, a provoqué une débâcle diplomatique sérieuse entre les trois groupes ethniques qui semblent promouvoir des visions différentes de l'avenir du pays. Cet article soutient que l'avenir européen de la Bosnie-Herzégovine est incontestable et c'est pour cette raison que la cohérence internationale est essentielle pour empêcher qu'un radicalisme ethnique ne déstabilise un processus déjà laborieux d'européanisation. Par conséquent, les préoccupations existentielles de tous les groupes ethniques doivent être prises en compte et être intégrées dans une dernière phase fonctionnelle du processus de l'intégration européenne de la Bosnie-Herzégovine.

## ABSTRACT

Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country that despite its terribly expensive fifteen-year international reconstruction, it still struggles to identify its future as a functional unitary state. The need for institutional reforms that would change major constitutional provisions entailed in the Dayton Peace Agreement, have provoked a serious diplomatic debacle amongst the three constituent ethnic groups which seem to be promoting different visions for the country's future. This article advocates that Bosnia and Herzegovina's European future is indisputable and for this reason international consistency is crucial as to prevent ethnic radicalism from destabilising an already painstaking Europeanisation process.

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\*\* An earlier version of this paper will appear in *Defensor Pacis*, Institute of Defense Studies, Hellenic Ministry of National Defense.

Accordingly, the existential concerns of all ethnic groups shall be taken into account and be incorporated into a functional last phase of Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration process.

After fifteen years of constant international efforts to attain a sustainable peace through major state reconstruction policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the country still cannot be considered as able to work on its own future. The international efforts to end the war in 1995 and to establish the conditions for sustainable peace through the creation of a marginally unitary state, which at the same time could meet the demands for self-governance by its constituent major ethnic groups, had been an extraordinary and unprecedented endeavour. Perhaps for this reason and given the hesitancy and suspicion with which the three major ethnic groups have been approaching peace implementation since December 1995, BiH today cannot demonstrate its ability for self-governance. Against this background, the country presents (again) one of the most interesting paradigms in post-Cold War international crisis management.<sup>2</sup> It is the country that has received immense international assistance, coming to be regarded the 'laboratory for what was arguably the most extensive and innovative democratization experiment in history.'<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in contrast to the inconsistency with which the international community approached conflict resolution between 1992 and 1995, when the war was ravaging BiH between the three ethnic groups, the period that followed the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995,<sup>4</sup> was characterized by a strong international impulse to orchestrate effective reconstruction. In the form of grants and loans for this reconstruction and for BiH's ability to function as a state, a state of no more than 4.4 million people, it has received at least \$14 billion between 1996 and 2008.<sup>5</sup> It is the first country in post-Cold War international relations which has received such multifaceted international support. Yet the existence of BiH in its current form is strongly debated, for a number of reasons that will be explained below. This is not necessarily a negative development, provided that major institutional changes and reforms are needed, and some have been already implemented, to enable the country to meet its requirements for European integration. However, what is crucial is that these reforms shall be promoted in a carefully coordinated fashion, so as to avoid giving excuses to the three constituent groups to seek destabilisation. The main argument of this

analysis is that BiH was the first experiment during the 1990s in the implementation of innovative mechanisms of crisis management, sometimes effective but more often inconsistent. In four major crisis management experiments later (Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq), the international community seems to have rather improved the mechanisms and tools with which it can effectively address the nature of different conflicts. Precisely for this reason, it would have been a serious mistake to ignore the reality that effective crisis management in complex situations such as BiH seemingly suggests mechanisms and tools aiming at addressing the needs of the constituent peoples of the conflict area, rather than of the aspirations of major international players. In the remainder of the article, the evolution of peace implementation in BiH will be examined, with an emphasis on the major institutional obstacles that prevent BiH from experiencing effective state governance. An analysis of the positions of the three constituent ethnic groups will be presented in light of the country's European perspective. Finally, the way in which major powers view the future of BiH will be briefly discussed. It will be shown that despite the fact that the mechanisms for BiH's European integration are present and accelerating, a coherent international voice as to the implementation of a comprehensive approach in this direction is still pending. This analysis advocates that despite all international support for reconstruction and development in BiH, consistency seems to be missing (once again) as regards the vision of BiH as a unitary state and a prospective member of Euro-Atlantic structures. For this reason, a failure to orchestrate an effective process of Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into the European Union in the coming years will be detrimental to regional stability and for this reason to the image that the EU is trying to establish as a credible international actor.

### **Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP),<sup>6</sup> is the peace treaty that was signed amongst the warring factions of the war in BiH (Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims) and the members of the International Contact Group, creating the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and authorising a specific role for different international actors to implement its provisions aiming at reconstructing a consociational confederation.<sup>7</sup> The Dayton Agreement created a decentralised state comprising two entities, Republica Srpska (RS) and the Federation of BiH (FBiH), comprising in turn ten cantons representing Croat and Muslim majorities.<sup>8</sup> The agreement provided for a centralised government under its

internationally recognised borders, while the representation of Bosniaks,<sup>9</sup> Serbs and Croats was safeguarded by their participation in the state's Parliamentary Assembly (the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples) as well as in the Presidency and the Council of Ministers. The tripartite Presidency is composed of a president from one of the three ethnic groups and the two vice-presidents from the other two. Together with the members of the House of Peoples, the members of the Presidency retain a veto right if an issue of 'vital interest' arises to the detriment of the interests of one or more of the constituent peoples.<sup>10</sup> State powers were confined to foreign policy, foreign trade, monetary policy and customs, emigration and state-wide traffic and communication. The two entities acquired a wide range of autonomy including the responsibility for their own defence policy.

The Dayton Agreement also provided the authorisation basis for the development of a number of international missions to implement important segments of the agreement, including both military and civilian aspects. It also authorised the two entities to establish special relationships with neighbouring states, thus encouraging Bosnian citizens to hold an additional second citizenship if they wished. Another important element was the establishment of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which assumed the responsibility of coordinating all practices aiming at implementing the civilian aspects of the agreement. Importantly, full responsibility for the situation in Bosnia is assumed by the Peace Implementation Council, an *ad hoc* structure comprising states and international organisations, with fifty five members today, and which 'supports peace implementation' in BiH, while its Steering Board members provide political guidance to the OHR.<sup>11</sup> The High Representative's main task was initially to encourage the leaders of the three ethnic groups to work together in the implementation of the BiH constitution, which is embedded in Annex IV of the Dayton Agreement.<sup>12</sup> In 1997, in the light of serious inertia as regards decision-making in BiH, it was decided by the PIC in a conference in Bonn, to increase the competences of the HR in order to enforce rather than facilitate peace implementation. More specifically, the HR was given the authority to be able 'to remove elected politicians and other officials as well as to impose legislation' when it was deemed appropriate. As Thorsten Gromes argues, from December 1997 to June 2008, the High Representative dismissed almost two hundred politicians and other officials; in total, he made 860 decisions using these so called 'Bonn powers' for the benefit of peace implementation and, since 2000, for implementing reforms for the country's European perspective.<sup>13</sup> There are

some elements in the structural construction of BiH's political system that have to be highlighted. The first important element is that the type of consociational democracy it provides reflects the result of a war which ended with a peace that was brokered mainly by the United States, aiming at addressing the three groups' concerns, yet sustaining a marginally functional state structure on its existing territory. It was not an easy endeavour. The second element is that Dayton was negotiated by the leaders of Croatia and Serbia, as regards the non-Muslim population in BiH, and by representatives of the local populace. This by definition creates difficulties in peace implementation.

The third element, as Sumantra Bose rightly advocates, is that these type of confederal political systems do not function smoothly in deeply divided societies.<sup>14</sup> However, precisely because the Constitution of BiH provides the ability for the three constituent ethnic groups to give the state further prerogatives, if they so decide, it does not prevent the entities from transferring some powers from the entities to the state structures.<sup>15</sup> In other words, coexistence of the three ethnic groups can be worked out, assuming that the political will of the constituent entities to establish a common future exists. No doubt, this process has been taking place in the last several years and quite a number of reforms have been promoted. For example, ministries in the state structure have been increased from three in 1995 to sixteen in early 2010, including a number of agencies. This means that when political will by the leaders of the entities has manifested itself, major reforms have been fostered. Reforms have taken place in BiH, especially after the European Union committed itself to start working on the country's European integration. However, as Bieber has rightly argued, Dayton deficiency 'was not so much what it set up, but what it recognized.'<sup>16</sup> For this reason, it is rather difficult to advocate, or even impose, reforms that threaten to utterly abolish the existential prerogatives of any of the three entities. This is undoubtedly a reality inherited by the Dayton Agreement and has to be seriously taken into account when proposals for the rationalisation of BiH's governance structures are made. Yet a key remedy to this difficulty is perhaps a strong policy package, so as to make the citizens of BiH win the trust of the state institutions.<sup>17</sup> Thus mechanisms and policies that reinforce the protection of community rights and at the same time promote strong anti-corruption strategies have to function as the dual lenses through which key decision-making on reforms shall be taking place. Indeed, good governance and transparency are key ingredients of a State that wins the hearts of its citizens. It also contributes to



economic development. David Chandler has advocated that corruption and bad governance are allegedly even more serious impediments in the build-up of a competent Bosnian state than ethnic nationalism.<sup>18</sup> However, one of the most important incentives that seems to have moderated ethnic polemics and has functioned as a catalyst against deep ethnic divisions is the country's prospective membership of the European Union. For there is a strong consensus by all political leaders and their constituents regarding the prospect of BiH as a member of the EU.<sup>19</sup> The European Union has played a crucial role in the reconstruction of BiH in the last decade. It has evolved into being its most important factor of stability and development. Yet the exact constitutional form under which this integration will be realised is still not clear amongst the three ethnic groups, as is explained below.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the war in Kosovo in 1999, the European Union started to advocate the prospective European integration of Western Balkan countries. Despite the considerable financial support it provided to BiH reconstruction after Dayton, the European Union started to acknowledge the importance of accelerating the European perspective of the Western Balkans only after the war in Kosovo. In 2000, the European Commission presented the Road Map for BiH's preparations for participating in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The adoption of the eighteen steps that BiH had to undertake in order to prepare itself for the 'feasibility study', the completion of which would have initiated its SAP, took a year and a half longer than originally expected, due to decision-making stagnation.

However, it is widely acknowledged that in general, in the period between 2001-2008, important reforms took place in BiH, facilitating the process of European integration on a cautious step by step basis.<sup>20</sup> For example, the former three opposing armies (Bosniak, Serb and Croatian) have merged into a single, multinational and professional force. The police has been formed and trained in an exemplary fashion and is considered to be the most trusted institution in the entire country. Some improvements have taken place in the justice system, but more reforms are needed.<sup>21</sup> A Stabilisation and Association Agreement, the final phase of the SAP, was signed on 16 June 2008, putting into formally establishing BiH's obligations towards European integration. However, no major reforms have been pursued since then. Perhaps the single most important drawback to BiH's commitment to reforms has been Kosovo's Declaration of Independence on 17 February 2008. It appears to have had a detrimental impact on the already difficult working relationship that had been developed amongst the three ethnic groups in the preceding years. In the eyes

of the Bosnian Serbs, it challenged European Union credibility as well as the rationale for maintaining BiH's territorial integrity. Another difficult issue to be tackled regards the role of the High Representative, who also happens to be the EU Special representative to BiH. His authoritarian powers, which had been used some nine hundred times in the past and underpinned the removal of some 180 politicians from their posts in BiH, 'including three State Presidents',<sup>22</sup> are regarded as an impediment to the democratisation of BiH, and for this reason the post is conditioned to further reforms adopted by the BiH authorities.

Serious handicaps regarding effective decision-making exist, demonstrating the inability of the state institutions to promote reforms. The hesitancy with which ethnic groups approach decision-making on political reforms is also demonstrated by the fact that, as the EU 2009 Progress Report mentions, 'Due to its limited powers the Council of Ministers has occasionally been left out of negotiations on reforms, which have been conducted by political party leaders.'<sup>23</sup> Further progress on reforms in BiH will depend to a large extent on the willingness of the parties to function without hesitation as regards the protection of their existential concerns.

The European integration process shall perhaps consider the need for a comprehensive and cohesive approach with which to orchestrate its efforts towards addressing the concerns of the constituent peoples, that would in turn facilitate the adoption of certain reforms. As it has been admitted by the European Commission officials, 'A shared vision by the political leaders on the direction of the country and on key EU-related reforms remains essential for further progress towards the European Union.'<sup>24</sup> Yet it seems that the international community, or the PIC for that matter, appears uncertain of its ability to work constructively over the consensus of the three communities over BiH's European integration and thus to accelerate institutional reforms. Before looking at the international setting, it is useful to examine the positions and concerns of the three communities in order to establish whether there is room for coordinated action if a common vision is to be realised.

### **Positions and Concerns of BiH's constituent ethnic groups**

At this stage, Bosnia and Herzegovina is at a difficult crossroads, with the leaders of two of its three constituent ethnic groups holding radical views.<sup>25</sup> More specifically, the Bosniaks fervently support the evolution of BiH into an effective centralised state with no entities but peoples. Yet this approach

is divided amongst the moderates and hardliners. The former approach is promoted by Sulejman Tihić, head of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), the largest and oldest Muslim party. He is accepting the fact that Republica Srpska (RS) is a permanent structure of BiH and presents a more cooperative profile.

The hardline approach is represented by Haris Silajdžić, head of the Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), who asserts that RS has to be demolished, since it is the result of genocide and the Bosniak community the constant victim.<sup>26</sup> Silajdžić often rejects reforms, suggested even by the High Representative, if these appear not to minimise the power of the RS. As some officials have reportedly argued, Silajdžić seems to be expecting a more favourable international setting, also involving a more committed US administration, such as President Obama's, in which he could materialise his objectives.<sup>27</sup>

The Bosnian Serbs are currently represented by Milorad Dodik, who is now serving as Prime Minister of Republica Srpska. The Bosnian Serb leader has adopted a hardline rhetoric, advocating either the creation of a union of federal states, or demanding the right of RS to secession.<sup>28</sup> Dodik frequently obstructs decision-making at the state level, if this means the transfer of an authority that could make RS more dependable on the state structures. The role of the High Representative is fervently rejected and decisions imposed on the entities on the basis of the Bonn Powers are often not implemented. However, it is widely acknowledged that despite hardline rhetoric about the prospect of an RS declaration of independence following a local referendum, it would be very difficult for such an initiative to win international support at this stage from other states, including Serbia.

Bosnian Croats, on the other hand, seem as members of the Federation of BiH to be promoting publicly a moderate stance. Yet at the cantonal level, they are seeking greater linkage with neighbouring Croatia. In fact, the majority of Bosnian Croats hold dual citizenship. The Croat representative to the state Presidency, Željko Komšić, is a member of the Social Democratic Party, a Bosniak-dominated party. However, other parties such as the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH, led by Dragan Čović, promote coexistence that could also serve Croatian community rights.<sup>29</sup> In general, while Bosniacs view a unitary state without entities as an EU applicant, Bosnian Serbs perceive a confederal scheme, while Bosnian Croats consider even a three-entity federation as the most appropriate final candidate.<sup>30</sup> The reason for

mentioning the perspectives of the constituent ethnic groups is to highlight that secessionist views exist, and that hardline obstructionist advocacy can easily win supporters, if space is offered by international inefficiency or by the absence of a consistent and responsible international approach.

Against the background of the afore-mentioned cacophony of perceptions as regards BiH's future, recent developments point to a different reading. More specifically it seems that the differing voices within BiH's decision-making elite reflects trends which may turn out sour, in the absence of international cohesion. The truth is that despite hardline rhetoric, which at this stage may be voiced in view of the beginning of the electoral period, the three communities have demonstrated a willingness to coordinate actions towards further reforms.<sup>31</sup> One of the most important occasions was in October 2008, when the leaders of the largest parties of the three communities met in Prud (northern Bosnia) and committed themselves to start negotiating the conditions set by the PIC for further institutional reforms. They agreed on a number of key issues regarding property transfers, the control of Brško District, the population census (scheduled for 2011), and discussed the prospects of certain constitutional reforms. Although it was not a breakthrough, it reflected the three communities' conviction that mutual self-respecting commitments shall benefit all three communities through decisions towards European reforms.<sup>32</sup> The Prud agreement was considered as the first step of a process that would continue until BiH reforms for European integration were concluded.

In light of the Prud process, the PIC tried to grasp the momentum by announcing on 27 February 2009 'five objectives and two conditions' that BiH has to fulfil before transition could proceed towards Europeanisation. These included:

- Acceptable and Sustainable Resolution of the Issue of Apportionment of Property between State and other levels of government
- Acceptable and Sustainable Resolution of Defence Property
- Completion of the Brcko Final Award
- Fiscal Sustainability (promoted through an Agreement on a Permanent ITA Co-efficient methodology and establishment of a National Fiscal Council)
- Entrenchment of the Rule of Law (demonstrated through Adoption of National War Crimes Strategy, passage of Law on Aliens and Asylum, and adoption of National Justice Sector Reform Strategy)

‘In addition to the objectives listed above, the PIC Steering Board agrees that two conditions need to be fulfilled prior to transition: Signing of the SAA and a positive assessment of the situation in BiH by the PIC SB based on full compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement.’<sup>33</sup> Following the announcement of the ‘five objectives and two conditions’ no major negotiations took place amongst the parties until autumn, when the United States and the European Union (8-9 October 2009) tried to initiate a major negotiation endeavour under their leadership with the aim of fostering an agreement on the required reform.

This effort became known as the ‘Butmir’ initiative after the NATO (Camp Butmir) military base in Sarajevo where negotiations took place.<sup>34</sup> The process was led by the US Deputy Secretary of State, James Steinberg, and the Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, acting as the Chairman of the EU Presidency. Later, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, joined the process. The proposals for reform were presented to the parties on a package ‘take or leave it basis’, and included a number of substantial changes focusing on strengthening the powers of single structures that could facilitate decision-making, even if this would have meant the transfer of important authorities to the state structure. Other provisions included full acceptance and implementation of the European Convention of Human Rights, the one voice clause for conducting accession negotiations with the EU, an increase of the members of Bosnia’s Parliamentary Assembly and issues regarding state property. The package proposal was not accepted by the participants.<sup>35</sup> It has been reportedly argued that had there been certain elements in the negotiating package upon which parties could agree, some minimal agreement could have been attained. However, it was the package format as well as the emergency climate that had been created, compounded with some inevitable Dayton reminiscences, which affected the already bad timing and helped the parties to reject the proposal.<sup>36</sup> The composed manner with which almost all party leaders in BiH rejected this initiative is indicative of their common interest in addressing their existential concerns. Thus a more inclusive and committed proposal that could realise a functional balance between entity autonomy (or communal autonomy) and BiH’s integrity does not seem to be out of reach.

Lessons do not seem to have been learned from previous international action. International cohesion, a virtue absent between 1992 and 1995 in preventing the war in BiH, has to be fully demonstrated. However, as Dušan Reljić, has correctly advocated ‘[...] years after the war’s end, internal and external actors have still not reached any understanding about how best to

strike the necessary balance between centralized government and territorial autonomy.<sup>37</sup> For one of the most serious problems facing BiH today, as has been the case for the last several years, is that there 'have been two parallel debates on reform, within the international community and policy circles and among politicians and intellectuals within Bosnia and Herzegovina' which in any case prolongs the shortcomings of the state being[sic] functioning as a protectorate.<sup>38</sup>

Perhaps the reality that this time has to be taken seriously is that a strategy of combining the continuation of institutional evolution regarding BiH's governance, and thus its European and/or Euro-atlantic integration, with respect for the ethnic groups' existential concerns is more than needed. Hesitation and vagueness regarding one group's intention to extract elements of rights and prerogatives that the other groups have already enjoyed for the last fifteen years, will certainly sustain the current invisible progress towards sustainable peace. The European Union has acknowledged to some extent the importance of keeping this balance in the name of promoting further reforms. However, there are strategic antagonisms among major international powers, as is explained below, that challenge a consistent international standing for BiH's path to effective statehood.

### **The perspectives of the Key International Players**

For the US and the EU, as major international players in the effort to end the war in Bosnia and consolidate its peace, the current vague situation threatens to jeopardise their credibility.<sup>39</sup> As three former High Representatives to BiH have urged recently, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina can only be supported by the international community if we ourselves work in a serene, inclusive, non-antagonistic and transparent manner in good faith and based on objective criteria.'<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the perspectives of key international players that have been constantly involved in managing the situation in BiH are important, since the current uncertainty over the ultimate BiH integrated vision cannot be promptly addressed if international coherence is absent.

For the United States, successful consolidation of democracy in BiH and the maintenance of its territorial integrity simply vindicate the wisdom of the Dayton Peace Agreement, despite its constitutional complexities, which at the time of its launch were considered as the best acceptable and peaceful outcome.<sup>41</sup> The United States, under the Obama Administration, has already demonstrated its interest to 're-engage' in BiH. The visit by the US Vice-

President, John Biden, to the key Balkan cities (Belgrade, Pristina and Sarajevo), a few months (May 2009) after President Obama took office, is conducive to the willingness of the new US administration not to permit the destructive dynamic that is accelerating in Bosnia to jeopardise fifteen years of strategic investment in international crisis management.<sup>42</sup>

However, there seems to be impatience on the part of Washington regarding the pace of reforms in BiH. Washington's re-engagement may entail an approach that could prove disruptive to the cautious step-by-step fashion in which the EU is building the reform process in BiH. For example, the way in which 'the Butmir initiative' was prepared and composed has been criticised as threatening the credibility of all those actors who have authorised responsibility for supervising BiH reforms.<sup>43</sup> Although Washington's purpose might have been to help to reinforce the pace of reforms in BiH, its message can be considered as a signal about its fading trust of EU policies. To some extent, it might be perceived as if it is promoting a different vision about BiH as a member of trans-atlantic structures.<sup>44</sup>

Another influential factor regarding international action in BiH is Russia. Moscow is trying to make its presence visible in the region by supporting at this stage the continuation of the constitutional arrangements provided in Dayton. However, Russia's support for the autonomy of Republica Srpska and the indicated close economic relations with the Bosnian Serbs in the energy sector may be considered as a policy that may increase Bosnian Serb intransigence over the needs for reforms. Yet Russia remains in any case a crucial stabilising international factor through its membership of both the UN Security Council and the PIC.

As regards the role of the EU, criticisms and disappointment regarding its effectiveness have started to appear mainly within BiH. This criticism is vividly captured in the words of Sead Numanovic, editor-in-Chief of the Bosnian Newspaper *Dnevni Avaz*, who reportedly argues that 'You cannot find a place in the world, [...] where the E.U. had such a bad performance, such poor results, from such a lot of money.'<sup>45</sup> Again the image of the EU as an effective foreign policy player is at stake. As Paddy Ashdown asked recently: 'If the E.U., which has, in Bosnia, all its instruments of foreign policy – including a police mission and a military mission – if it can't get things done there, what hope is there?' He added: 'It is simply pathetic if we have to rely on the U.S. in our own backyard.'<sup>46</sup> Recent stagnation in reforms in BiH do not encourage positive messages. There should be no doubt that the European Union has

proved to be the most committed international actor these days to consolidate peace in BiH. The problem with the EU policy towards BiH is that not all efforts pointing to certain policies, mechanisms and other instruments have been coordinated in a desirable fashion, and thus tarnish the image of the EU.<sup>47</sup>

At this stage, the European Union is promoting all actions that could be considered as being embedded in a strategy that employs a comprehensive approach, namely combining military and non-military factors in order to consolidate peace and stability through development.<sup>48</sup> The problem is that all these actions have not been fully coordinated. It is hoped that the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty will address this deficiency.

More specifically, since December 2004 the EU has launched a military operation of about 6,300 troops as a continuation force, after NATO concluded its SFOR mission. Operation EUFOR ALTHEA is authorised under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to ensure continued compliance with the Dayton Agreement and to contribute to a safe and secure environment in BiH.<sup>49</sup> Although a relapse to war seems a remote contingency, the military presence in the territory of BiH has a strong preventive impact. Its mandate has been extended until the end of 2011.

Since January 2003, the EU also has deployed a Police Mission in BiH (EUPM). It followed on from a UN police operation on the ground since early 1996. Its mission is to establish policing arrangements under BiH ownership in accordance with best European and international practice. Monitoring, mentoring and inspection activities are duties to be performed. EUPM has continued to concentrate its efforts on supporting the fight against organised crime and to monitor and assess the implementation of police reforms.<sup>50</sup>

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Stabilization and Association Agreement has been ratified by fourteen member states so far. A ratification of BiH's SAA by all members will accelerate financial assistance from the EU to specific development and structural programmes. The EU provides guidance to the authorities of BiH on reform priorities as part of the European partnership.<sup>51</sup> BiH is scheduled to receive €89.1 million under the 2009 Instrument for Pre-accession assistance (IPA) programme for the period 2009-2011. Main areas of assistance include public administration, constitutional reforms, rule of law, civil society, culture, SME development, labour market and *acquis* approximation. In 2009, the focus is also on reducing the impact of the financial and economic crisis in BiH (€39m.). Additional financial support is provided by the EU through the participation of BiH (January 2009) in other



Community programmes, such as the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities.

In general, the EU is treating BiH as a weak and difficult democracy in transition, which at the same time will become an EU member should the country abide by European requirements. In other words, the EU offers a concise developmental vision to BiH, and more importantly also to the wider region of the Western Balkans. Perhaps for this reason, and in light of the substantial progress that all regional countries have made towards their European bid, a favourable conjuncture seems to be developing, one that could facilitate a more concise and firm European stance towards accelerating reforms for BiH European integration under its current borders. The only challenge that the EU has to address as regards its policy towards BiH is simply to make its prerogatives visible as soon as possible, so as to mitigate extreme voices that challenge its effectiveness. Cohesion in action shall also involve all major actors who could contribute to BiH democratic consolidation and European integration. Thus Bosnia and Herzegovina fifteen years later has come back demanding the future it was denied because of an inconsistent international community of the 1990s. International inconsistency will be detrimental to BiH's future let alone its European perspective.<sup>52</sup> More importantly, inconsistency among key international players in 'permissive environments' such as the Western Balkans are sending the message elsewhere that state-building can never be effective, thus rendering vulnerable societies subject to further destabilising actions.

## NOTES

1. Paddy Ashdown, a former high representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Stephen Castle, "For Bosnia, Future May Hinge on Irish Vote", *The New York Times*, 1 October 2009.
2. Apart from the brief military conflict in Slovenia (1991) and the war in Croatia lasting several months (1991-1992), the three-year war in BiH (April 1992- Nov. 1995) was the largest and most lethal war in Europe since World War II. It claimed about 102,000 deaths and created almost 1.2 million refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (1.3 million). See: <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1291965/posts> and [http://www.unhcr.ba/publications/state\\_refugees\\_bih.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ba/publications/state_refugees_bih.pdf).

- 3 Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western, "The Death of Bosnia. How to Stop Bosnia from Falling Apart", *Foreign Affairs*, Sept./Oct. 2009, Vol.88, No. 5, p. 69 (pp. 69-83).
4. Better known as the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement (DPA).
5. McMahon and Western, "The Death of Bosnia", *op.cit.*
- 6 The Peace Agreement was initialled in Dayton, Ohio in November 1995 by the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević (representing the Bosnian Serbs), the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and the Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic. It was officially signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, also by the French President Jacques Chirac, the U.S. President Bill Clinton, the UK Prime Minister John Major, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, as members of the International Contact Group. See: [http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content\\_id=380](http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380)
7. Consociational theory presumes 'power sharing at the centre, supplemented with a high degree of decentralization', Biever, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 20. For an excellent analysis of the consociational and confederal paradigm Dayton demonstrates, see Sumantra Bose, "The Bosnian State a decade after Dayton", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 12, No. 3, October 2005, pp. 322-335.
8. Only two of the cantons do not represent clear ethnic majorities.
9. The term 'Bosniaks' refers to Bosnian Muslims.
10. Rebecca Everly, "Complex public power regulation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Dayton peace agreement", *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2006, pp. 33-48.
11. See [http://www.ohr.int/pic/default.asp?content\\_id=38563](http://www.ohr.int/pic/default.asp?content_id=38563) (Accessed 20/01/2010)
12. Annex 10 of the GFAP provides the tasks and responsibilities of the High Representative.
13. Thorsten Gromes, "The Prospect of European Integration and Conflict Transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 31, No. 4, July 2009, p. 432 (431-447).
14. Bose, "The Bosnian State a decade after Dayton", *op.cit.*, p. 327.
15. Art. III 5a, Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995.
16. Biever, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace", *op.cit.*, p. 17.
17. For an important survey on this public conviction, see, Sam Whitt, "Institutions and Ethnic Trust: Evidence from Bosnia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 2, March 2010, pp. 271-292.

18. David Chandler, "Building Trust in public institutions? Good governance and anti-corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 85-99.
19. Despite the current scepticism that has been created amongst BiH's political elite in light of the crisis facing the EU, there is not doubt that BiH used to present important majorities in favour of European integration. For the two positions see, "The Missing Peace. The Need for a long term Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Nansen Dialogue Centre Sarajevo and Saferworld* and Marie-Janine Galic, "The Western Balkans on the Road Towards European Integration", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, December 2005. Available at: <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/03273.pdf>
20. Paddy Ashdown and Richard Holbrooke, "A Bosnian powder keg", *The Guardian*, 22 October 2008. For some analysts it was this careful process that contributed to the adoption of those reforms. See Thorsten Gromes, "The Prospect of European Integration and Conflict Transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *op.cit.* p. 439 and Bieber, *op.cit.*, p. 21.
21. "Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe", *International Crisis Group*, Report No. 198, 9 March 2009, p. 2.
22. UN Press release, "Amid "Political Impasse", Bosnia and Herzegovina at crossroads in Bid for Euro-Atlantic Integration, Security Council Told," Security Council, SC/9795, 23 November 2009. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9795.doc.htm> (Accessed on 22/01/2010).
23. Commission Staff Working Document, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2009 Progress Report, p. 10. [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2009/ba\\_rapport\\_2009\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/ba_rapport_2009_en.pdf) (Accessed on 20/01/2010)
24. Conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, extract from the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010', COM (2009) 533 final.
25. "Bosnia's Incomplete Transition", *International Crisis Group*, *op.cit.*
26. *Ibid.*
27. *Ibid.*
28. This advocacy appears more frequently after Kosovo's self-declared independence.
29. "Bosnia's Incomplete Transition", *op.cit.*, p. 10.
30. Gromes, "The Prospect of European Integration and Conflict Transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *op.cit.*, p. 437.
31. National elections have been scheduled for October 2010.
32. It was positively assessed by the High Representative at the time, Miroslav Lajčák. See <http://www.eusrbih.eu/media/pr/1/?cid=5400,1,1>

33. Declaration by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, 27 February 2009, [http://www.ohr.int/pic/default.asp?content\\_id=41352](http://www.ohr.int/pic/default.asp?content_id=41352) (Accessed on 22/01/2010)
34. [http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings\\_news/2009/10/21/joint\\_statement\\_by\\_foreign\\_minister\\_carl\\_bildt\\_and\\_deputy\\_secretary\\_james\\_steinberg\\_on\\_bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina](http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/10/21/joint_statement_by_foreign_minister_carl_bildt_and_deputy_secretary_james_steinberg_on_bosnia_and_herzegovina) (Accessed on 25/01/2010)
35. Only Sulejman Tihić was in favour of the package offered. See International Crisis Group, "Bosnia Dual Crisis", Policy Briefing No. 57, pp. 4-8.
36. *Ibid.* p.12.
37. Dušan Reljić, "The West Balkans between the EU, the USA, and Russia", *SWP Comments*, No. 19, August 2009.
38. Bieber, *op.cit.*, p. 27 (pp. 15-31).
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42. Nicholas Kulish, "Biden Warns Bosnians About "Old Patterns", *New York Times*, 19 May 2009.
43. Ashdown, Petritsch and Schwarz-Schilling, *op.cit.*
44. This vision contradicts the suggestion made by the former US Ambassador William Montgomery about the prospect of different secessions in the region. See William Montgomery, "The Balkan Mess Redux", *The New York Times*, 4 June 2009. Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/05/opinion/05iht-edmontgomery.html> (Accessed 25/01/2010)

45. *Op.cit.*, quoted in Castle, “For Bosnia, Future May Hinge on Irish Vote”.
46. *Ibid.*
47. For a well-documented criticism over the “cautious” EU policy towards BiH, see Giulio Venneri, “Beyond the Sovereignty Paradox: EU ‘Hands-up’ Statebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 2010, pp. 153-178.
48. Further discussion on the comprehensive approach in international crisis management is not strictly relevant to the purpose of this analysis.
49. The operation is in close cooperation with NATO, since it functions under the ‘Berlin Plus’ clause.
50. Bosnia and Herzegovina 2009 Progress Report, COM (2009) 533, SEC (2009) 1338, Brussels, 14.10.2009, p. 6.
51. *Ibid.* p. 5.
52. See also Sven Gunnar Simonsen, “Divided Loyalty. Elections test Bosnia-Herzegovina’s unity”, *Jane’s Intelligent Review*, September 2010, pp. 30-36.

# **Transparency and Accountability in the Parliaments of Greece and Southeast Europe (or the Gap between Institutional Rules and Democratic Practices)<sup>1</sup>**

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## **RÉSUMÉ**

Au cours des deux dernières années une vague de réformes parlementaires a balayé les pays d'Europe du Sud affectant la nature et la légitimité de la démocratie. Cet article examine le degré d'ouverture et de transparence des Parlements nationaux en Grèce et dans les autres pays ex-communistes de la région. En passant en revue les dispositions qui ont trait à l'accès du public à l'information et à la participation au processus législatif, ce texte analyse la façon dont fonctionne en pratique le cadre juridique dans la promotion de l'efficacité, de la transparence et de la responsabilité. Les auteurs soulignent que si le Parlement reste, aux yeux de l'électorat, l'établissement central et souverain dans une démocratie représentative, les Parlements à travers l'Europe du Sud souffrent de graves lacunes dans l'application de la loi et d'une importante perte de puissance dans la pratique. Un haut degré d'impartialité, la domination de l'exécutif, le faible niveau de transparence et de manque d'information sont les principaux éléments identifiés comme les causes profondes du problème. En outre le processus d'eupéanisation apparaît également dans la diffusion des processus de décision et d'autonomisation des acteurs au niveau exécutif et administratif au détriment des Parlements nationaux.

## **ABSTRACT**

In the past couple of years a wave of parliamentary reforms has swept through the countries of Southeast Europe affecting the nature and legitimacy of democracy. This article examines the degree of openness and transparency of national parliaments in Greece and in the other ex-communist countries of the region. By reviewing provisions that pertain to the public's access to information and participation in the legislative process, it analyzes how the legal frame functions in practice in promoting effectiveness, transparency

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and accountability. The authors argue that while the Parliament remains, in the eyes of the electorates, the central and sovereign institution in a representative democracy, parliaments across southeast Europe are suffering from serious gaps in the application of the law and from a serious loss of power in practice. High degrees of partisanship, dominance of the executive, low levels of transparency and lack of information are the main elements identified as the root-causes of the problem. In addition, the process of Europeanization also appears to diffuse the decision-making process and empower the executive and administrative actors at the expense of national legislatures.

In the past couple of years a wave of parliamentary reforms has swept through the countries of Southeast Europe affecting the nature and legitimacy of democracy. Besides changes in electoral systems and the type of cabinet, an important set of reforms pertain to changes in access to information rules and in the parliaments' Rules of Standing Order (RSOP) that affect the transparency and accountability of parliamentary institutions. In most cases, these reforms have been taking place in the context of a post-transitional status of democratization and European integration, as aspiring candidate states or as long-standing EU members like Greece. Popularly elected and representative parliaments epitomize both in symbol and substance the restoration of democracy. At the same time, they seem to be suffering from a serious crisis of legitimacy in the eyes of the electorates, registering record-low levels of trust and loss of public confidence in their ability to represent society. Such a sharp decline in their legitimacy was expressed in Greece in May 2010 when the slogan "let the Parliament burn" became the flag-moto of an especially heated demonstration. While the grievances were not specifically centered on parliament, the slogan captured the widespread public discontent with the workings of the democratic political system as a whole.

To be sure, the evident decline of parliament as a preeminent institution of political representation and government control is far from a novel or uniquely south European development. Instead, it has been a much-analyzed phenomenon that variably besets contemporary systems of various degrees of openness and democratic quality. For a long time now, the study of parliamentary institutions has recognized that the increased regulatory functions of social welfare state have shifted the balance of power from parliament to the government, resulting in a corresponding decline in the

power of the former to control and hold accountable the latter. Governments and state administrations issue a very large number of regulatory decisions and administrative acts that escape parliamentary deliberation and control. This has been even more pronounced in the context of the European Union (EU), in which national administrations and governments are assigned primary responsibility to implement EU laws and policies. In so far as this has been taking place, the authority of parliament as the preeminent institution of popular representation, with the power to endorse, or conversely control and reconfigure government policies, is constrained. An additional challenge in the relatively recent democracies with an authoritarian legacy like those of Southeast Europe is the fact that their young parliamentary institutions never managed after the end of communist rule to thoroughly re-claim actual decision-making power in drafting and passing laws.

When important aspects of decision-making and legislating functions shift or remain outside of parliament, this raises fundamental issues about transparency and accountability in contemporary parliamentary democracy. How can transparency and accountability of parliament's political and legislative decision-making be ensured if they are largely determined outside of parliament? Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of contemporary democracy. Bearing upon all governing and public bodies carrying official functions, including parliament, it refers to their essential obligation to be open to the public about their activities and conduct. Only through transparent procedures and practices can citizens and various societal groups verify whether the parliamentarians, whom they vote to power, perform effectively their role of providing support to, but also of exercising control over government policies and actions.

Transparency was not always such a widely and unquestionably accepted obligation placed upon government or parliament as it is today under modern democratic governance. In non-democratic or semi-democratic systems, public and government bodies have often treated the information that they held as though it were for the exclusive use of their officials and applied to public documents various degrees of classification.<sup>2</sup> Giving regular and unrestricted publicity to the workings and actions of parliamentarians enables citizens to exercise control and hold them accountable by making an informed decision each time they vote to elect their representatives.

A central means whereby transparency and accountability are ensured is through robust constitutional and legislative guarantees for accessing information. By contrast, limits to accessing information are a serious



impediment to effective civic involvement in the legislative process.<sup>3</sup> They are also a source of citizens' disillusionment and apathy towards the legislative process, and towards democratic representation more broadly. Access to information is a means of ensuring accountability of parliamentary representatives as it allows citizens to be informed about and monitor their conduct and activities. Both transparency and accountability are also prerequisites for a more open and representative legislature. Unhindered access to information and knowledge about its workings enable individuals and civil society actors to follow more easily and seek to participate and engage in the legislative processes.<sup>4</sup> In turn, through their lobbying activities or advocacy campaigns, civil society actors such as NGOs, trade unions, business associations or the media instill pressures for greater access to information and transparency more broadly.

As the countries of Southeast Europe moved from dictatorships to democracy, have they managed to ensure transparency and accountability of their parliaments? To what extent have they established themselves as legitimate and effective institutions, and what are the consequences for the workings of democracy? This article addresses these questions, first by examining the case of Greece. Furthermore, it comparatively analyzes the implications of the Greek experience with parliamentary institutions for the other Balkan countries in the post-1989 period. Drawing from the Greek case, the analysis considers the developments and conditions affecting the transparency and accountability of parliament in the broader South European context. Given the fact that Greece did not have a state socialist system, it is not directly comparable to the other Balkan countries.<sup>5</sup> At the same time though, Greece shares with the other Balkan countries a legacy of parliamentary failures that resulted in political upheavals and authoritarianism in the course of the twentieth century. Such failures came to end with transition to democratic regimes in the mid-1970s in Greece and in the other countries of the region in the late 1980s and 1990s and the establishment of functional and representative parliamentary institutions. In both sets of cases, democratization has been followed by a process of accession and membership to the European Community/Union (EC/EU).<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of primary legal material and secondary literature, this article examines the degree of openness and transparency of national parliaments. In particular, it reviews provisions that pertain to the public's access to information regarding the functions of parliament and the actions of its representatives, as well as provisions regarding participation in the legislative

process. It also analyzes how the legal frame functions in practice in so far as its effectiveness in ensuring transparency and accountability is concerned. The last part discusses further the findings in reference to the parliament's changing role and declining authority today, and provides a set of recommendations towards improving the parliament's transparency and accountability. We argue that while the Parliament remains, in the eyes of the electorates, the central and sovereign institution in a representative democracy, parliaments across southeast Europe are suffering from serious gaps in the application of the law and from a serious loss of power in practice. High degrees of partisanship, dominance of the executive, low levels of transparency and lack of information are the main elements identified as the root-causes of the problem. In addition, the process of Europeanization also appears to diffuse the decision-making process and empower the executive and administrative actors at the expense of national legislatures.

#### **A. Transparency and accountability in the Greek Parliament: constitutional-legal frame and practice**

After seven years of military dictatorship, Greece underwent a transition to a democratic regime in 1974, which shed away the vestiges of the deficient democracy that had been established after World War II. The transition involved the adoption of a new constitution and the abolition of monarchy, which had regularly interfered with electoral and parliamentary processes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the basis of an unusually broad political consensus, a system of presidential parliamentary democracy (*proedrevomeni koinovouleftiki dimokrateia*) was established.<sup>7</sup> Following the advent to power of the centre-left Socialist government of PASOK in the 1980s, the balance of power between the President of the Republic on the one hand, and the Parliament and the Government on the other, permanently shifted in favour of the latter. The reinforced prerogatives and emergency powers that had remained with the President of the Republic, albeit not used after 1974, were permanently removed with the first constitutional revision of 1985. In this way, the 1985 constitutional revision strengthened the parliamentary over the presidential characteristics of contemporary Greek democracy. While the parliament appointed the Prime Minister and the other members of the government cabinet, its ability to exercise effective control over the executive was not equally reinforced. The 1985 constitutional revision dismantled presidential powers, and it also reinforced the predominance of the governing party and the Prime Minister.<sup>8</sup>

The Greek Parliament (*Vouli ton Ellinon*, or *Vouli*) is directly elected for a term of four years. The votes of the electorate are translated into parliamentary representation through an electoral system that for most part after World War II has been based on reinforced proportional representation.<sup>9</sup> Regarding its main competences, the Greek *Vouli* elects the President of the Republic and forms the government, it legislates and votes the annual state budget, and it exercises oversight and control over the government. The Parliament also appoints the Prime Minister (PM) who enjoys the 'express confidence' (principle of *dedilomeni*) of the majority of representatives, and who is usually the head of the political party, to which the parliamentary majority belongs. The parliamentary majority gives a vote of confidence to the government cabinet, whose members are appointed by the PM.<sup>10</sup>

By far the most important competence of the Parliament is its legislative function.<sup>11</sup> It votes the bills submitted by the government, the opposition or by individual representatives.<sup>12</sup> The elaboration of the bills is taken on by the relevant parliamentary committee<sup>13</sup> together with the rest of the representatives. They can be voted either in plenary session or by the competent parliamentary committee.<sup>14</sup> The 2001 constitutional revision empowered the permanent parliamentary committees with autonomous legislative competences according to article 70 of the Greek Constitution.

If the 1974 constitution laid the foundations for the democratic nature of Greece's political system, its second revision in 2001 (the first one, as already mentioned had taken place in 1985), gave constitutional recognition to rule of law (*kratos dikaion*)<sup>15</sup>. Among other things, it did so by guaranteeing with the new Article 5A of the 2001 constitution a general right to information and the participation of individuals in the information society (parag. 2).<sup>16</sup> The latter implied a direct obligation for the state *to facilitate citizens' access to information*. While this constitutional provision does not specifically refer to Parliament, it entrenched more firmly the need and obligation of the latter to guarantee transparency. At the same time, the constitution also recognizes certain limitations to the right to information. Restrictions can be justified for reasons of national security, such as a serious external threat, fight against crime, and the protection of the rights of third parties,<sup>17</sup> which, however, must be interpreted restrictively. The workings of the Greek Parliament, including in relation to issues of access to information and publicity, are regulated by the already mentioned Rules of Standing Order (RSOP), a set of internal rules that is decided by the chamber of deputies.

Whether they meet in plenary session or in the context of committees, parliamentary representatives (or MPs) must do so openly and in public, regardless of the subject matter on which they are deliberating.<sup>18</sup> Closed to the public, however, are meetings of permanent committees holding hearings with individuals outside from parliament during discussion of government bills or draft laws.<sup>19</sup> It must be noted though that since 1993, when the relevant provision was adopted, a closed hearing with non-parliamentarians has never been requested. The presence of extra-parliamentary individuals is a form of public deliberation and aims at providing clarifications with regard to issues that are legislated. Those who are invited usually come from the leadership ranks of trade union organizations.

Publicity and transparency of the Greek parliament's workings and activities are also ensured through *open and televised meetings*, most of which are broadcast and immediately reach the media through a variety of means. Since the early 2000s, the *Vouli* has its own TV station. All meetings of the Plenary Session and most meetings of the permanent committees are also recorded and televised through an internal transmission system inside the parliament building, as well as broadcast live or recorded through the TV station of the *Vouli*, the radio station and the website. Publicity and transparency are furthermore guaranteed through the constant presence of journalists from print and electronic media with special permits (*diapistevmenoï*), who attend all parliamentary meetings.

Parliamentary activities are recorded through *keeping detailed proceedings* that are available to the public upon request or by downloading them from the parliament's website. Given the fact that only a small percentage of the public actually watches live broadcast of parliamentary meetings and that in practice even fewer attend those in person, keeping detailed and systematic proceedings is of utmost importance. Proceedings contain a word by word record of all speeches made by deputies, of any procedural matters that may arise, and, of course, of the results of voting. It must be noted that the process of voting by MPs can be open or secret. Article 73 of RSOP provide for secret voting on issues that concern the election of individuals, or issues, in which individuals (MPs or citizens) are explicitly named.<sup>20</sup> Through detailed, systematic and timely recording of what is said in the Chamber, anyone who is interested can get a full picture by reading the proceedings.<sup>21</sup>

Transparency is not only a matter of publicity of and wide access to information regarding the activities of parliament as an institution. It also

concerns the conduct of parliamentarians in their political activities. The latter may be revealing about their relations with various constituencies, social groups or influential individuals, as well as about their political loyalties and dependencies. In the Greek electoral system, MPs are elected not from a pre-ranked party list but on the basis of the number of votes that they are able to amass. As a result, candidates' campaigns are driven by a votes' maximization logic that makes them thoroughly depend on large amounts of funds, as well as on donations by party supporters. Those who donate large sums of money to their electoral campaigns are likely to have and often do have disproportionate influence over the views and actions of parliamentarians. Therefore, a basic parameter of transparency is to *ensure publicity of the finances of political parties and their deputies*, as much during their electoral campaign as during their term in parliament. Publicity of parliamentary work but also of the MPs activities enables citizens to exercise control over their elected representatives and hold them accountable for their views and actions.

Since its 2001 revision, the obligation of national authorities to exercise control over the electoral expenses of political parties and their candidates running for parliament is stipulated in the constitution.<sup>22</sup> This responsibility is assigned to a special body with the participation of high-level judicial officials. Political parties are obliged to keep special documents, in which they report per each category their revenues and expenses, and in which they explicitly mention the names of those who donate a sum higher than 600 euro annually. Political parties also publish their annual accounts in the Government Gazette (*Efimerida tis Kyverniseos*) and in the daily press. Parliament deputies but also a certain number of candidates running for MPs must also provide detailed accounts of their electoral revenues and expenses along with the respective invoices.<sup>23</sup> However, contrary to what is required from political parties, the accounts of deputies are rarely made public, but they are only submitted to the relevant parliamentary committee for review. The MPs are also required to declare annually their assets with detailed references to their movable and immovable property. Following their review by a parliament committee (*Epitropi Eleghou*), these declarations are subsequently published in the daily press.<sup>24</sup>

While article 9§2 in the Constitution and the abovementioned provisions contained in Law 3023/2002 seek to make transparent the finances of MPs, especially those channeled into their electoral campaign, in practice the results are far from satisfactory. Even though undeclared revenues from big donors apparently reach the coffers of political parties and their candidates, such

donations have never come to light during the review process. The fact that such a process often takes place with substantial delay, and in a place (inside parliament) that is often far removed from the local party or candidates' offices, must in part be seen to account for such a deficient and ineffective control. It is no surprise that illicit campaign financing of parliamentarians has never been exposed if we also consider the fact that those same deputies are both those who exercise control and simultaneously those who are subject to such control. The issue of establishing effective control over the finances of political parties and parliamentary representatives is of ongoing relevance and it is widely acknowledged to be a serious impediment to guaranteeing their accountability. However, fundamental reform of the existing process of control and of the respective committee that engages in it requires constitutional revision, which can not start earlier than June 2013 and it is unlikely to be completed before 2015.

It becomes evident from the previous section that a fairly robust constitutional and legal frame is in place to enable citizens to gain fairly comprehensive information about the activities and functions of the Greek Parliament. Anyone who is interested can gain access to the vast majority of documents and knowledge of the activities taking place and the decisions made by the Chamber. While this is a fundamental accomplishment of the country's post-1974 democracy, it does not in practice appear to always guarantee transparency, or to meet the public's contemporary expectations about transparency, accountability, openness and democratic participation.

While legal and constitutional rules satisfactorily guarantee publicity of parliamentary activity and citizens' access to information regarding the latter, in practice, transparency, openness and accountability of the Greek Parliament are severely compromised by a number of factors. In the first place, it is clear that control over the annual accounts of Parliament, including the expenses of MPs themselves is insufficient and defective. While there is no study that has been conducted on the subject, a series of articles that have appeared in the press recently give a glimpse to what is otherwise a well-known fact, namely, that the Greek Parliament is an excessively and unjustifiably high-cost institution. While the President of Parliament submits the annual budget to the *Vouli*, a number of expenses are arguably not sufficiently clarified and convincingly explained, as it is the case in the most recent 2010 budget.<sup>25</sup> Questions regarding the sound financial management of parliament as an institution are also compounded by the thorough lack of transparency characterizing the recruitment process of parliament employees. They are hired

without open calls for applications, and enjoy high levels of salaries and benefits. The new government has also vowed to change the process of recruitment and make it open and competitive.<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, transparency is undermined in practice through the frequent recourse of the government to provisions that allow for the urgent introduction and passing of laws without discussion. This is permitted under certain conditions, which, however, are not always in place.<sup>27</sup> The urgent procedure does not allow time for parliamentarians to scrutinize and discuss a government bill. Parliamentary discussion and debate are also undermined when they take place under tight time constraints. For instance, one of the most important functions of the Greek parliament, namely, the approval of the state budget, takes place in very tight time frame. This occurs because the government tends to submit the budget with delay, and the 40-day deadline in advance that is stipulated by the constitution in practice is rarely met, allowing limited time for discussion and deliberation.<sup>28</sup>

Knowledge about and discussion of the legislative initiatives undertaken by the government in parliament are undermined by widespread practices such as so called 'catch-all' bills. These are government bills that contain additional provisions or amendments appended to a government bill, which, however, are irrelevant to the main subject matter of the bill, contrary to what the constitution stipulates.<sup>29</sup> Such additional amendments are usually inserted by the competent minister at the last minute without previous deliberation before the appropriate committee.<sup>30</sup> Practices as these undermine transparency and escape parliamentary and public accountability. Knowledge and discussion are particularly limited when irrelevant provisions and amendments are introduced by a minister in the chamber in late night meetings, when a large number of MPs are not present.<sup>31</sup> Over the past couple of years, however, recourse to this practice of submitting so-called 'late night amendments' has been significantly reduced.

The established legal and constitutional frame allows the public to be informed about the government bills discussed inside parliament. These, however, are already crystallized and largely formed outputs of ministerial processes, possible consultations and deliberations with particular (and most likely influential) interest groups, which have already taken place in a manner that is informal and unknown to the public and most likely to many among parliamentarians themselves. Unlike in countries, such as Germany, in Greece the pre-parliamentary law drafting processes are informal and invisible and

fall outside the provisions contained in the RSOP or the constitution. The few existing rules that pertain to it merely regulate the composition and functions of the bodies (i.e. ministerial committees, or the Legal Office of the PM) that are involved in this process.<sup>32</sup> Yet, they do not clarify or regulate the role of actors such as interest groups, political parties, trade unions, administrative officials, or individuals, who participate in this crucial process of legislation drafting.<sup>33</sup>

The pre-parliamentary legislative drafting process that is set in by the government and the competent ministries lacks transparency. The interactions and meetings between ministry officials, interest groups and external experts who can provide specialized knowledge and advice are informal; they lack publicity and escape parliamentary scrutiny. So are the interactions between political parties and the governing party on the one hand, and social and interest groups on the other.<sup>34</sup> Once the competent law-drafting committee inside a ministry, which is dominated by government officials and members of the governing party, submits its draft to the minister, s/he can invite at his or her discretion members from particular interest and social groups, and ask them for their views and position on the subject matter of the draft law. This process ends with the preparation of the explanatory report by the competent minister, which accompanies a bill throughout its subsequent stages before and after its submission to the Speaker of the Parliament. Before it goes to parliament, a government bill is also sent to the parliamentary group of the governing party, so that its MPs are not later caught by surprise when they are asked to vote for it.<sup>35</sup>

The predominant and formative weight that the pre-parliamentary law-drafting process has on the government bills that are submitted to parliament for discussion and vote is in part a reflection of the executive's dominance over the Greek political system. The dominance of the government over parliament is further reinforced by the dominance of the governing party in parliament and the strong partisan lines and discipline that characterize its activities. The strengthened position of the executive and the administration and the corresponding decline of parliamentary institutions in decision-making and policy-making is not only a Greek phenomenon. Instead, it is a generalized one that has been linked with the development and evolution of modern welfare state, as it is already mentioned earlier in this study. It has also been arguably reinforced by the enhanced powers that governments and public administration gain in the context of EU membership. National administrations are responsible for implementing a large body of EU legislation in a growing range of sectors,



in which the EU now shapes policies and legislates. The lack of transparency and publicity at the pre-parliamentary stages of law-drafting raise another issue of openness: the far-reaching disparities in the degree of access and influence that different social and interest groups have in the legislative processes.

As a result of the informal nature and opaqueness of the executive-dominated legislative drafting process before a bill reaches parliament, MPs have deficient information and knowledge about it. This undermines the basis for engaging in substantive dialogue inside the chamber and exercising a constructive kind of control over the government.<sup>36</sup> The discussions and debates taking place in Parliament for most part do not disclose its underlying basis of support and opposition, and are unable to provide to the public reasoned arguments beyond party lines. This is a substantive (as opposed to procedural) parameter of transparency in the legislative process, in which there is a critical gap. It is no surprise that public opinion surveys (such as the one referred to in the previous section) mention the need for more substantive dialogue as shortcoming of parliamentary deliberations. It could arguably in part be addressed by standardizing and clarifying the pre-parliamentary drafting process, as well as by providing in the explanatory reports that accompany the draft laws more detailed information about the different views and positions of actors who were involved.<sup>37</sup>

The gap in citizens' access to information about Parliament in practice and their trust towards it clearly surfaces in a survey commissioned by the Greek Parliament in May 2008, in which 80% of individuals expressed the view that the *Vouli must be* the centre of the country's political life (emphasis added).<sup>38</sup> The majority of respondents expressed the view that greater and more substantive dialogue should take place in the Chamber. There is an underlying and diffused impression shared by large segments of the public that the legislative and decision-making processes that take place in Parliament are not sufficiently open or transparent. The speeches, discussions and debates that take place in the Greek Parliament are seen to be largely shaped by partisan lines, while the substantive content of the government bills discussed has already been determined by officials inside the competent ministries or party leaders through a process that is not accessible to public knowledge. It is indicative that the vast majority of respondents in the abovementioned survey believe that ministers must announce and present in Parliament the measures that they propose in their area of responsibility, if this institution is to become upgraded and a forum of substantive dialogue. This sounds like a plea to a more open and transparent process, through which government bills are put together.

## **B. Do the new democracies in the Balkans guarantee transparency and accountability in national parliament? Theory and practice**

Similarly to Greece, Albanian, Serbian, (FYR) Macedonian, Bulgarian and Romanian Parliaments function according to Constitutional Provisions and Internal Rules of Procedure voted and internally controlled by the respective Parliaments. As described in the respective Constitutions, Parliaments are the highest sovereign authorities mandated to exercise scrutiny over Governments and act as the main legislative body.<sup>39</sup> The right of access to information is a Constitutional guarantee, either on its own accord, or it is derived from constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression in all countries in the region. Relevant legal provisions require from all state bodies, including Parliament, to take a proactive stance in sharing information to all interested citizens.

Access to information is in principle unlimited; any interested individual can access information without having to prove his or her vested interest. Serbia's Law on Publication of the Information Bulletin on the Work of Public Authorities creates such an obligation for all state institutions, including Parliament. This is also the case in Bulgaria and Albania where constitutional and legal provisions guarantee the transparency of institutions providing that any person has the right to request information which the State is obliged to provide, unless the information is subject to specific restrictions.<sup>40</sup> Existing restrictions only justify the refusal to provide information on grounds of threat of life, confidential state information or the protection of personal data. As a rule, in cases of denial to grant access to information, the refusal has to be accompanied by an explanatory note while citizens in all cases have the right to appeal. The case of Serbia, however, is an exception in this regard: an individual does not have the right to appeal to the Commissioner for Free Access to information of Public Importance, an independent authority monitoring the free access to information, and administrative litigation is the only available alternative.<sup>41</sup>

Due to the turbulent past of the region, as well as due to the relatively recent democratization process, the rules in place are often characterized by especially high standards based on the provisions of international organisations like the OECD. In countries like Albania and Macedonia(FYR) such organizations retain a monitoring role of the political process. Such high standards, for instance, are evidenced in the fact that citizens have the right to scrutinize state bodies and directly participate in public affairs, besides having the right of

access to public information. Citizens in Serbia, Macedonia(FYR), Albania, Romania have the right to introduce a legislative initiative if they manage to collect a certain number of signatures, which is required by law. The historical experience of the countries with authoritarian rule and one-party systems arguably necessitated the incorporation of stronger checks and balances in the respective Constitutions. In Bulgaria, the right to enact legislation directly by citizens has been introduced but only in the context of initiating a referendum. In Greece on the other hand, a similar provision is completely absent.

Media coverage is another very important means of ensuring access to information and transparency of Parliaments and as such it is regulated to a greater or smaller extent in all countries. As in the case of Freedom of Information Acts, media coverage of Parliamentary activities is covered by provisions in the respective Parliaments' Rules of Procedure (RoP). They usually grant accredited Representatives of the Press privileged access to the Parliamentary sessions. All Parliaments have open and televised meetings either on national television or broadcasting via their own channel as in the case of Greece. Accredited journalists appear to enjoy a privileged and almost unconditional access to information in comparison to the ordinary citizens. Characteristically, in Romania, Article 8 of the Freedom of Information Act guarantees privileged access to information for journalists determining a short deadline of 24 hours, within which parliamentary authorities must respond to requests of media representatives. By contrast, a ten day rule applies to ordinary citizens. According to the RoP, representatives of the press generally enjoy privileged access to the parliamentary sessions.

All Parliaments have their own websites that provide information on the Parliament's agenda, the legislative process, and pending legislation and texts of proposals.<sup>42</sup> They also contain general information on the Parliament, the country's Constitution and the Parliaments' Rules of Procedure. In principle all the websites include updated archives of the proceedings of the Plenary and Committee sessions, as well as audiovisual material when this is available. With the exception of the Hellenic Parliament and the Romanian Senate House, all Parliaments appear to have functioning websites in English and in other languages outside their national language.

Parliaments are the dominant actors engaging in the legislative process. Nevertheless, they do not exclusively possess the right to initiate legislation, which in most cases is exercised by the executive. The legislative process is fairly similar in all countries under consideration and broadly follows three steps: 1)

legal initiative (either in the form of draft-law coming from the government, law proposal from MPs or rarely citizens' initiative); 2) debate and approval of the law; and 3) publication in the Official Gazette, after which the law takes effect. As it is stipulated in the constitutions, voting is open and MPs preferences should be made publicly. Secret voting may take place but it is limited. Before reaching the plenary session a draft law is always processed by the relevant Legislative Committee.

Public debate and consultation may take place in some cases usually after the first reading of the draft law. For instance, during the second reading in the FYROM a relevant working body can be formed including all interested parties from the civil society.<sup>43</sup> Public debate does not take place, however, if a law is adopted through the use of "urgent procedures", which obstructs control and accountability, as the case of Greece demonstrates above. All stages of the legislative process should in principle be open and accessible to the citizen. However, as it is analyzed below, this is hardly the case, especially when concerning the first stage, that of drafting and initiating legislation. In Albania, consultation process with the general public does take place during the pre-drafting phase in the competent Ministry, before it reaches the Parliament. Even so, any consultation largely depends on the discretion of the Minister.<sup>44</sup> The citizens remain at best 'informed observers' whereas active participation in the entire process is at the discretion of the competent Minister, the President of Parliament or of the Committee responsible. Indeed, while the law-making procedure is clearly described in the law, the pre-drafting period is rather unregulated, rendering difficult citizens' participation and control.<sup>45</sup>

While all parliaments appear, overall, to have rather robust constitutional and legal frames regulating accountability and transparency of the institutions, the application in practice reveals that serious drawbacks exist in the systems. While there are positive provisions in the laws of the countries under study that provide to citizens opportunities for active participation, like the provisions granting direct legal initiative rights to the citizens, in practice this process rarely takes place; when it does it is not always guaranteed that it shall be respected. Characteristic is the example of Romania. While the law provides to citizens the possibility to initiate legislation, provided the collection of 100,000 signatures, at the same time it penalizes the 'coercion' of a signature without specifying the terms of coercion.<sup>46</sup> This latter provision arguably functions as a deterrent to citizens' initiatives and their efforts to collect the required number of signatures.

Practical limitation upon access to information is also a real problem in all countries discussed. An important cause of the problem is the relative absence of definitions specifying in detail the cases under which information can be withheld. In the absence of such definitions, release of information is effectively left in the hands of the state officials handling the cases in question. Arbitrary interpretation of the law is a direct consequence of the absence of clear definitions. For instance, in Bulgaria the Law on Access to Information, which was adopted rather late in 2000, provides no clear definition of what constitutes a state secret, leading to frequent refusals in requests to access information.<sup>47</sup> This law was amended in 2008 to introduce a specific definition of what constitutes a “commercial secret” as well as the notion of “outweighing public interest” as a ground to justify the authorities’ refusal to allow access to public information.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, in Albania, there is no specific definition of what constitutes ‘public information’. According to the OSCE’s most recent report, there are a number of problems in regards to the implementation of the Albanian law. These are largely due to the ignorance of citizens about its existence, as well as to the administration’s lack of capacity and training in enforcing it.<sup>49</sup>

The parliamentary reforms that have taken place in the ex-communist countries of Southeast Europe have arguably been in the direction of efficacy at the expense of legitimacy. For instance, in the FYROM, the Rules of Procedure of Parliament were amended in 2009, to reduce the time available to MPs for speeches.<sup>50</sup> Absent is a robust system of checks and balances in practice, while there are no effective means of incorporating the active participation of civil society actors. As states mature, moving from the first phase of transition characterized by an ‘overparliamentarisation’ of politics,<sup>51</sup> to that of democratic consolidation, Parliaments are ‘institutionalised’. As scholars have argued, they are mandated to become more efficient and ‘manage’ greater and more complicated amounts of work, effectively placing more emphasis on stability and efficacy over legitimacy and representation.<sup>52</sup> EU accession has not made the situation any easier, as Parliaments are required to incorporate a large body of EU legislation in national law. In this process, the executive has enjoyed privileged access in the policy-making process at the EU level.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether this situation will be altered following the signing of the Lisbon Treaty, which has strengthened the role of national parliaments by enhancing the subsidiarity principle.<sup>54</sup>

The process of European integration arguably strengthens the Government vis-à-vis the Parliament. This claim is to a large extent, inapplicable in

Bulgarian context, because the Constitutional design anyhow provides for executive domination over the legislative body, as it was already explained. It is clear from this brief introduction that in the specific Constitutional model of Bulgaria not the Parliament controls the government but vice versa. EU integration has not changed this existing balance of power between the legislative and the executive, if anything, it has strengthened it. The adoption of the *acquis* was indeed a Herculean process and no one could expect Bulgarian Parliament to have carefully scrutinized each and every act. Yet the main agent of the legislation-drafting process in Bulgaria is the Government: parliamentary groups bring draft laws only when they want to side-step the cumbersome process of coordination and consultation in the preparation of drafts within the executive. European integration did not change much this practice: the dominance of the Government, which, however, was already deeply entrenched, was simply confirmed.

Whether bolstered by domestic institutional design, or as a consequence of the EU accession or association process, the strengthening of the executive has gone hand in hand with pressures and initiatives to reduce the size of Parliament. Such initiatives reflect largely disparaging views and appraisals of parliamentary assemblies, whose quality of work and contribution to democracy is not seen to match their size. In Albania, amendments to the Constitution in 2008, led to a reform of the electoral system, introducing regional proportional representation and changes in the vote of confidence procedure and the election of the President. These reforms have strengthened the position of the Prime Minister over that of the parliamentarians.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, a mixed majority electoral system was adopted in Romania. A referendum was enacted on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2009 to decide whether Romania should adopt a unicameral Parliament with smaller number of representatives. According to the results, 77.78% of the voters were in favor of a unicameral Parliament, while a stunning 88.84% of voters were in favor of reducing the number of Parliamentarians. As a result Romania has now entered a process of constitutional revision in order to put the referendum result into effect.<sup>56</sup> In the context of the financial crisis in Greece, discussions about the Parliament's expenses have also led to discussions about the possibility of reducing the number of Parliamentarians to enhance efficiency; however no Constitutional amendments can take place until June 2013 according to the respective legal provisions.

States of SE Europe have been facing at different times, similar challenges and common goals: democratic consolidation and European integration. As

Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia (FYR) moved from command economies and state socialist regimes to market liberalization and parliamentary liberal democracy, two common trends concerning Parliaments have been observed. First, the initial enthusiasm for elections with record numbers of participation in the first years of democracy, gradually gave place to apathy and absenteeism. Second, a growing mistrust of political institutions is reflected in the fact that parliaments along with political parties are considered as the most corrupt establishments. According to Transparency International's global corruption barometer in 2009, an international civil society organization dedicated to monitoring political corruption, Romanians ranked their Parliament as the most corrupted institution together with political parties, with 4.3 points average score where 5 is the most corrupt. Similar scores gave the Bulgarians and the Serbs with the Greeks and Macedonians (FYR) falling slightly behind with scores around 3.8/5.<sup>57</sup>

### C. Concluding remarks

The countries of Southeast Europe examined in this article have on the whole robust legal and constitutional provisions of access to information, providing all the necessary tools to ensure accountability and control over parliamentarians. A comparison across the different countries shows that Greece differs from Romania, Serbia, Albania, Bulgaria and the FYROM in so far as it is characterized by a less demanding set of legal provisions pertaining to access to information and parliamentary control. This is largely attributed to the presence of strong international and direct European influences and pressures during the transition to democracy and afterwards in the ex-communist countries of the region. While present, such influences and pressures were far from comparable during Greece's democratization post-transition phase in the second half of the 1970s. While Greece was also in the process of accession with the EC during this latter period, such a process was not nearly as demanding and intrusive as it was in the late 1990s and in 2000s, when the rest of the Southeast European countries have been going through it.

Given that elections alone are imperfect tools for holding governments accountable,<sup>58</sup> the existence of such guarantees is certainly vital for enabling citizens to follow and monitor government decision-making. Yet, despite sufficient, if not robust, legal and constitutional guarantees on access to information and other forms of control, accountability and transparency in the parliaments of Southeast Europe remain problematic. The relevant problems

stem from the gap that exists between legal rules on the one hand and the practical application of the law on the other. They also stem from political and institutional parameters having to do with the strong partisan quality of parliamentary workings, as well as with institutional frame that overwhelmingly privileges the executive at the expense of Parliament.

While party control functions as a 'safe' choice for the workings of democracy,<sup>59</sup> unconditional dominance of the executive over Parliament, severely limits the scrutinizing function of Parliaments. The government-dominated nature of the legislative processes becomes even more pronounced in the Balkan countries that recently joined the EU (Romania and Bulgaria) or are currently in the process of association with the EU and seek to adjust their laws to the EU *acquis*. This was not the case when Greece made the transition to democracy. Greece was not required to transpose a large body of EU law prior to gaining membership, or even in the first decade following its entry in the EC in the 1980s.

Fundamentally owing to the strong partisan nature of the parliamentary legislative process, the speeches, discussions and debates that take place in the parliaments across the region are largely shaped by partisan lines. The dependence of individual MPs on their party takes an extreme form in Serbia where it is constitutionally sanctioned. Article 102 of the Serbian Constitution states that a deputy "irrevocably puts his/her term of office at the disposal of the political party, on the proposal of which he or she was elected as a deputy". Given the total dominance of the governing majority at the legislating stage, the earlier processes of draft preparation and deliberation with various interested social actors is of particular importance for ensuring that parliament remains an open and broadly representative institution. The substantive content of the government bills discussed has already been determined by officials inside the competent ministries or party leaders through a process that is fundamentally removed from and inaccessible to public knowledge. In this unregulated and opaque process, influence can be exerted based on informal channels and personal contacts, an element that significantly aggravates the transparency and trust deficit.

Opacity in the pre-legislative stages and limited involvement of civil society actors, lack of information and transparency as well as increased ineffectiveness in holding the executives accountable are serious challenges. Government dominance in the Parliament's legislative process, combined with the limited monitoring and information on the activities and assets of individual MPs, make parliamentary affairs obscure in the eyes of citizens. They promote elitist



models of governance, alienation of the electorate from MPs and limit the scope of civil society involvement. All of these elements function as impediments to democratic consolidation and limit the degree of public trust.<sup>60</sup>

The way in which an institution like the Parliament works depends to a very large degree on the perceptions and attitudes of parliamentarians themselves. It is these attitudes that may define their degree of participation to the enactment of legislation, the use of tools they have available for scrutiny, their activity *viva-vis* the exigencies of the Europeanization process. For this reason, it is all the more important that Parliaments institutionalize the process of public consultation with representatives from civil society. Active participation on the part of civil society organizations may drive parliamentarians' preferences towards taking a more proactive stance. Moreover, institutionalization of the consultation process and direct contact with the citizens will make parliamentarians more accountable and aware of their actions.

The reforms that have taken place or are currently in process have taken Parliaments across SE Europe towards the next stage of democratization, that of democratic consolidation, follow the path of efficiency, in some cases at the expense of transparency and representation. In cases like Greece, the economic crisis and the scandals that accompanied it have pressed towards the adoption of new rules that aim to stamp out corruption and enhance the transparency of the institutions. Similar efforts are being made in Romania and notably Bulgaria where electoral reforms aim directly towards greater control over political parties and greater emphasis on public participation.

Still, further steps need to be taken across the region to enhance the participation of civil society in the law-making process, as well as transparency of the actors who are involved in and influence the latter. This is especially important in the stage of law-drafting and the debate in the relevant committees rendering the entire process open to the public. There is a pressing need to render more transparent and institutionalize the consultation process and to hold in check the influence exerted through interpersonal relations and informal contacts upon legislation drafting, which are widespread practices across the region. In the Balkan countries, provisions that allow citizens' initiatives to call for referendum or to initiate legislation have so far been ineffective and not easy to realize in practice. Perhaps the use of new technologies like the internet might contribute to its practical realization but the conditions for doing so are still absent. Finally, it is imperative that the already existing legal framework is applied in practice. Greater information of

citizens about their rights and training of public servants about their obligations would be two positive ways forward.

For instance, on the domain of public debate on legislation in Greece, there has been an improvement over the last ten months (following the election of a new government in October 2009) with the introduction of the obligatory open consultation process on law proposals drafted by the Ministries. Law proposals are submitted online on the site [www.opengov.gr](http://www.opengov.gr) for a specified period and are open to comments from any citizen. Citizens have, in this way, the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation and take indirectly part in its preparation process. For instance, such a consultation attracted a great deal of participation, it received large publicity and provoked public debate over the new Greek law on migration and citizenship.<sup>61</sup> This positive development, however, does not directly affect the workings of the Parliament as such. As long as citizens' participation within the Parliament remains limited, and the role of interest groups and other actors at the pre-drafting stage non-transparent, the Parliament is unlikely to be able to effectively carry out its scrutinizing functions to control and hold accountable the Government. Parliaments need to be open, transparent and accountable to their electorates. Only if these conditions are met in practice, then Parliaments are likely to enjoy the trust they merit, which is a basic precondition for a healthy and stable democracy.

## NOTES

1. Research for this article was carried out between June and October 2009 in the frame of the project on "Open Parliaments – Transparency and Accountability in Southeast Europe", coordinated by the Centre for Liberal Studies and funded by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Sofia.
2. Toby Mendel, *Parliament and Access to Information: Working for Transparent Governance*, World Bank Institute Working Papers, Washington DC, 2005, p. 15.
3. *A Plea for Open Parliaments in the Black Sea Region*, Bucharest, Institute for Public Policy, 2008, p. 5.
4. Katalin Szili, "Parliaments and Civil Society – Interaction between Parliaments and Civil Society report", April 2008, available at: <http://www.europatanacs.hu/pdf/Report-dr.KatalinSzili.pdf> [accessed in September 2010], p. 3.

5. On the difficulty of comparing the South European with ex-communist countries, see the debate between Valerie Bunce, "Should Transitologists Be Grounded?", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 1, 1996, pp. 111-127; and Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "The Conceptual Travels of Transitologists and Consolidologists: How Far to the East Should They Attempt to Go?", *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 1, 1994, pp. 173-185.
6. Greece became a member of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981. Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, while Albania, the FYROM and Serbia are potential candidate states.
7. Art 1§1, Greek Constitution, available at: <http://www.hri.org/docs/syntagma> [accessed in September 2010].
8. Nikos Alivizatos, "The difficulties of 'rationalization' in a polarized political system: the Greek Chamber of Deputies", in Ulrike Liebert and Maurizio Cotta (eds.), *Parliament and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe*, London, Pinter, 1990, pp. 134-135 and Penelope Foundethakis, "The Hellenic Parliament: The New Rules of the Game", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2003, p. 87.
9. A brief exception was during the year 1989-90, when a more proportional electoral system, which had been voted, led to three rounds of general elections as a result of the inability to form parliamentary majority. The centre-right government of New Democracy that was eventually formed had only the slimmest of majorities with 151 deputies out of 300.
10. Art. 84 of the Greek Constitution, and Art. 141 of the *Rules of Standing Order of Parliament* [RSOP], available at: <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/c8827c35-4399-4fbb-8ea6-aebdc768f4f7/KANONISMOS.pdf> [accessed in August 2010].
11. Art. 26, "1 Greek Constitution, *op.cit.*
12. In Greek a distinction is drawn between a law proposal [*protasi nomou*] and government bill [*nomoschedio*]; the former is submitted by opposition parties, which rarely happens in the Greek system, while the latter is submitted by the government.
13. There are 6 Standing Committees, a number of Special Permanent Committees, and 4 committees on parliament's internal affairs. The Standing Committees are: Cultural and Educational Affairs, Defense and Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs, Social Affairs, Public Administration, Public Order and Justice, Production and Trade.
14. Art. 71, §1 of the Constitution specifies which bills are discussed by and need the vote of parliamentarians in plenary session in order to pass. For instance, these are bills that concern protection of an individual right or the electoral system.
15. *Ibid.*, Art. 25, "1.

16. The right to information in relation to obtaining official documents is elaborated and defined by the Code of Administrative Procedure (Law 2690/1999).
17. Greek Constitution, *op.cit.*, Art. 5A<sup>1</sup>.
18. *Ibid.*, Art. 66, <sup>1</sup> and 3.
19. Art. 38, <sup>1</sup>, Greek RSOP, *op.cit.*
20. In particular, the ballot is secret when the Speaker of Parliament is elected, when there is a vote of censure against one or more MPs, or when member(s) of the government are committed to trial. It goes without saying that when the voting is secret the preferences of MPs are not disclosed, and it is up to the individual MP, if s/he wishes, to make his or her preference publicly known through other means.
21. Art. 61, *Ibid.*
22. Art. 29, <sup>2</sup>, Greek Constitution, *op.cit.*
23. Art; 18, 20 Law 3022/2002, *op.cit.*
24. See Law 3022/2002.
25. “Kondylia tis Voulis me skoteina simeia”, *Kathimerini* [Greek daily], 5 November 2009.
26. “Meso ton diadikasion tou ASEP efeksis oi proslipseis sto Koinovoulio”, *Kathimerini* [Greek daily], 5 November 2009.
27. Art. 74 Greek Constitution, *op.cit.*, Articles 109 and 110, RSOP, *op.cit.*
28. Yorgos Kaminis, “The Greek Parliament: The Challenge of Upgrading [Βουλή: Η Πρόκληση της Αναβάθμισης], in *The Constitution – Twenty Years of Constitution [Το Σύνταγμα – Τα εικοσάχρονα του Συντάγματος]*, Athens-Komotini, Sakkoulas, 1998, pp.186-187.
29. Art. 74 <sup>5</sup>, Greek Constitution, *op.cit.*
30. Alivizatos, “The difficulties of ‘rationalization’ in a polarized political system: the Greek Chamber of Deputies”, *op.cit.*. p. 141.
31. Kaminis, “The Greek Parliament: The Challenge of Upgrading”, *op.cit.*, pp. 178-9.
32. Dimitris Melissas, “The Pre-parliamentary legislative process – the informal legislator” [Η Προκοινοβουλευτική Νομοθετική Διαδικασία – Ο Άτυπος Νομοθέτης], Athens-Komotini, Sakkoulas, 1995, p. 74.
33. Kaminis, “The Greek Parliament: The Challenge of Upgrading”, *op.cit.*, pp. 182-183.
34. Melissas, “The Pre-parliamentary legislative process – the informal legislator”, *op.cit.*, pp. 75-76.
35. For a detailed description of the process of legislation drafting by the government and its competent ministries, see Melissas, “The Pre-parliamentary legislative process – the informal legislator”, *op.cit.*, pp. 92-95.

36. Melissas, “The Pre-parliamentary legislative process – the informal legislator”, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-32.
37. Kaminis, “The Greek Parliament: The Challenge of Upgrading”, *op.cit.*, p. 184.
38. Vouli ton Ellinon, “Erevna gia tin Vouli ton Ellinon apo tin Kapa Research” [Survey for the Greek Parliament by Kapa Research], press release, Athens, 9 July 2008. It can be accessed at: [http://www.epr.gr/release-pdf.php?press\\_id=124554](http://www.epr.gr/release-pdf.php?press_id=124554) [accessed in September 2010].
39. Articles 1, 62 Constitution (Bulgaria), Law 8417/1998 (Albania), Art. 8 of the Constitution (FYROM), Art. 2, Constitution (Serbia).
40. Albanian Law on Information, 8503/1999, Article 45, Constitution of Bulgaria.
41. Serbian Law on Free Access to Public information, 54/07.
42. For the website addresses please refer to the bibliographical notes at the end of the paper.
43. Articles 132-192, Rules of Procedure of the Parliament. See Zhidas Daskalovski, “Open Parliaments: The Case of Macedonia”, *Open Parliaments – Transparency and Accountability of Parliaments in South-East Europe*, edited by Daniel Smilov, Sofia, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2010.
44. Elira Zaka, “Open Parliaments: The Case of Albania”, *Open Parliaments – Transparency and Accountability of Parliaments in South-East Europe*, Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010.
45. Robert Bideleux, “Post Communist Democratisation: Democratic politics as the Art of Impossible?”, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 71, 2009, p. 308.
46. Romanian Law, no 189/1999. See Elena Iorga, “Open Parliaments: The Case of Romania”, *Open Parliaments – Transparency and Accountability of Parliaments in South-East Europe*.
47. Ruzha Smilova & Daniel Smilov, “Open Parliaments: The Case of Bulgaria”, *Open Parliaments – Transparency and Accountability of Parliaments in South-East Europe*, Sofia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010.
48. The other two are the ‘time-limited’ legitimate aims justifying exception such as the national security, and the ‘harm-test’. Memorandum on the Albanian Law on the Right to Information on Official Documents, OSCE, London, September 2004, available at: [http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2004/09/3760\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/rfm/2004/09/3760_en.pdf) [accessed in September 2010].
49. *Ibid*, p. 2.
50. FYROM, Parliament RSOP available at: [www.sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/Delovnik\\_Sobranie.pdf](http://www.sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/Delovnik_Sobranie.pdf) [accessed in August 2010].
51. Radoslaw Zubek and Klaus H. Goetz, ‘Performing to type? How State Institutions

- Matter in East Central Europe', in *Journal of Public Policy*, Vo. 30, No. 1, 2010, pp. 1-22.
52. Philip Norton *et al*, "The impact of Democratic Practice on the Parliaments of Southern Europe", *op.cit.*, Leston-Bandeira, "The impact of Democratic Practice on the Parliaments of Southern Europe", *The Journal of Legislative Studies, op.cit.* p. 2.
  53. Katrin Auel, "Introduction: The Europeanisation of Parliamentary Democracy", *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3/4, 2005, p. 306.
  54. The Lisbon Treaty has also strengthened the role of COSAC, the collective instrument of European National Parliaments.
  55. Albanian Law 9904/2008.
  56. On the results of the Romanian referendum and a background analysis of the Romanian political system refer to: <http://www.iri.org/explore-our-resources/election-watch/romania-post-election-watch-december-2009-presidential-election> and <http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/gov/cis/romania/PRODO.HTM> [accessed in September 2010].
  57. Transparency International, "2009 Global Corruption Barometer report", available at: [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/gcb/2009](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/gcb/2009) [accessed in September 2010].
  58. Timothy Hellwig and David Samuels, "Electoral accountability and the Variety of Democratic Regimes", *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 38, 2007, p. 68.
  59. Philip Norton and Christina Leston-Bandeira, "The impact of Democratic Practice on the Parliaments of Southern Europe", in *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol. 9, 2003, p. 178.
  60. Joseph V. Julian, "Democratic Consolidation – Revisited", in Slobodan G. Markovih, Eric Becket Weaver & Vukasin Pavlovic (eds.), *Challenges to New Democracies in the Balkans*, Belgrade, Cigoja Press, 2004, p. 31.
  61. Greek Law 3838/2010.



# Coopération régionale dans l'Europe du Sud-Est: Le cas de l'intégration des transports

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## ABSTRACT

Regional integration in the Western Balkans constitutes an important aspect of the countries' long process of transition and reform. Regionalism will not only help overcome lingering issues of the past, but also generate significant economic and sociopolitical effects, while paving the way for the Western Balkans' eventual adhesion to the European Union. In this arduous process, the question of transport infrastructure and transport integration constitutes an important aspect that should not be ignored. This article presents the challenges of developing a functional transport network across the Western Balkans and the benefits such a network would offer to current regional cooperation efforts. It provides an overview of the state of transport infrastructure from the early 20th century to the present, while arguing that constructing a regionally integrated transport network is a unique opportunity and a significant challenge, one which the Western Balkans need to rise up to.

## RÉSUMÉ

L'intégration régionale dans les Balkans de l'Ouest constitue un aspect important du processus de longue transition et de réforme des Etats. Le régionalisme aidera non seulement à surmonter les problèmes persistants du passé, mais aussi à générer d'importants effets économiques et socio-politiques, tout en ouvrant la voie à une éventuelle adhésion des Balkans occidentaux à l'Union européenne. Dans ce processus difficile, la question des infrastructures de transport et l'intégration des transports constituent un élément important à ne pas ignorer. Cet article présente les défis du développement d'un réseau de transport fonctionnel dans les Balkans de l'Ouest et les avantages qu'un tel réseau offre aux efforts actuels de la coopération régionale. Ce texte donne un aperçu de l'état des infrastructures de transport du début du 20e siècle à nos jours, tout en faisant valoir que la construction d'un réseau de transport régional intégré est une occasion unique et un défi important, celui que les Balkans de l'Ouest doivent relever.

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Cet article examine le processus de la coopération régionale dans les Balkans occidentaux à travers le prisme de l'intégration des transports entre les États de l'Europe du Sud-Est. Plus d'une décennie depuis le début des efforts concertés pour le renforcement de la coopération entre les pays déchirés par la guerre de l'ex-Yougoslavie, des voies fonctionnelles et efficaces de transport régional n'ont pas encore été atteintes. En même temps, alors qu'on avançait souvent qu'un réseau régional de transport intégré favoriserait la coopération interétatique, relancerait l'activité économique régionale en retard et produirait des renversements socio-politiques importants, à ce jour, les résultats semblent défier les attentes. Le niveau des échanges interétatiques est toujours bas, les tensions sociales persistent, tandis qu'un certain nombre de questions bilatérales non résolues continuent d'entraver la coopération régionale. En effet, il a souvent été observé qu'au lieu de contribuer à la construction des "ponts" entre les peuples de l'Europe du Sud et à la résolution des différences, les projets de transport prévus souffrent souvent de retards ou même d'annulations en raison des conflits bilatéraux qu'ils étaient censés aider à surmonter.

Il a été avancé que la coopération régionale dépend fréquemment de l'interaction entre différents facteurs exogènes (voire même internationaux) et de la dynamique interne. Les premiers sont composés principalement d'acteurs extrarégionaux qui, à travers une variété de mécanismes, aident dans la promotion de la coopération régionale, tandis que les seconds sont fondés sur le consensus (ou son absence) parmi les acteurs locaux concernant l'importance de la coopération régionale et sur leur "volonté et capacité d'identifier les initiatives d'intérêt commun et mutuel, qui se traduira par des projets communs."<sup>2</sup> Le cas de l'intégration des transports se révèle particulièrement utile dans l'exploration de cet enjeu, étant donné qu'en raison de leur nature, de tels projets d'infrastructure sont souvent à la pointe de l'attention locale tandis qu'en même temps, ils sont en grande partie financés par des acteurs extrarégionaux.

Cet article vise à fournir une évaluation critique de la valeur des tentatives de construction d'infrastructures de transport efficaces dans les Balkans effectuées ces dix dernières années. Il tente de dépeindre, à la fois, les incitations et les obstacles de la coopération régionale dans les Balkans occidentaux. En accordant une attention particulière à l'impact des politiques de l'Union Européenne [UE] dans ce domaine, il vise, également, à tester la validité de la

conception politique traditionnelle que la promotion du développement des infrastructures permettrait d'introduire, et de favoriser une collaboration "de plus en plus étroite, une compréhension politique et une prospérité économique et sociale"<sup>3</sup> selon les aspirations de la Commission européenne. En d'autres termes, cette analyse évalue l'impact que les efforts d'intégration de transport (souvent nommés *top-down*) ont eu sur les pays des Balkans occidentaux dans leur poursuite d'une intégration plus étroite, que ce soit socio-politique ou économique.

Les objectifs de l'article sont, en grande partie, traduits dans sa structure. Les deux sections suivantes tracent le cadre historique et théorique. La description historique de la condition changeante des voies de transport régional au cours du dernier siècle (lors de la Yougoslavie de Tito, dans les années 1990 et après les guerres yougoslaves) aide à décrire le cadre dans lequel les pays des Balkans occidentaux ont créé, renforcé ou affaibli les liens régionaux. Dans ce contexte, le cadre global théorique du régionalisme, tel qu'il a été développé par des spécialistes des relations internationales depuis les années 1950, aide à comprendre l'importance de la coopération régionale, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'Europe du Sud. Dans la troisième partie, l'article examine les effets que les efforts d'intégration des transports ont eu sur le régionalisme balkanique occidental, au niveau social, économique et politique, en accordant une attention particulière au rôle de l'UE dans la promotion de la reconstruction des infrastructures comme un moyen vers la coopération régionale et l'adhésion éventuelle à l'UE. Cette analyse permettra, en fin de compte, une évaluation des obstacles et des incitations qui caractérisent les atteintes balkaniques quant au régionalisme d'aujourd'hui.

## Cadre Historique

Bien qu'ils soient souvent regroupés, les pays des Balkans occidentaux ne partagent pas un haut degré d'homogénéité, ce qui se reflète également dans le cas des infrastructures de transport. Revenant à la période de la Guerre Froide, même les Républiques ayant appartenu à la SFR Yougoslavie étaient économiquement diverses, tant en raison de décisions de planification centralisées qu'en raison de différents processus historiques.<sup>4</sup> Les mécanismes yougoslaves de planification centrale ont conduit à l'élaboration progressive d'un réseau de transport reliant les Républiques avec Belgrade. Cependant, les Républiques étaient reliées entre elles par un réseau beaucoup plus rudimentaire.<sup>5</sup> En même temps, l'Etat yougoslave accordait moins d'attention

à la modernisation de ce réseau, ce qui a eu comme résultat la présence des routes commerciales à la fois inadéquates et désuètes. La dissolution de la Yougoslavie et, naturellement, de son marché commun a détruit ces liens rudimentaires et, par conséquent, a accentué les différences économiques, tout en soulignant, également, de nombreuses rivalités ethniques réprimées.<sup>6</sup> La dissolution signifiait inévitablement que le processus du transfert des fonds fédéraux et des capitaux vers les Républiques les plus pauvres de la Fédération, mis en place depuis longtemps, serait immédiatement arrêté. Ainsi, on a été témoins de la naissance d'États hétérogènes (au sens économique, ethnique ou autre)<sup>7</sup> et en termes de transport, plus isolés que jamais.

En même temps, l'Albanie, sous le régime d'Enver Hoxha, constituait, essentiellement, une affaire totalement différente. Tout au long de la Guerre Froide, l'Albanie exerçait une stratégie trop centralisée et isolatrice qui négligeait la construction des liens de transport avec les autres pays des Balkans (en partie, en raison de la géographie défavorable du pays). Hoxha poursuivait, au contraire, des relations commerciales étroites avec la Chine de Mao Zedong, au moins jusqu'à la fin des années 1970. En 1992, lorsque Tirana était appelé à faire face à des difficultés économiques, il a détourné son attention vers ses voisins.<sup>8</sup> Les Balkans étaient alors une région très différente de celle du temps de Hoxha: la dissolution de la Yougoslavie a instigué une décennie de conflits violents qui ont profondément affecté l'ensemble de la péninsule. Les années 1990 ont eu un impact considérable sur les routes de transport, développées lentement au fil des décennies. Les guerres yougoslaves n'ont pas seulement causé la rupture des liens inter-républicains, mais elles ont aussi forcé les nouveaux États indépendants à se tenir sur leurs propres pieds. Dans leurs efforts de reconstruction, les États se tournaient davantage vers l'Ouest, que les uns vers les autres. Par conséquent, la construction des voies de transport qui relieraient les capitales nationales à celles de l'Europe Centrale et Occidentale semblait plus urgente que la construction d'un réseau reliant les villes dans les Balkans occidentaux, même si ces dernières étaient plus importantes, moins coûteuses et plus rentables. Dans ce contexte, la communauté internationale, choquée par les actes de nettoyage ethnique et de violence sans précédent, a choisi de se concentrer sur des régions spécifiques (Bosnie-Herzégovine, Kosovo). Elle n'a commencé à s'intéresser à la restauration des liens régionaux qu'au début des années 2000.

La déclaration d'indépendance du Kosovo en Février 2008 constitue, selon les analystes, le chapitre final de la dissolution de la Yougoslavie. Pourtant, le processus de transition pour la région des Balkans occidentaux avait déjà

commencé quelques années plus tôt. C'était un processus qui a déjà eu un impact significatif sur le secteur des infrastructures de transport. En effet, on pourrait soutenir que le processus pour les Balkans occidentaux a été ouvert à la suite d'un autre événement relatif au Kosovo, celui de la fin de la guerre du Kosovo en 1999.

Presque immédiatement, la communauté internationale a réalisé l'importance de la coopération régionale pour les Balkans occidentaux en créant le Pacte de stabilité pour l'Europe du Sud entre les pays de la région et les acteurs internationaux, un accord qui stressait l'aspect du régionalisme. Le pacte focalisait sur la promotion de la démocratisation, l'amélioration de la sécurité, tout en fournissant les fonds nécessaires pour commencer la restauration des infrastructures, stimulant le commerce et la croissance économique.<sup>9</sup> A la suite des recommandations de la Banque mondiale et de l'UE, un certain nombre d'accords de libre-échange bilatéraux ont été signés entre les pays des Balkans, suivis par la mise en place, en 2006, de la Zone de libre-échange de l'Europe Centrale [CEFTA].<sup>10</sup> En conséquence, le Pacte de stabilité a été remplacé, au début de 2008, par le Conseil de coopération régionale [RCC], basé à Sarajevo, une organisation plutôt locale.

En même temps, l'UE a lancé, en 2000, le processus de stabilisation et d'association [*SAP*] pour les pays des Balkans occidentaux. Selon le processus, des accords de stabilisation et d'association [*SAAs*] seraient signés avec chaque pays, conduisant à l'adoption progressive de *l'acquis communautaire* (ou *acquis*, se référant à l'ensemble des lois européennes accumulées au fil des décennies) et à la libéralisation des échanges et du soutien économique pour un certain nombre de projets, y compris les infrastructures de transport. Des accords similaires avaient été signés, quelques années auparavant, avec les pays de l'Europe de l'Est, conduisant à l'élargissement européen nommé "Big Bang" de 2004 avec 10 nouveaux Etats membres. Ce commencement du *SAP* favorisait l'adhésion des Balkans occidentaux à l'UE, étant donné que Bruxelles n'a jamais douté de l'identité européenne des Balkans occidentaux, sans toutefois fixer une date précise d'adhésion. Jusqu'à 2009, tous les pays des Balkans occidentaux, à l'exception du Kosovo (en vertu de la résolution 1244/99), avaient des accords de stabilisation et d'association avec l'UE.

Ainsi, dans le cadre de la *SAP* et du Pacte de stabilité, les pays des Balkans occidentaux ont entamé, déjà au début des années 2000, le processus de réparation des liens de transport endommagés et visant à l'amélioration de l'infrastructure existante.<sup>11</sup> Recherchant une coordination plus efficace dans le secteur, ils ont signé le Mémoire de compréhension 2004 [MoU] pour le

développement du réseau principal de transport régional avec la Commission européenne, qui constitue à ce jour, le cadre principal pour la coopération régionale dans le secteur des transports. Une nouvelle organisation des transports régionaux, l'Observatoire des transports de l'Europe du Sud-Est [SEETO], a été établie en conformité avec le protocole de l'accord, en vue de renforcer la coopération dans les Balkans occidentaux, pour faciliter les investissements, attirer l'attention des institutions financières internationales (IFI), et améliorer l'harmonisation et le suivi des progrès accomplis.

La création du réseau principal n'est pas, naturellement, isolée des développements liés aux transports dans le continent européen en général. Dans ce domaine, l'UE a été particulièrement active, ayant déjà identifié le transport comme "l'épine dorsale de l'économie européenne, ce qui représente environ 7% du PIB et plus de 5% de l'emploi total dans l'UE".<sup>12</sup> L'idée, déjà présente depuis l'Acte unique européen de 1986 (la première révision majeure du traité de Rome de 1957 qui avait institué la Communauté économique européenne), a été officiellement introduite dans le traité de Maastricht de 1992, qui mettait en place un réseau de transport trans-européen (RTE-T), comprenant un engagement de la Communauté d'établir des "réseaux trans-européens dans les domaines des transports, des télécommunications et des infrastructures énergétiques". Actuellement, le RTE-T est un projet ambitieux visant à la construction des routes, des voies ferrées, des aéroports, des ports, des voies navigables, des ports intérieurs et des systèmes de gestion du trafic traversant le continent, conçu comme un réseau unique et pluridimensionnel. Dans le début des années 2000, la Commission a publié un Livre blanc qui fixe les priorités d'une politique européenne des transports en 2010 et a été dûment mis à jour lors de l'examen à mi-parcours de 2006, qui nécessite des investissements de transport de plus de €350 milliards d'ici à 2010.<sup>13</sup>

L'Europe de l'Est et du Sud-Est a été introduite dans ce "grand dessin" de transport paneuropéen à la suite de la dissolution de l'Union des Républiques socialistes soviétiques [URSS], qui a marqué le début d'une réorientation des pays de l'Est vers l'Ouest, et a coïncidé chronologiquement avec le début de la fin de la SFR-Yougoslavie. Trois conférences de transport paneuropéen (qui se sont tenues à Prague, 1991, en Crète, 1993, et à Helsinki, 1997) définissaient dix "couloirs de transport paneuropéens" ou, autrement dit, des routes importantes qui traversent l'Europe centrale, orientale et l'Europe du Sud et qui nécessitent des investissements importants au cours des décennies suivantes. Ces dix couloirs constituent, en substance, la vision bruxelloise d'un réseau de transport intégré dans le continent européen.<sup>14</sup>

## Cadre Théorique

La dissolution de l'URSS coïncide également avec le début d'une nouvelle tendance dans l'économie politique mondiale, celle de la résurgence du régionalisme. Les accords de coopération intergouvernementale ne sont pas un phénomène nouveau, étant donné qu'ils étaient déjà répandus dans les années 1950 - 1970, ce qui est évident par le développement de la Communauté économique européenne, le Pacte andin, etc.<sup>15</sup> Toutefois, la montée des accords commerciaux régionaux depuis les années 1990 (représentant plus de 50% du commerce mondial en 2005)<sup>16</sup> a conduit les chercheurs à se référer à un "nouveau régionalisme", une tendance qui a tout aussi touché tant l'Europe que les Balkans occidentaux.

L'abondance de ces accords souligne l'importance que les Etats y attachent, malgré les preuves contradictoires quant aux bénéfiques (financiers ou autre) que les parties impliquées en tirent. En fait, une école de pensée a fait valoir, depuis très tôt, que la ruée vers le régionalisme n'a guère de sens économique, vue que le retrait de certains tarifs peut entraîner le détournement plutôt que la création de commerce, ayant ainsi un effet net négatif sur le bien-être des partenaires régionaux. Même au niveau mondial, les accords régionaux peuvent fausser l'allocation des ressources (la politique agricole de l'UE, le PAC, est un parfait exemple), et sont considérés comme une alternative inefficace à réduire les obstacles au commerce dans un accord de non-discrimination avec un grand nombre d'Etats.<sup>17</sup> Du point de vue de sciences politiques, il semble préférable pour un Etat de négocier un accord unique avec un grand nombre de partenaires, plutôt que de poursuivre de longues négociations successives avec un petit nombre de pays. Cependant, malgré les preuves du contraire, le régionalisme a connu un nouvel élan, car il peut assurer le *lock-in* des réformes économiques intérieures,<sup>18</sup> augmenter d'un bloc le pouvoir de négociation des pays,<sup>19</sup> ou, comme les premiers stades de l'intégration européenne ont montré, il peut procurer une sensation de sécurité contre une menace commune extérieure.<sup>20</sup>

En se concentrant sur le continent européen, en ce qui concerne le régionalisme la plupart des scientifiques des relations internationales focalisent sur la logique du développement de l'UE. Le groupe de chercheurs nommé "néo-fonctionnalistes" a interprété l'intégration européenne comme une forme de coopération économique régionale qui, progressivement, produirait des pressions imprévues sur la coopération dans d'autres domaines, ce que les néo-fonctionnalistes ont appelé les *spill-overs*.<sup>21</sup> Un exemple fréquemment cité est

celui du développement de la Cour de justice européenne, responsable de l'interprétation des traités entre Etats-membres, dont la portée s'est étendue bien au-delà ce qui avait été initialement envisagé. La Commission européenne, une structure purement supranationale, a également la capacité de créer des programmes et de pousser davantage la coopération entre les Etats membres, parfois contre leur gré. La théorie du neo-fonctionnalisme soutient, donc, que le régionalisme pourrait, très facilement, fournir le processus d'intégration d'une dynamique propre à lui.<sup>22</sup>

De l'autre côté, un certain nombre de spécialistes affirment que la coopération régionale en Europe ne s'explique pas par une série de *spill-overs* largement imprévus, mais par la volonté précise de nations souveraines, dont la stratégie n'a été rien d'autre que de renforcer leurs propres positions vis-à-vis des autres Etats.<sup>23</sup> Pour eux, la délégation des pouvoirs aux institutions communautaires comme à la Commission n'a pas eu lieu au hasard, mais plutôt dans un cadre "calculée, rationnelle, et circonscrit".<sup>24</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, l'un des partisans principaux de l'"intergouvernementalisme libérale" pour le développement de l'UE, fait valoir que les négociations entre les gouvernements sont la force motrice de l'intégration européenne.<sup>25</sup> Ainsi, la force de l'UE se trouve plutôt dans le caractère intergouvernementale du Conseil des ministres, que dans l'aspect supranational de la Commission européenne.

En ce qui concerne les Balkans occidentaux, le développement économique local et régional a eu lieu grâce à la redistribution externe stimulée, soit dans des interventions directes de l'État à caractère régional soit sous la forme des fonds régionaux en provenance de l'UE.<sup>26</sup> Il faut souligner qu'une grande partie de la littérature a mis l'accent sur le rôle des acteurs extérieurs dans la "promotion" du régionalisme,<sup>27</sup> en particulier en ce qui concerne la notion de la conditionnalité promulguée par l'UE, qui définit la coopération régionale comme une condition *sine qua non* à l'adhésion à l'UE.<sup>28</sup> Il semble, donc, peu étonnant que l'accent mis sur la coopération régionale a donné lieu à un certain nombre d'initiatives, qui ne se limitent pas à celles mentionnées ci-dessus. Parmi ces initiatives on distingue le processus de Royaumeont, l'initiative de Coopération de l'Europe du Sud Est, le Processus de Coopération de l'Europe du Sud East, ainsi que d'autres initiatives qui comprennent, mais ne se limitent pas, à l'Europe du Sud, comme l'Initiative Adriatique-Ionienne [AII], la Coopération Economique de la mer Noire et l'Initiative centre-européenne.

Toutefois, en se concentrant sur la dynamique interne du pays en question, les chercheurs ont fait valoir que le régionalisme semble convenir aux Balkans

occidentaux qui partagent, si ce n'est pas la cohésion économique, au moins la proximité physique, la cohésion culturelle et sociale et la nécessité de créer un régime de sécurité dans une zone d'instabilité et de conflit potentiel.<sup>29</sup> Les analystes ont parlé en faveur du régionalisme en Europe du Sud en ce qui concerne le commerce et l'investissement direct étranger,<sup>30</sup> la convergence des politiques<sup>31</sup> ou les processus spécifiques,<sup>32</sup> tout en soulignant que c'est l'aspiration à l'adhésion à l'UE qui anime le régionalisme, plutôt que l'inverse.<sup>33</sup>

#### IV. L'intégration des transports et la coopération régionale

On examinera la relation entre l'intégration des transports et la coopération régionale dans les Balkans occidentaux sous une double approche. D'une part, on mettra en avant les incitations que l'intégration des transports offre en ce qui concerne les formes de coopération (économique, politique ou sociale) et d'autre part, on présentera les facteurs qui tendent à entraver cette coopération. Un tel format permettra l'examen du climat actuel en matière de coopération technique des Balkans occidentaux et jettera la lumière sur le progrès, ou non, du régionalisme.

L'intégration des transports peut contribuer à la coopération régionale par un certain nombre de moyens, dont le plus important se trouve sans doute dans le secteur financier. L'aspect économique du développement d'un réseau de transports parmi les Balkans occidentaux constitue une partie fondamentale de l'analyse. Un réseau d'infrastructures de transport restauré, agrandi et modernisé (à la fois routier, ferroviaire, aérien et maritime) donnera une impulsion à l'économie de la région, tout simplement parce que les pays des Balkans occidentaux continuent à souffrir du manque de liaisons de transport. On souligne que:

*Il n'y a pas de voie ferrée reliant l'Albanie commerciale vers les pays voisins. Le Monténégro est seulement relié à la Serbie, tandis que Skopje reste sans connexion avec Sofia. Les lignes ferroviaires existantes sont principalement à voie unique, ne sont pas encore électrifiées, tandis qu'elles sont parcourues par des trains antiques, âgés de plus de 30 ans. Cela signifie que pour transporter des marchandises de Tirana à Sofia, à travers Skopje, par chemin de fer (une distance de moins de 350 kilomètres), il nous faut 3 heures pour arriver à Shkodra. Une fois là-bas il faut changer de train pour aller à Podgorica, d'où on prendra le train pour Belgrade, un voyage qui dure 8 heures. Pour aller de Belgrade à Skopje il nous faut 9 heures*



*de trajet. Une fois arrivé, on prend le train pour Thessalonique (5 heures de voyage), et on continue avec le train à destination de Sofia (6 heures de trajet).<sup>34</sup>*

Or, le manque de liaisons de transport est plus compliqué que les barrières non tarifaires. L'effet de l'intégration des transports sur le commerce régional pourrait être important, étant donné que le cumul diagonal n'a pas encore été appliqué avec succès dans la région des Balkans occidentaux. Le cumul entre deux pays permet essentiellement que les produits originaires de l'un soient traités dans l'autre comme s'ils étaient originaires de ce dernier. Jusqu'à récemment, l'UE mettait l'accent sur un système de cumul bilatéral,<sup>35</sup> ce qui signifie que les pays des Balkans occidentaux n'avaient pas la possibilité de coopérer qu'avec Bruxelles. En d'autres termes, du point de vue du commerce international, les matières premières et les pièces détachées, les produits agricoles, etc. originaires des pays des Balkans occidentaux bénéficient des règles d'origine préférentielles dans les pays de l'UE, mais pas dans les autres pays des Balkans occidentaux. Ce cumul bilatéral sape les échanges intra-régionaux, en les rendant moins rentables. Le cumul diagonal, si appliqué correctement, pourrait conduire à une intégration plus active/complète du commerce, constituer une incitation à supprimer les retards transfrontaliers et finalement faciliter le processus de coopération régionale.

Le manque de coopération interinstitutionnelle au sein des pays et les retards transfrontaliers qui en résultent, constituent un autre domaine important qui pourrait s'améliorer par un système de transport intégré couvrant les Balkans occidentaux. L'une des premières choses que l'observateur du système de transport de la région rencontre est le haut degré de la fragmentation de l'Europe du Sud-Est. Cette fragmentation intense pourrait être une fatalité historique ou géographique étant donné, d'une part, la dissolution de la Yougoslavie et la création de plusieurs nouveaux pays, chacun avec son système administratif de frontières, et d'autre part, la petite taille de la région. Pourtant, une telle fragmentation a un impact significatif sur l'efficacité du secteur des transports, créant un certain nombre de questions. Selon une étude récente de la Banque mondiale le secteur des transports souffre:

*[...] des tracasseries administratives, des pratiques de corruption, d'une multitude de contrôles aux frontières par différents organismes ainsi que d'un manque de coopération entre les autorités des deux côtés des frontières communes. [...] Un camion de marchandises, par exemple, voyageant entre Salzbourg et Thessalonique doit traverser*

*quatre frontières différentes - chacune avec ses propres contrôles. Lors de ces frontières, le camion est soumis à des contrôles de douane et d'autres liées au fret, tels que les contrôles sanitaires et phytosanitaires dans le cas des produits agricoles. En outre, le conducteur doit présenter son visa et le permis de conduire et le camion peut être vérifié pour sa conformité avec les normes des véhicules, l'assurance, et ainsi de suite.*<sup>36</sup>

On pourrait aussi faire valoir que le moment est venu pour que la coopération régionale stimule l'efficacité commerciale, étant donné le ralentissement économique mondial qui a tout aussi atteint la péninsule balkanique. Il est à noter que l'Europe du Sud a déjà rejoint le reste du continent en étant gravement touchée par la crise financière actuelle. L'accord d'urgence des €3 milliards que la Serbie, la plus grande économie de la région, a signé avec le FMI, la contraction du PIB croate plus de 5 pour cent en 2009 et le taux extrêmement élevé de chômage en ARYM (ayant atteint, en 2009, la moyenne la plus élevée des années 30) ne sont que quelques exemples des effets de la récession mondiale sur la région.

Un réseau de transport intégré, centré sur la promotion des liens commerciaux plus étroits entre les pays des Balkans occidentaux, encouragerait une circulation plus facile des marchandises, des personnes et des capitaux, comme cela a souvent été soutenu par l'UE. Il favoriserait la croissance tirée par les exportations, étant donné que le volume des échanges régionaux est loin de son potentiel. Une étude de la Banque mondiale, en 2003, avait constaté que la région agissait à 77% de son potentiel.<sup>37</sup> Selon les données de 2006, les exportations de la région ne couvrent qu'un quart des importations, entraînant des déficits élevés à la balance commerciale.<sup>38</sup> Un réseau intégré attirerait une plus grande quantité d'investissements directs à l'étranger [IDE], comme la taille du marché va augmenter et la qualité du service va s'améliorer. Cela est particulièrement important pour les Balkans occidentaux, étant donné que l'IDE, en pourcentage de leur produit intérieur brut [PIB], reste aux alentours de 5% et est particulièrement faible pour les pays en transition: en 2005, la somme investie en Roumanie a été supérieure à l'IDE total en Albanie, en Bosnie-Herzégovine, en Croatie, en ARYM et en Serbie-Monténégro.<sup>39</sup>

Le secteur des transports qui semble se prêter le mieux à l'intégration régionale et qui a tout à gagner est, sans doute, celui du transport aérien. Le transport aérien est également le domaine dans lequel la dualité du marché du transport dans les Balkans occidentaux est peut-être le plus évident. D'une

part, le marché de l'aviation dans les Balkans occidentaux présente d'importantes possibilités de développement. En termes généraux, le secteur actuel n'est qu'une ombre de lui-même: dans le début des années 1990, JAT, la compagnie aérienne yougoslave, transportait à elle seule 5 millions de passagers par an, alors qu'en 2005, le trafic aérien combiné dans les Balkans occidentaux est tombé à moins de 3 millions de passagers. Il s'agit d'un nombre particulièrement faible, compte tenu du fait que les moyennes de l'aéroport de Vienne seules comptent 15 millions de passagers par an.<sup>40</sup> D'autre part, comme n'importe quel autre marché de l'aviation dans le monde entier, celui des Balkans occidentaux est dominé par des économies d'échelle. Le montant du capital nécessaire à investir avant que tout profit puisse être réalisé est prohibitif, dissuadant ainsi les investissements privés et donnant lieu à un marché dominé par les compagnies aériennes publiques et fortement dépendantes des subventions gouvernementales.

Par conséquent, le gain financier pour le secteur du transport aérien par l'intégration des transports et la coopération régionale est clair: la Banque mondiale fait valoir que les aéroports de la région sont situés à proximité des frontières nationales et peuvent, ainsi, servir aux pays voisins. L'aéroport de Skopje en ARYM et le nouvel aéroport albanais à Kukes sont moins de 20 km de la frontière du Kosovo.<sup>41</sup> L'aéroport de Dubrovnik pourrait aussi servir le Monténégro, tandis que les aéroports de Sarajevo (Bosnie) et Osijek (Croatie) sont à proximité des frontières serbes. Après tout, la petite taille de la plupart des pays des Balkans occidentaux (à l'exception de la Serbie et de la Croatie) implique que les vols intérieurs sont limités en nombre, avec la majorité de la circulation survenue principalement à travers les frontières nationales. Ainsi, la libéralisation transfrontalière aura un impact largement positif sur le trafic aérien.

L'exemple du secteur du transport aérien met en évidence l'influence de la proximité géographique par rapport à la coopération régionale: pour certains vols des Balkans occidentaux, une route qui traverse cinq pays différents au cours d'une heure n'est pas atypique. À 900 kilomètres par heure, un avion a besoin seulement de 10 minutes pour traverser l'espace aérien de l'ARYM, et moins de 20 minutes pour traverser la Bosnie.<sup>42</sup> Ainsi, dans une région qui fait face à la fragmentation de l'espace aérien, la gestion du trafic aérien régional est nécessaire avant que le nombre de vols soit augmenté.

Pendant, les incitations à la coopération régionale grâce à l'intégration de transport ne sont pas limitées aux questions de l'économie du commerce ou de

la finance. Un certain nombre de chercheurs a fait valoir qu'il existe un potentiel important pour les retombées politiques et de sécurité dans les Balkans occidentaux. L'intégration des transports nécessite la coordination intergouvernementale, qui pourrait également conduire à une coopération politique plus étroite,<sup>43</sup> faciliter le processus de négociation et de mise en œuvre des accords pertinents (étant donné le petit nombre des participants), tout en servant comme un mécanisme d'assurer de réformes.<sup>44</sup> L'intégration des transports exige également un degré élevé de coopération transfrontalière, qui pourrait porter un coup au crime organisé et à la corruption, ainsi qu'à l'immigration clandestine, à travers des outils de gestion d'intégration frontalière.<sup>45</sup> Les tensions en cours pourraient aussi être atténuées par la coopération dans un problème de faibles politiques telles que le transport. Il faut garder à l'esprit que la Bosnie-Herzégovine doit essayer de se réconcilier avec l'héritage complexe de Dayton. D'autre part, le Monténégro n'a acquis son indépendance de la Serbie qu'en 2006. En plus, la Croatie-Slovénie et les conflits frontaliers Croatie-Monténégro n'ont pas encore pris fin, alors que la question du Kosovo reste une menace non seulement pour la Serbie (qui ne l'a pas encore reconnu comme un Etat séparé), mais aussi vis-à-vis de l'ARYM.<sup>46</sup>

En soutenant la théorie de la "paix démocratique" l'ancien commissaire européen aux Relations extérieures Chris Patten a déclaré que "les sociétés libres ont tendance de ne pas combattre les unes les autres ou d'être de mauvais voisins"<sup>47</sup> une croyance qui continue d'affecter les priorités de l'UE à ce jour. Un renforcement des politiques d'intégration des Balkans occidentaux de transport, en combinaison avec l'adhésion aux structures euro-atlantiques, n'assurerait pas l'éradication des conflits dans le court terme. Il pourrait, cependant, veiller à ce que ces pays ne deviennent pas les états fragiles du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

## V. Les obstacles à la coopération en Europe du Sud

Toutefois, un examen des efforts récents visant à promouvoir l'intégration des transports et par conséquent la coopération régionale, présenterait également les limites de ces tentatives. En fait, le degré élevé de fragmentation identifié ci-dessus relève d'un plus grand défi qui entrave le développement du commerce et du réseau de transport fonctionnel dans la région. Tout au long des années 1990, une série de conflits armés a ravagé la région avec une intensité que l'Europe n'avait pas connue depuis un demi-siècle. Vers le milieu des années 2000, avec leurs liens de transport déjà gravement compromis et l'animosité accrue, plusieurs nouveaux Etats ont lancé un processus de

formation d'identité étatique et d'affirmation de soi, un processus qui a souvent conduit à une nouvelle détérioration de leurs relations. L'existence d'une multitude d'obstacles au commerce transfrontalier identifie la question plus profonde de la méfiance et parfois de l'hostilité qui ne permet pas le renforcement des liens économiques et le développement de projets d'infrastructures des transports.<sup>48</sup> Toute tentative, par conséquent, de créer un réseau intégré de transport de l'Ouest des Balkans en vue de favoriser la coopération régionale doit faire face aux désirs contradictoires des pays des Balkans occidentaux.

Ainsi, alors que la communauté internationale a pris des mesures pour améliorer les relations entre les pays des Balkans occidentaux et à favoriser un climat de coopération plutôt que d'antagonisme, souvent grâce à la coopération technique, ces efforts n'ont pas, jusqu'ici, produit des résultats suffisants. En effet, malgré l'amélioration des liaisons de transport entre les pays européens du sud, des études montrent que les pays des Balkans occidentaux continuent à préférer les échanges avec l'UE, plutôt qu'entre eux. L'Albanie, par exemple, un pays qui n'a pas participé à la dissolution de la Yougoslavie, continue à mener 86% de ses importations et 98% de ses exportations avec des pays européens, malgré la proximité géographique avec ses voisins balkaniques.<sup>49</sup> Cette structure des échanges se reproduit dans toute la région des Balkans occidentaux, ce qui entrave fortement le développement des liens commerciaux régionaux.

L'empressement des Balkans occidentaux de rejoindre l'UE contraste fortement avec leur réticence de coopérer au niveau régional. Les distorsions du marché à base ethnique sont profondes à l'intérieur des pays de l'Europe du Sud-Est: en Bosnie-Herzégovine, par exemple, les deux entités ethniquement définies (en vertu de l'Accord de Dayton en 1995) n'ont plus des lois commerciales différentes, mais les divisions continuent d'être si profondes que, selon un rapport, "de nombreux consommateurs et commerçants continuent de fonctionner sur une base ethnique nationale, à la recherche de partenaires à Belgrade s'ils sont serbes, à Zagreb s'ils sont croates".<sup>50</sup> Ce manque de coopération concerne également la situation interne de chaque pays, où la coopération intra-organisme, selon le rapport de la Commission européenne sur les "Lignes directrices pour la gestion intégrée des frontières [IBM] dans les Balkans occidentaux"<sup>51</sup> n'est pas encore été atteinte.

La mesure dans laquelle les rivalités ethniques et les interprétations actuelles de l'Histoire influencent la promotion du régionalisme dans les Balkans

occidentaux apparaît assez rapidement si l'on examine le secteur des transports: Dans l'ARYM, des facteurs historiques entravent le projet Corridor Xd, qui traverse l'ARYM avant d'atteindre Medzitlija, à la frontière grecque. L'intention déclarée de Skopje de rebaptiser cette section du Corridor X "Alexandre de Macédoine" a suscité la réaction du gouvernement grec qui, se plaignant de "provocations", a décidé de suspendre le financement du projet par la Grèce. Ainsi, une partie d'une somme des €152 millions destinée à l'achèvement du projet a été gelée.<sup>52</sup> En Bosnie-Herzégovine, d'autre part, l'achèvement du projet Corridor Vc a été réduit en raison des divisions ethniques entre les deux entités du pays, la Republika Srpska et la Fédération de Bosnie-Herzégovine. Une mission d'établissement des faits par l'Europe centrale et orientale [CEE] Bankwatch Network a identifié un "feuilleton continué" des "allégations de corruption, des boycotts et une démission" entre les parties concernées.<sup>53</sup>

Loin d'une question simple de débats historiques, le manque d'intégration régionale est également dû à un certain nombre de questions politiques qui doivent être résolues. Outre les difficultés politiques de la Bosnie-Herzégovine ou le débat du nom entre Athènes et Skopje, la question de l'indépendance du Kosovo constitue également un grave problème en termes de construction d'un réseau de transport efficace qui est libre des frictions frontalières. Établir la liberté de circulation entre le Kosovo (en vertu de la résolution 1244/99) et la Serbie par exemple, est un ingrédient nécessaire d'un tel réseau, et a été un domaine d'intérêt pour l'UE pendant des Présidences tournantes consécutives.

Des chercheurs ont attribué la réticence des États à poursuivre la coopération régionale, non seulement aux expériences traumatisantes des années 1990, à des obstacles historiques, sociaux ou politiques, mais aussi à une incompréhension fondamentale de la mise en œuvre du régionalisme. Les maigres résultats obtenus par la promotion du régionalisme dans la région des Balkans occidentaux suggèrent également que les pays en question n'ont pas encore compris les avantages de l'intégration régionale, ainsi que le potentiel politique et économique important qui les attend, si un réseau de transport fonctionnel est construit. Une explication de ce phénomène qui a été fréquemment mise en avant dans la littérature est que la coopération régionale ne s'est pas développée localement dans la région des Balkans occidentaux.<sup>54</sup> Plutôt, en remontant à la Déclaration de Thessalonique de 2003, le régionalisme a été lié à la perspective européenne de l'Europe du Sud-Est, dans le cadre du mécanisme de conditionnalité que Bruxelles emploie traditionnellement avec les pays voisins.<sup>55</sup>

Malheureusement, si l'on examine le succès de la conditionnalité en termes de développement du régionalisme dans les Balkans occidentaux, les résultats sont en dessous des attentes initiales.<sup>56</sup> Poursuivre l'intégration régionale seulement parce qu'elle est une condition préalable à l'adhésion de l'UE ou à l'adhésion à l'OMC pousse les pays des Balkans occidentaux à manquer le but du régionalisme, visant à des liens plus étroits avec l'UE ou l'OMC, plutôt que les uns avec les autres. En effet, le défi pour la communauté internationale semble être la manière de transformer le "régionalisme importé" dans une volonté régionale réelle vers une intégration plus poussée.<sup>57</sup>

Le défaut de s'appuyer sur les efforts de la communauté internationale pour une plus grande intégration de transport et de créer une zone de coopération régionale fonctionnelle ne devrait donc pas être attribué exclusivement aux pays des Balkans occidentaux, mais aussi aux stratégies douteuses employées par des acteurs extérieurs. Une telle politique est l'encouragement d'un nombre croissant d'accords (qu'ils soient bilatéraux ou multilatéraux), dans un effort de promouvoir la coopération régionale. Kaminski et De la Rocha ont nommé les nombreux, souvent chevauchants, accords commerciaux bilatéraux comme un "bol de spaghetti", dans une tentative de décrire la nature compliquée d'un groupe d'accords qui, plutôt que de promouvoir la coopération régionale en finit par l'inhiber.

Une version modifiée de l'effet du "bol de spaghetti"<sup>58</sup> peut également être observée dans les efforts de la région d'intégration des transports, qui souffre des distorsions du marché en raison du manque de coordination entre les nombreux projets en cours de construction dans la région. Cela devrait être attribué, principalement au grand nombre d'acteurs internationaux, régionaux et locaux actifs dans le secteur des transports dans les Balkans occidentaux, chacun avec ses propres priorités et accès au financement. Le fait que les États des Balkans ont intégré un certain nombre d'organisations différentes (comme l'UE, l'ASA, l'ALECE, l'OMC, l'AII, etc), souvent à titre individuel et à des moments différents, ayant des stratégies diverses, voire contradictoires dans le secteur des transports, a davantage compliqué la situation. Par exemple, l'augmentation du financement par l'UE en Bulgarie et en Roumanie (états membres de l'UE depuis 2004) a accéléré la construction des corridors IV et IX, reliant l'Europe occidentale et centrale à la Bulgarie, la Roumanie et la Grèce, mais en contournant les Balkans occidentaux; le Corridor X, cependant, une fois achevé, constituerait une solution de connexion plus rapide et moins coûteuse. De même, la décision de procéder à la construction coûteuse de la route de l'AII devrait être mise en doute, étant donné qu'elle

agit de façon complémentaire au corridor X. Autrement dit, le manque de planification adéquate, la priorisation et la coordination des donateurs a conduit au financement de trois projets routiers différents (l'autoroute de l'AI / le Corridor X / les corridors IV et IX), dont aucun n'a encore été achevé (dû en partie à des fonds limités), là où un seul suffirait.

Même d'un point de vue économique, la réticence des Balkans occidentaux à adopter des accords de coopération régionale ne semble pas tout à fait injustifiée: les chercheurs ont, en effet, fait valoir que la création de l'ALECE détient le risque de favoriser le détournement des échanges (ex. le déplacement de la production loin de l'avantage comparatif d'un pays) au lieu de la création de commerce (spécialisation de la production) entre les pays des Balkans occidentaux.<sup>59</sup> En détournant le commerce loin des Balkans occidentaux, le CEFTA n'encourage guère la création du commerce.

Le risque du détournement des échanges demeure important, d'une part, parce que le processus de mise en œuvre du CEFTA n'a pas eu lieu en même temps, ou avec le même rythme pour tous les pays. Ainsi, les pays des Balkans occidentaux trouvent un accès plus facile aux marchés de l'UE, encourageant ainsi le commerce horizontal que le commerce diagonal. Plus important encore, les pays de l'ALECE ont adopté des tarifs douaniers plus élevés et plus dispersés que ceux de l'UE, ce qui favorise également les échanges avec l'UE plutôt que l'un vers l'autre.<sup>60</sup> Si un réseau de transport régional intégré, avec des liens étroits entre les centres commerciaux de l'UE, contribue à la promotion et à la création du commerce, certaines mesures doivent, en outre, être prises afin de garantir que des flux commerciaux plus élevés ne se réalisent au détriment des Balkans de l'Ouest. D'ailleurs, il s'est fait valoir que tous les corridors de transport comportent deux extrémités, qui ne sont pas toujours également mises au point.<sup>61</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Cet article a tenté de plaider la cause de l'intégration des transports dans les Balkans occidentaux dans le but de promouvoir la coopération régionale et de resserrer les liens économiques et sociopolitiques entre les pays de l'Europe du Sud. Cet effort est en cours depuis le début des années 2000, faisant des progrès significatifs et ayant surmonté un certain nombre d'obstacles, dont la plupart tournait autour de l'héritage des guerres yougoslaves: l'infrastructure qui était détruite ou archaïque, l'omniprésent retard économique et un haut degré d'animosité étaient profonds parmi les anciennes républiques



yougoslaves. En même temps toutefois, l'intégration de transport n'est ni une panacée pour les défis persistants de la région, ni un processus linéaire sans problèmes. Un examen attentif de la façon dont l'intégration des transports a contribué à la résurgence des problèmes (que ce soit les tensions ethniques, le contrôle de l'espace aérien, ou les interprétations historiques contestées) souligne le fait que le processus de transition des Balkans occidentaux est loin d'être achevé. En cela, le régionalisme joue, et devrait continuer à jouer, un rôle important.

### NOTES

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# **An Unsung Success Story? Regional Cooperation in South East Europe**

**Dimitar Bechev\***

## **RÉSUMÉ**

Après la dissolution violente de la Yougoslavie dans les années 1990, la coopération interétatique est devenue la norme dans la grande Europe du Sud-Est, une zone englobant ce que l'on appelle les Balkans de l'Ouest, les Etats membres de l'UE - la Grèce, la Roumanie et la Bulgarie -mais aussi la Turquie et même la Moldavie. Des institutions et des systèmes multilatéraux couvrent désormais un large éventail de politiques : depuis les cours d'eau transfrontaliers jusqu'à la promotion de l'investissement en matière de défense et de sécurité. Ces régimes ont été partie intégrante de l'intégration de la région dans les clubs de l'Ouest tels que l'UE et l'OTAN. L'article fait le point sur le virage de la coopération dans la politique des Balkans dans les années 2000 et analyse les origines, la dynamique et les limites des institutions et des régimes opérant au niveau intergouvernemental dans un certain nombre de politiques couvrant les domaines du commerce, de l'énergie, de la justice et des affaires intérieures. Ce texte fait valoir que la coopération régionale est principalement un sous-produit de la force gravitationnelle et des politiques de puissants acteurs extérieurs comme l'UE. Les schémas locaux d'interdépendance jouent un rôle secondaire et sont principalement responsables des formes flexibles de collaboration « minilatérale » ou de voisin à voisin.

## **ABSTRACT**

Following the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, interstate cooperation has become the norm in wider South East Europe, an area encompassing the so-called Western Balkans, EU member states Greece, Romania and Bulgaria but also Turkey and even Moldova. Multilateral schemes and institutions now cover a broad array of policy areas, from cross-border waterways to investment promotion to security and defence. Such schemes have been part and parcel of the region's integration into Western clubs such as the EU and NATO. The article takes stock of the cooperative turn in Balkan politics in the 2000s and analyses the origins, dynamics and limits of institutions and schemes operating at the intergovernmental level across a number of policy-areas including trade, energy and

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justice and home affairs. It argues that regional cooperation is mostly a byproduct of the gravitational pull and policies of powerful external actors such as the EU. Local patterns of interdependence play a secondary role and are chiefly responsible for flexible forms of 'minilateral' or neighbour-to-neighbour collaboration..

Following the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, interstate cooperation has become the norm in wider South East Europe, an area encompassing the so-called Western Balkans, EU member states Greece, Romania and Bulgaria but also Turkey and even Moldova. Multilateral schemes and institutions now cover a broad array of policy areas, from cross-border waterways to investment promotion to security and defence. As of the summer 2008, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) operates in once war-torn Sarajevo, 'regionally owned' by the countries of South East Europe, after long years of tutoring by the European Union (EU), the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and Western governments. The process, in the wider sense, involves not only governmental agencies but also all manner of private actors, from businesses to sports associations. (A Balkan professional basketball league with teams from Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania and Montenegro was launched in 2008). This has been especially visible within the confines of former Yugoslavia. Journalist Tim Judah, covering Western Balkan affairs for *The Economist*, has recently written an illuminating piece about the (re)emergence of 'the Yugosphere'.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, the spread and growth of regional institutions and the deepening of human and economic networks does not mean that past grievances are forgotten and divisive issues resolved. The continuing saga over Kosovo's independence, entering a new stage with the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 22 July 2010, and the precarious state of affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are vivid reminders of the problems, tensions and rivalries that have earned the Balkans an unflattering name in global political discourse. One of the unfortunate consequences of the standoff between Prishtina and Belgrade is the exclusion of Kosovo from all manner of all-Balkan schemes, which previously involved UNMIK. But in a longer historical perspective, especially if one looks back to the cold war era and the turbulent early 1990s, it is impossible to deny the headway made. Domestically, democratization and the transition to market economies has made significant

gains as testified by all international indices measuring transition, while enhanced linkages between neighbours has aided economic development, particularly concerning the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia. Though the pace of such developments has been more often than not sluggish, as of the 2000s the direction is clear.

The following article addresses two interrelated questions. First, what are the factors and broader economic, political and social forces that drive forward regionalism in Europe's southeast and explain the turn, incomplete though it might be, from ethnic strife, conflict and competition to cooperative engagement? Second, what has regional cooperation delivered? Unlike other similar publications the article does not concentrate on individual institutions such as the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SP), RCC or the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC), the intergovernmental body set up by the regional countries in 1996 with roots going back to the pioneering summit of Balkan foreign ministers held in Belgrade back in 1988. What it does instead is to zoom in on three crucially important sectors that have been in the centre of the regional cooperation agenda since the mid-1990s: trade, energy and what is known in EU-speak as 'justice and home affairs' (JHA), that is matters of law enforcement and soft security. That way it sheds light on the underlying dynamics but also the obstacles informing the Balkan brand of multilateral cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

### **What drives regional cooperation?**

The study of regionalism has carved out a niche of its own in the academic field of International Relations.<sup>3</sup> Interest in the subject mushroomed after the end of the Cold War with the re-energizing of old schemes such as the European Community (becoming EU in 1993), ASEAN and the appearance of new institutions like Mercosur in Latin America's southern cone or NAFTA. While intra-Balkan cooperation takes place on an altogether different spatial scale and its ambitions have always been more limited, the literature on regionalism provides useful insights into its causes, character and underlying dynamics.

There are, roughly speaking, three groups of factors at play. When discussing cooperation within a regional setting, theorists usually highlight *interdependence*, that is linkages running between societies, markets and political systems that create demand collective response by relevant actors, principally though not exclusively governments. In South East Europe, the



variable has traditionally had negative impact. Economic fragmentation, exacerbated by the Yugoslav wars of succession, has impeded growth and development. Deficiencies or sheer lack of cross-border infrastructure connections has bottlenecked exchange within the region but also, more importantly, with key export markets in Western Europe. At the same time, the conflicts in former Yugoslavia bequeathed a host transnational issues binding together a wide circle, if not all, countries in the area: refugees and internally displaced persons, the spread of organized criminal networks, various forms of illegal trafficking carried out by multiethnic syndicates. While economic fragmentation has typically obstructed the advancement and institutionalization of regional schemes, such challenges have called for collective action on behalf of Yugoslavia's successors and also their neighbours in the Balkans and Central Europe.

The second set of factors relates to the *push* from powerful outside sponsors of regionalism. Since the conclusion of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords in the autumn of 1995, EU and the US have made the promotion of multilateral economic and political initiatives their core policy in and around former Yugoslavia. A renewed impetus followed after the 1999 war in Kosovo which led to the inauguration of the SP, a brainchild of the then German Presidency of the EU Council assisted by a host of international financial institutions and western governments. It was followed by the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) for the Western Balkans, mainly a bilateral instrument aimed at bringing individual countries into the EU fold, based on their fitness but complemented by a robust multilateral dimension seeking to tackle horizontal issues putting all target countries, figuratively speaking, in the same boat. One should not overlook schemes covering the area of security and defence, falling into the ambit of NATO. As early as 1996, the Clinton administration launched the South East Defence Ministerial (SEDM), which has since implemented initiatives such as the Balkan countries' joint peacekeeping force known as SEEBRIG. Later, in 2003, the Bush administration designed the Adriatic Charter involving NATO membership frontrunner states: Croatia, Macedonia and Albania.

The last, but certainly not the least, factor to take into account is *regional identity*. Scholars of regionalism, particularly those adhering to the Social Constructivist school, have seen the phenomenon as grounded in or adding to a 'we-feeling', a sense of community underpinned by common cultural idioms, language, political and social norms. Though it is problematic to speak of a shared Balkan notion of belonging, be it at the level of political elites or publics

at large, transnational identities are not uncommon. The most banal, but telling and illustrative, example is the bloc voting in the Eurovision song contest. Such cross-border patterns of identification are, for obvious historical and cultural reasons, at their strongest within the confines of former Yugoslavia. Yet one can also speak of a shared, thin sense of identity in South East Europe deriving from the region's peripheral position vis-a-vis the model societies of the West. The collective drive for integration into the EU and NATO as 'South East Europe', rather than the maligned Balkans, has advanced such notions of regional identity. For their part, such constructions have facilitated the reception of normative models of regional cooperation and integration projected by external actors, first and foremost the self-styled 'normative power' that is the EU.<sup>4</sup>

### Sectors of cooperation

These three broad causal forces have variable impact across different policy-areas. For instance, interdependence is a more robust driver for collective action in the rule of law domain where South East Europe has always been more cohesive regional unit. Less so in economic areas as individual countries, as a rule, have stronger trade and investment ties with the 'core' EU rather than regional neighbours. For their part, identity concerns do not play a direct and self-standing causal role but rather shape the cognitive environment within which local and external agents interact. The following section investigates the development of regional cooperation in several key areas to trace the main achievements made but also relate them to the overarching factors.

#### *Trade*

Trade is at the heart of any regional endeavour but in South East Europe it took considerable period of time to implement a far-reaching liberalization scheme. Despite some pre-existing bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), for instance between Macedonia and rump Yugoslavia (signed in 1996), Croatia and Slovenia (both in 1998), it was only with the SP that a multilateral initiative was put on the table by the European Commission. The EU used SAP conditionality to encourage the Western Balkan governments. The closing statement of the Zagreb Summit (November 2000) featured a commitment to regional cooperation and mentioned explicitly the build-up of a free-trade area.<sup>5</sup> However, the target governments (not just the SAP countries but also Bulgaria and Romania at the time) opted for a model whereby liberalization

would take place through *bilateral* agreements, rather than a regional instrument, and therefore complement *lia*, by the high profile of Slovenia as a trade and investment powerhouse in the Western Balkans (with the exception of Albania), a development related to the favourable regimes established as a result of the region's closer integration into the EU. In 2008, Slovenia was BiH's second most significant trade partner after Croatia (16.8 per cent of Bosnian exports, 12.8 per cent of imports). In 2002-04, half of the country's investment outflows went to other former Yugoslav republics.<sup>13</sup>

One caveat is due here. The picture of South East Europe as integrated only within the confines of ex-Yugoslavia changes noticeably if one is to include Greece into the region in focus. The country is a leading trade partner for all its immediate neighbours to the north, Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia. In 2008, it was the second most important source of imports for Albania and Macedonia (12.5/12.4 per cent of the total) and third for Bulgaria (5.4 per cent). 9.9 per cent of Bulgarian exports went to Greece (the top destination) compared with 12.5 and 11.8 per cent for Macedonia and Albania. One should also add Turkey, which is the third largest export market for Bulgaria as well as a source for significant share of imports to Romania (4.9 per cent), Albania (6.9 per cent) and Macedonia (5.6 per cent).<sup>14</sup>

### *Energy*

Energy has been a top priority for all countries in South East Europe, partly because of their dependency on imports, partly owing to the advantages of the region's intermediate position between the suppliers around the Caspian Sea and in Central Asia and the consumers in Western Europe. Starting from the early 1990s, governments have touted various schemes for the construction of oil and gas pipelines eager to reap the economic and security benefits. Some oil infrastructure projects have remained on paper: Burgas-Vlorë (Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia), Constanța to Omišalj/Trieste (Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Italy), the connection of the Družhba pipeline with the Adria system (Hungary-Croatia). Limited resources, technical difficulties, environmental fallout and, most conspicuously, the uncertainty of future supplies have presented serious obstacles.<sup>15</sup> Only smaller-scale projects as the pipe connecting Thessaloniki and Skopje have been completed. While a tripartite agreement on Burgas-Alexandroupolis was signed in Athens by Prime Ministers Kostas Karamanlis (Greece) and Sergey Stanishev (Bulgaria) and President Vladimir Putin of Russia in March 2007, the future prospects of the project are uncertain due to internal opposition in Bulgaria as well as the progress of the

Samsun-Ceyhan pipeline located entirely on Turkish territory.

Similar to oil, gas, too, has fueled both cooperation and competition in South East Europe.<sup>16</sup> When in November 2007 Gazprom signed a deal with the Italian energy firm ENI for a gas pipeline under the Black Sea, bypassing Ukraine engaged in several political and commercial disputes with Russia, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia hurried to jump on the bandwagon and ensure that the route would pass through their territories. South Stream is in competition with the Nabucco project supported by the European Commission and the US government and inaugurated in July 2009 through an intergovernmental agreement signed in Ankara by Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria. The future of both pipelines is far from clear owing to the prohibitive costs and, similar to oil, the uncertainty whether there will be sufficient supply of gas from the exporters (Russia, Azerbaijan, the Central Asian republics). For all the fuzz generated by grand projects worth billions of euro, regional cooperation in the area of gas has been served best by much more practical, lower-key initiatives such as the interconnection of Turkey and Greece's networks completed in the autumn of 2007. Another interconnector is currently under construction between Greece and Bulgaria while the European Commission has been drawing plans for a Western Balkan gas ring (proposed originally in 2003 by the Greek and Turkish public companies DEPA and BOTAS) which involves, amongst other things, linking Serbia's network with those of neighbouring Croatia, Bulgaria and Macedonia.<sup>17</sup> These small-step arrangements help the diversification of gas supplies to the Balkans and reinforce the integration of local energy markets.

Despite the political salience of oil and gas, the electricity sector has seen the most remarkable advancement. Cooperation in that area has been facilitated by the intra-regional complementarities. While some have been suffering from chronic shortages (the Western Balkans, Turkey, Greece), others like Bulgaria (up until the closure of Units 3 and 4 of the Kozloduy Power Plant in 2007) and Romania have excess capacity due to the rapid deindustrialization after the fall of communism. Until 2003, however, the two countries were not part of the Union for the Coordination of the Transmission of Electricity (UCTE) bringing together the EU member states.<sup>18</sup> Serbia and Montenegro and Macedonia, though applying the UCTE technical standards, were disconnected from the grid in the early 1990s.<sup>19</sup> Many national grids in the Balkans were not interconnected while the 1990s severely damaged the transmission infrastructure in eastern Croatia and BiH. As a result, the SP tabled the connection between Albania and Montenegro and between Bulgaria

and Macedonia as a priority while South East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), a US-launched scheme dating to 1996, negotiated in 2001 a regional memorandum on grid connectivity. In the 2009 regular reports, the European Commission notes that several 400kV transmission lines have either been completed: Gjueshevo (Bulgaria) - Deve Bair (Macedonia), Niš - Leskovac (south Serbia, to be extended to Skopje); or are under construction: Elbasan (Albania) - Podgorica (Montenegro).

Balkan government made some early steps towards integration. In September-October 1995, the Albanian, Bulgarian, FR Yugoslav, Greek and Macedonian authorities carried out a successful test for a synchronous connection of national grids. In 1999, energy ministers (excluding Croatia and Turkey) set 2006 as a target date for the launch of a regional market. From that point onwards the European Commission (DG Transport and Energy), which had originally developed the plan deriving from the intra-EU energy liberalization initiatives, assumed leadership.<sup>20</sup> In November 2002, the EU, Western Balkans (including UNMIK/Kosovo), Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey signed in Athens a MoU pledging to open the retail markets to operators from the other participating countries by January 2005 through implementing the EU Electricity Directive (96/92/EC).<sup>21</sup> In December 2003, energy ministers adopted another memorandum extending the same framework to gas in line with Council Directive 2003/55/EC.<sup>22</sup>

Such steps paved the way to the Energy Community Treaty signed in October 2005, again in Athens, by the European Community, Bulgaria, Romania, the Western Balkan governments (including UNMIK/Kosovo). Turkey chose to stay out of the treaty preferring to delay harmonization with the *acquis* to a future point in its membership negotiations (Renner, 2009). The Energy Community's organization structure copies that of corresponding bodies within the EU itself. The bulk of the work is carried out by a permanent secretariat in Vienna, with the EU budget covering 98 per cent of the operational cost, not unlike the CEFTA 2006 secretariat in the first year of its existence.<sup>23</sup> A ministerial council monitors its activities aided by a permanent high-level group of senior officials. A Regulatory Board brings together representatives of the national regulatory authorities, much like the European Regulators' Group for electricity and gas (ERGEG).<sup>24</sup> There are also four issue-specific fora: electricity (going back to the 2002 memorandum), gas (established with the 2005 treaty), social impact of energy reform (October 2007), and oil (December 2008).<sup>25</sup>

Despite recurrent calls for 'regional ownership', the Energy Community is a

body firmly anchored and guided by the EU institutions and frameworks. As a consequence, its prospects are dependent on the pace of EU integration in South East Europe. The participants' variable willingness and capacity of participating countries to implement the institutional and regulatory reforms listed in the Athens Treaty and its annexes which, in turn, highlights external anchors. In October 2009, the European Commission found that within the Western Balkans only Croatia had aligned its legislation to a sufficient degree.<sup>26</sup>

All in all, the Energy Community is an example of the EU's piecemeal export of its legislation and institutional templates to a geographical area drawn into its orbit, sometimes described by the term 'external governance'. It is a de facto extension of the Union's policies in the Western Balkans, though other countries currently engaged in accession negotiations (Turkey), aspiring to deepen relations with the EU (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) or already part of advanced institutional arrangements (Norway in the European Economic Area) are also involved as observers. Moldova and Ukraine have joined the Community in 2010 as a way to enhance energy security, after the 2006 and 2009 gas crises involving Kyiv and Russia's Gazprom.<sup>27</sup>

### *Justice and home affairs*

When the Stability Pact was launched in 1999 the implicated governments and international institutions paid a great deal of attention on 'soft security' issues such as corruption, transborder crime, illegal trafficking, and migration management, all of which had become prominent in the Balkans during the Yugoslav wars of succession and spilled over into western Europe.<sup>28</sup> A subtable on JHA was inaugurated, reflecting the assumption that many challenges had to be tackled at the regional level. Its landmark initiative was an expert-level forum on organized crime (SPOC) coordinated by Austria, a country concerned about the issue owing to its location close to the Western Balkans. SPOC was a peer-review mechanism overseeing the transposition into domestic legislation of international instruments such as the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as its two additional protocols on human trafficking and illegal migration.<sup>29</sup> There was a perceptible duplication with the tasks assigned to the US-supported SECI. In May 1999, SECI members Albania, BiH, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Turkey signed an agreement to open regional centre on cross-border crime in Bucharest. Opened in 2001 and housed in the massive *Casa Popurului* (alongside the country's Chamber of Deputies and other institutions), the centre's task has been to help the exchange of

information amongst 15 liaison officers seconded by participating interior ministries and customs authorities. Their work is supported by a number of issue-specific taskforces as well as by a Prosecutors Advisory Group (SEEPAG) based in Belgrade.<sup>30</sup> While the centre scored practical results,<sup>31</sup> initial assessments indicated that participating countries commitment was limited, especially concerning financial contributions.<sup>32</sup>

Even under these constraints, SECI centre was, from the outset, judged more successful than SPOC, not least because of its more inclusive list of participants: from Hungary to Turkey, rather than the Western Balkans only. It was credited, for example, with a series of multi-country operations leading to the neutralization of human trafficking, smuggling and drug networks over the period 2002-09.<sup>33</sup> As a result, SPOC came under pressure to coordinate more effectively with SECI, and in late 2003, it established a permanent secretariat which was hosted by the Bucharest centre. Such efforts at streamlining were half-successful because of the copious bilateral programmes run by the EU, the Council of Europe and other institutions involved in South East Europe.

Like SPOC, the impact of other SP projects and schemes was limited because their chief goal was managing bilateral donor assistance rather than fostering regional cooperation. They were geared towards *common problems*, as opposed to *transnational/regional problems* requiring joint action.<sup>34</sup> A good example was the Pact's anti-corruption initiative (SPAI) supported by OECD. SPAI initiated a series of projects for the implementation of international anti-corruption standards, the promotion of transparency in public administrations, and, generally, advance good governance. Its efforts were complementary to the Regional School of Public Administration that opened at Danilovgrad in Montenegro (May 2006) with funding from the EU's CARDS programme.<sup>35</sup> However, SPAI was little more than a peer-review mechanism with limited implementation monitoring capacity (a regional liaison office in Sarajevo), whose programmes duplicated those of other agencies.<sup>36</sup> This was the reason why RCC, the successor of SP, convened in September 2008 a conference in Sarajevo to work out synergies by the multiple regional organizations and initiatives involved in JHA issues, not least SPAI renamed, as of October 2007, 'Regional Anticorruption Initiative' in line with the trend towards regional ownership of cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

The 2000s saw a drive towards cooperation also from within the region too. In December 2001, the interior ministers of Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Turkey and FR Yugoslavia agreed to share

police information and strengthen border controls in order to combat cross-border crime.<sup>38</sup> In the wake of a high-profile conference on Balkan organized crime hosted in London on 25 November 2002 by the UK Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Belgrade organized a meeting of the region's interior ministers in March 2003 under SEECP, followed by two further conferences in Sarajevo.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent annual conferences, typically attended by the EU Home Affairs Commissioner too, institutionalized dialogue among the interior and justice departments in national executives, though the implementation of joint projects has been delegated to RCC. RCC has sought to cooperate with the SECI centre in Bucharest. The first outcome of this link is the upgrade of SECI unit into a South East European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC) with an intergovernmental convention signed on 9 December 2009, a project which had been underway since 2007.<sup>40</sup> The new agreement solved the data protection issue that previously prevented full interoperability with Europol, one of the EU agencies steering the process.<sup>41</sup>

There is a trend towards intensified cooperation centred on the Western Balkans, as opposed to wider South East Europe. In June 2001, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and FR Yugoslavia signed a special agreement along the lines of the Palermo Convention on human trafficking and in February 2002, the three interior ministers agreed on a set of joint measures by the respective police forces.<sup>42</sup> The establishment of regional bodies such as the Public Prosecutors' Network (PROSECO, established March 2005) or the South East European Police Chief Association (SEPCA), originally initiated by the SP, has put those coordination efforts on a more permanent basis.<sup>43</sup> RCC has also assisted the establishment of the Secretariat of the Police Cooperation Convention (PCC) for South East Europe located in Ljubljana (September 2008).

It is hard to judge how successful such initiatives have been in tackling cross-border threats. Unresolved status issues and deadlocked reforms, e.g. the endless saga concerning the creation of a unified police force in Bosnia, have created grey zones, both in geographical and institutional terms, which in turn weakens the impact of intergovernmental coordination. In addition, even if corruption and crime are a trans-border issue, the key locus of institution-building and transformation remains the domestic arena. The unequal progress towards the EU and the variable capacity of national governments to secure the rule of law are also bound to dilute cooperation. For instance, the absence of data protection legislation in some Balkan countries initially prevented the SECI centre to exchange of information with Europol as well as



between national law enforcement agencies.<sup>44</sup>

On balance, there have been high-profile cases where intergovernmental frameworks have yielded visible results. Following the car-bomb assassination of Ivo Pukani, a prominent investigative journalist working the Zagreb weekly *Nacional*, on 23 October 2008, Serbian and Croatian police could arrest members of a criminal network operating in both countries. The trial opened in February 2010, a few days after one of the indicted surrendered to the police in Banjaluka, BiH.<sup>45</sup> Another trial against Sreten Jocić (Joca Amsterdam), a Serbian underworld boss implicated in the murder of Pukanić who had written widely on the Balkan tobacco mafia, is set to start in Belgrade at a special court on serious crime.<sup>46</sup>

Cooperation in matters of justice has also made inroads into sensitive issues such as dealing with war crimes committed in the 1990s. There is now a web of agreements between the War Crimes Prosecutor in Serbia and the Prosecutors General in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Significantly, regional cooperation has been singled out by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) as a precondition for delegating cases to national authorities. As Milica Delević notes, at times cooperation faces constraints. As a rule, countries in the Western Balkans have constitutional clauses prohibiting the extradition of their nationals. This prevents prosecutors and judges to effectively investigate and hear cases, given that more often than not indictees hold the passport of another post-Yugoslav state. In some bilateral relations this has not been a problem: for instance, Croatia has consented that Montenegro could try cases for war crimes committed on its territory, e.g. during the siege of Dubrovnik in late 1991.<sup>47</sup> Intergovernmental agreements such as the two treaties signed by BiH with Croatia and Serbia in February 2010 which work out measures for preventing dual citizens from evading justice by crossing the border is certainly a step in the right direction.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

The foregoing overview of progress made in key functional sectors paints cooperation in South East Europe as a by-product of the region's integration into the EU. It is not coincidental that it has advanced most, in terms of institutionalization and 'output', in areas where the Union has a strong political mandate and extensive normative framework: trade policy, electricity markets. By contrast, in other domains where member states retain important powers and/or EU has to coordinate its efforts with other international players

– e.g. fighting organized crime and transnational corruption and especially oil and gas policy - South East European cooperation has proceeded at a slower pace. The fact that outside impulses have guided the process suggests that local interdependence plays a secondary part. It might facilitate joint action by Balkan governments but has rarely been a sufficient condition, in the absence of the external push provided by the EU, US, the IFIs etc. This is especially true for the pan-regional initiatives involving a wide array of countries, from Albania to Moldova, less so for ‘smaller-n’ schemes involving immediate neighbours whose interests and concerns coalesce more readily. Bilateral and ‘minilateral’ forms of interaction will surely proliferate: e.g. the recent inauguration of joint cabinet sessions between Greece and Turkey and Greece and Bulgaria following the model established by France and Germany.

The second important conclusion is that South East European cooperation is there to stay. Though it is impeded by the outstanding status issues as well as various domestic to do with the limited will or capacity for institutional and policy reform, the past ten years have seen a steady trend towards greater institutionalization of intergovernmental contacts and deeper interlinkage between markets and societies. Taken together such ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ dimensions constitute the complex phenomenon of regionalism. At the same time, regional cooperation, especially in functional policy-areas, is no silver bullet capable of resolving political problems in former Yugoslavia on its own. For all the talk of ‘regional ownership’, Balkan regionalism remains a piece of the larger puzzle concerning the transformative power projected by the EU towards its multiple peripheries.

## NOTES

1. Tim Judah, *Yugoslavia is Dead. Long Live the Yugosphere*. LSEE Research Paper, European Institute, London School of Economics, November 2009.
2. The article draws on Dimitar Bechev, *Constructing South East Europe: the Politics of Balkan Regional Cooperation*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming in 2011.
3. Amitav Acharya and Alistair Iain Johnston (eds.), *Crafting Cooperation. Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Andrew Hurrell and Louise Fawcett (eds.), *Regionalism in*

- World Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995.
4. Cf. Dimitar Bechev, “Carrots, Sticks and Norms: the EU and Regional Cooperation in Southeast Europe”, *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 27-43.
  5. EU-Western Balkan Summit, *Final Declaration*, Zagreb, 24 November 2000, Point 3.
  6. Workgroup on Trade Liberalization and Facilitation, *Ministerial Statement*, Rome, 13 November 2003.
  7. Milica Delević, “Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans”, *Chaillot Papers*, No. 107, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, 2007, p. 62.
  8. European Commission, *2009 Progress Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Brussels, 14.10.2009 SEC (2009) 1338, p. 23.
  9. *Reuters*, 25 September 2009.
  10. European Commission, *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010*, Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2009) 533, Brussels 14 October 2009, p. 6. Officials in Prishtina complained in early 2009 that authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina had charged duties to imports from Kosovo, in breach of CEFTA 2006 rules. *BalkanInsight.com*, 9 January 2009.
  11. Sanjay Kathuria, *Western Balkan Integration and the EU. Agenda for Trade and Growth*, Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2008, pp. 36-38.
  12. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
  13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
  14. Trade data obtained from Eurostat, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>
  15. *BalkanInsight.com*, 16 November 2006.
  16. Oxford Analytica, “States Vie for Pipeline to Bypass Bosphorus”, *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief*, 20 July 2000.
  17. *BalkanInsight.com*, 25 March 2010.
  18. UCTE was formerly known as UCPTE as it dealt not only with electricity transmission but also with production.
  19. Before the 1990s, former Yugoslavia was integrated in the southern branch of UCTE, known as SUDEL. Bulgaria and Romania participated in the United Power Systems (UPS) within COMECOM. Romania left UPS in 1994.
  20. Stephan Renner, “The Energy Community of Southeast Europe: A Neo-Functional Project of Regional Integration”, *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, Vol. 13, February 2009, p. 9.
  21. Replaced by Directive 2003/54/EC (the Second Electricity Directive).

22. Energy Ministers of South East Europe, *Memorandum of Understanding on the Regional Energy Market in South East Europe and its Integration into the European Community Internal Energy Market* (Athens Memorandum 2003), 8 December 2003. Available at: <http://www.stabilitypact.org/energy/031208-mou.pdf>
23. CEFTA 2006 secretariat is now co-funded by the Commission and the participating states contributing 30 per cent of the cost in 2009/10 and 50 per cent in 2010/11. Decision of the Joint Committee of CEFTA No. 2/2008, 8 October 2008. Available at: <http://www.cefta2006.com>
24. Ibid. The Regulatory Board makes recommendations to the ministerial council regarding disputes but is generally envisioned as a counterweight to the intergovernmental arm of the Energy Community.
25. More about the Energy Community at: <http://www.energy-community.org>
26. *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010*.
27. Moldova and Ukraine completed technical negotiations for joining the Treaty in 2009. Moldova formally joined on 17 March 2010.
28. Stability Pact for South East Europe, *Agenda for Stability*, Thessaloniki, 8 June 2000, point 21.
29. The SP even set up a taskforce on human trafficking together with the OSCE (September 2000). SP participants signed a special declaration in support. Amongst the actors involved in the taskforce were the OSCE Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Organization on Migration, UNICEF, the Council of Europe, the International Catholic Migration Committee etc. The taskforce's activities partly overlapped with those of the Regional Centre for the Fight against Illegal Trafficking, set up by Albania, Italy, Greece and Italy in the town of Vlorë.
30. Issues include trafficking in human beings, stolen vehicles, small arms, radioactive and dangerous substances, drugs, as well as commercial frauds, financial and cyber crimes, terrorism, and valuation frauds. SEEPAG was launched in November-December 2003 by the SEECP members and Slovenia. Further details at: <http://www.seepag.info>
31. In 2001 alone, the centre reported 3112 exchanges of information. Marko Hajdinjak, *Smuggling in Southeast Europe. The Yugoslav Wars and the Development of Regional Criminal Networks in the Balkans*, Sofia, Centre for the Study of Democracy, 2000, p. 65.
32. Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu quoted in Sappho Xenakis, "Organised Crime in the Balkans: Pitfalls in Threat Assessment", in Aleksandar Fatić (ed.), *Security in Southeastern Europe*, Belgrade: Management Centre, 2004, p. 211.
33. Florina Cristiana Matei, "Combatting Terrorism and Organized Crime in South Eastern Europe", Research Paper 133, Research Institute for European and

- American Studies (RIEAS), Athens, July 2009, p. 13.
34. For the distinction, see European Stability Initiative and East-West Institute, *Democracy, Security and the Future of the Stability Pact*, Berlin, April 2001, p. 28.
  35. Further at: <http://www.respaweb.eu>
  36. Even SPAI's multilateral activities overlapped with those of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) within the Council of Europe. ESI and East-West Institute, *Democracy, Security, op.cit.*, p. 15.
  37. See: <http://www.rai-see.org>
  38. *RFE/RL, Crime, Corruption and Terrorism Watch Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 7, 13 December 2001.
  39. *Tanjug*, 3 March 2003.
  40. The other leading project of the Centre is the Common Threat Assessment on Organized Crime for the South East European Region (OCTA-SEE) originally proposed by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council in October 2007. Starting from 2001, Slovenia has been hosting meetings on organized crime and terrorism attended by government representatives of the Western Balkans, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey, Austria, Hungary (the so-called Brdo Process).
  41. European Commission, *Western Balkans: Enhancing the European Perspective*, Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2008) 127, 5 March 2008, p. 13.
  42. *Balkan Times*, 5 February 2002.
  43. A Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe was signed in Vienna in May 2006
  44. Gabriela Konevska, Director of the SECI Centre and Head of the SPOC Secretariat, Europe by Satellite TV, 21 November 2003. Transcript available at: [www.seectv-exchanges.com](http://www.seectv-exchanges.com).
  45. *BBC News*, 3 February 2010.
  46. *EUObserver*, 4 February 2010.
  47. Delević, "Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans", *op.cit.*, p. 74.
  48. *Javno.hr*, 10 February 2010.

## Chronologies

### Chypre: 1<sup>er</sup> avril - 31 octobre 2010

**11-12 avril:** Visite à Chypre du Premier ministre grec Georges Papandréou qui déclare: «Nous n'arrêterons jamais d'oeuvrer pour une solution juste et viable du problème de Chypre».

**18 avril:** Election présidentielle en zone occupée de Chypre: dès le premier tour le nationaliste Dervis Eroglou, 72 ans, bat avec 50,38% des suffrages Mehmet Ali Talat, qui sollicitait un second mandat mais n'a obtenu que 42,85% des voix.

**21 mai:** Ahmet Davutoglu, ministre turc des affaires étrangères, indique que la Turquie est prête à ouvrir ses ports aux navires chypriotes – comme le demande l'Union européenne – en échange de la levée de l'« embargo » pesant sur l'entité chypriote turque.

**4-6 juin:** Visite du Pape Benoît XVI venu à Chypre lancer le Synode des évêques pour le Moyen Orient devant se tenir au Vatican du 10 au 24 octobre 2010.

**15 juin:** Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU adopte par 14 voix contre une (Turquie) une Résolution maintenant jusqu'au 15 décembre 2010 le mandat de la force des Nations Unies à Chypre, en place depuis 1964. Cette Résolution invite les deux parties de l'île à «intensifier le rythme des négociations».

**20 juillet:** Le chef de la communauté chypriote turque Dervis Eroglou souhaite qu'un règlement de la question chypriote intervienne avant la fin de l'année 2010.

**4, 10 et 31 août:** Négociations sur la question chypriote entre le président Dimitri Christofias et Dervis Eroglou.

**24 septembre:** Discours du président Christofias devant l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU.

**1<sup>er</sup> octobre:** Célébration des 50 ans de la proclamation d'indépendance de la République de Chypre.

**7 octobre:** Le chef de l'Etat russe Dimitri Medvedev, en visite à Chypre,

réaffirme le soutien de son pays au gouvernement chypriote malgré le renforcement des liens économiques de la Russie avec la Turquie.

**12-13 octobre:** Visite officielle à Chypre du président de la République de Slovénie Danilo Türk.

**14 octobre:** Ouverture à Limnitis d'un 7<sup>ème</sup> point de passage entre la zone occupée et la zone libre de Chypre.

### Grèce: 1<sup>er</sup> avril - 31 octobre 2010

**1<sup>er</sup> avril:** Décès de l'ancien premier ministre Tzannis Tzannetakis à l'âge de 83 ans.

**22-23 avril:** Grève des ferries - boat qui paralyse les transports maritimes du pays.

**5 mai:** Pendant les manifestations contre le plan d'austérité du gouvernement se produit l'incendie criminel d'une banque, qui provoque la mort de 3 personnes.

**6 mai:** Adoption par 172 voix (Pasok, Mme Dora Bakoyannis et le Laos) contre 121 (Nouvelle Démocratie, KKE, Syriza) du projet de loi sur le soutien à l'économie grecque. Exclusion de Mme Bakoyannis de la Nouvelle Démocratie. Les députés Dimaras, Sakorafa et Ikonomou sont exclus du Pasok pour avoir refusé de voter le projet de loi.

**7 mai:** Adoption par les pays de l'Eurogroupe du Memorandum par lequel l'Union européenne et le FMI accordent à Athènes une aide étalée sur 3 ans de 110 milliards d'euros (80 milliards pour l'UE et 30 milliards pour le FMI). Ce Memorandum prévoit notamment la suppression des 13<sup>ème</sup> et 14<sup>ème</sup> mois de salaire pour les fonctionnaires et un durcissement du système de retraites.

**15 mai:** Première visite officielle en Grèce depuis 2004 du Premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Signature d'une vingtaine d'accords bilatéraux. Création d'un Conseil supérieur gréco-turc visant au développement des relations économiques entre Athènes et Ankara.

**19 mai:** Nomination du député Georges Nikitiadis comme Secrétaire d'Etat à la culture et au tourisme en remplacement de Mme Angela Gerekou.

**4 juin:** Dans un entretien publié dans le quotidien français *la Croix* le Premier

ministre grec Georges Papandréou indique que la Grèce envisage une réduction de son important budget militaire mais seulement si la Turquie en fait autant dans un contexte d'intégration européenne. Ce budget pourrait atteindre une proportion de 2,3 à 2,5% du PIB contre 2,8% cette année.

**24 juin:** Explosion d'origine criminelle au Ministère de la Protection du Citoyen, qui provoque la mort d'un officier de police.

**19 juillet:** Assassinat du journaliste d'investigation Socratis Giolas par le groupe terroriste «Secte des révolutionnaires» apparu après les émeutes à Athènes de 2008.

**21-22 juillet:** Première visite d'un Premier ministre grec en Israël depuis la reconnaissance de ce pays par la Grèce.

**12 août:** Bombe incendiaire lancée contre le Consulat de Turquie à Thessalonique. Georges Petalotis, le Porte-Parole du gouvernement grec condamne catégoriquement «cet acte criminel».

**16 août:** Décès de l'ancien dictateur Dimitri Ioannidis, condamné à la prison à vie en 1975.

**16-17 août:** Première visite en Grèce d'un Premier ministre israélien. Benjamin Netanyahu et Georges Papandréou ont renforcé les liens entre leurs pays en matière de sécurité, de défense et de tourisme.

**7 septembre:** Remaniement ministériel: Le Premier ministre Georges Papandréou abandonne le portefeuille des Affaires étrangères confié à Dimitri Droutsas. Mme Louka Katseli, ministre de l'Economie est remplacée par Michel Chryssochoïdis.

**9 septembre:** Le PIB grec enregistre une baisse de 3,7% au 2<sup>ème</sup> trimestre, attestant la récession de l'économie nationale. Cette baisse est consécutive à la baisse de 2,3% au 1<sup>er</sup> trimestre.

**11 septembre:** Le déficit du budget de l'Etat a reculé de 32,2% entre janvier et août 2010. Le chômage a atteint 11,6% en juin 2010 contre 8,6% un an auparavant.

**2-4 octobre:** Visite officielle en Grèce du Premier ministre chinois, Wen Jiabao. 13 accords bilatéraux ont été signés. Le Premier ministre chinois accorde un «vote de confiance» à la Grèce en précisant que son pays a acheté et achètera dans le futur des obligations grecques avec des réserves en devises étrangères. Il espère que le volume du commerce entre la Chine et la Grèce



doublera dans les 5 ans.

**4 octobre:** Présentation du budget de la Grèce pour 2011, qui ramène le déficit de 7,8% à 7%.

**8 octobre:** Le président de l'Eurogroupe, Jean Claude Juncker déclare que l'UE connaissait depuis des années le problème budgétaire de la Grèce et qu'il aurait fallu prendre des mesures deux ou trois décennies plus tôt mais que personne n'avait parlé parce que cela aurait nui aux exportations de la France et de l'Allemagne.

**22 octobre:** Proclamation de l'initiative pour le changement climatique en Méditerranée a été signée à Athènes notamment par les Premiers ministres de Grèce, de Turquie, de Malte et de l'Autorité palestinienne.

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