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General Secretariat

THINK TANK REVIEW

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MAY 2018
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Special issue on the Western Balkans

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ISSUE 45 - APRIL 2017

Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής (Hellenic Foundation for European Foreign Policy)

The demise of EU Enlargement Policy

by Axel Sotiris Walldén

March 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (28 p.)

Enlargement has been on the EEC/EU agenda all along its history and was believed to be its "most successful" policy. According to the author, during the last decade, enlargement policy has rapidly degenerated and today it is essentially at a standstill in all three of its dimensions (Balkans, Turkey, European neighbourhood countries).

Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku (Belgrade Centre for Security Policy)

Public perception of Serbia's foreign policy

by Milos Popovic and Sonja Stojanovic Gajic [@StojanovicSonja](#)

7 March 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (42 p.)

The research was conducted from 26 December 2016 until 14 January 2017 on a representative sample of 1 403 adult citizens of Serbia. The aim of the project was to examine public attitude about personal and national security, foreign policy and important answers on security challenges, threats and potential alliances in Serbia at the current moment and to create room for discussion about new national security strategy of Serbia.

ISSUE 46 - MAY 2017

Centar za Evropske Politike (European Policy Centre)

Towards a smart staff retention policy for the sustainable EU integration of Serbia

by Milena Lazarević [@milenalazarevic](#), Dragana Bajić and Katarina Kosmina [@KosmiKatarina](#)

April 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (88 p.)

Adequate administrative capacities are one of the crucial preconditions for a successful and sustainable membership of Serbia in the EU. However, experienced employees have been increasingly leaving their public administration jobs due to inadequate work conditions. The research project behind this study was initiated with the goal of assessing and understanding the intensity and causes of staff turnover, as well as factors of motivation and demotivation, and the overall job satisfaction of employees working on EU/IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) jobs.

ISSUE 48 - JULY 2017

European Policy Centre

Kosovo's EU candidate status: a goal within reach?

by Zephyr Dessus, Albana Rexha [@albanarexha](#), Albana Merja [@AlbanaMerja](#) and Corina Stratulat

28 June 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (12 p.)

Ever since its independence in 2008, Kosovo has made headway in drawing nearer to the EU - by signing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2015 with the EU. However, with five Member States still unwilling to recognise its statehood, Kosovo finds itself in a uniquely difficult position regarding its eligibility to accede to the EU. Yet, this paper argues that the absence of a common position among the Member States on Kosovo's status is not insurmountable.

Forum for research on Eastern Europe and Emerging Economies (FREE Network)

Cross-country differences in convergence in CESEE

by Bas B. Bakker and Krzysztof Krogulski

June 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (14 p.)

The study indicates that since 1989 there have been large differences in the convergence of the income levels of the former communist countries in CESEE with those in the US. Most Central European countries have seen a sharp rise in relative incomes, but many countries in former Yugoslavia and the CIS have not – indeed, some countries, including Moldova and Serbia, are now poorer than they were in 1989.

ISSUE 49 - SEPTEMBER 2017

Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής (Hellenic Foundation for European Foreign Policy)

How the quality of democracy deteriorates: populism and the backsliding of democracy in three west Balkan countries

by Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos

10 July 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (48 p.)

This paper's main question is how and through what mechanisms the deterioration of quality of democracy takes place. A tentative answer is the following: lingering state socialist legacies, the combination of strong governments with fragile parliamentary opposition, and weak civil society, result in the backsliding of democracy.

ISSUE 50 - OCTOBER 2017

EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)

Resilience in the Western Balkans

by Sabina Kajnič Lange [@SabinaKLange](#), Zoran Nechev [@ZoranNechev](#) and Florian Trauner [@ftrauner](#)

August 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (146 p.)

According to the 2016 EU Global Strategy, a credible accession process grounded in strict and fair conditionality is essential to foster resilience in the Western Balkans. This report examines how the Western Balkans has emerged once again as a potentially volatile geopolitical arena, and analyses the drivers underpinning both fragility and resilience in the countries of the region from a variety of perspectives. It explores how policy approaches, mechanisms and instruments that have hitherto been applied might be adapted to counter those challenges (both internal and external) that threaten the EU accession perspective.

Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής (Hellenic Foundation for European Foreign Policy)

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: new government and new policies or new government and old tactics? A view from Athens

by Alexandros Mallias [@AlexMallias](#)

September 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (13 p.)

The author analyses the perspectives for improving the relations between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the day after the formation of a new Government in Skopje. He suggests that the two governments should not raise high expectations. They should work to enhance and expand the Confidence Building Measures' Process and rather opt for a quiet diplomacy on the name issue. He also analyses the Political Declaration of the Albanian Leaders in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, stressing its importance for addressing the interethnic tensions between Slavs and Albanians and for solving the name issue with Greece.

Centar za Evropske Politike (European Policy Centre)

Serbia's pursuit of interests in the European Union - Ready to grasp growing opportunities?

by Strahinja Subotić [@SubaBG](#)

September 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (4 p.)

This brief explore Serbia's current administrative, financial and lobbying capacities at the EU level in the context of Serbian EU accession negotiation process, in order to acquire a comprehensive understanding of how Serbia is pursuing its interests in Brussels today and whether (and how) it could use experience gained during the previous decade to its advantage.

Serbia's pursuit of interests in the European Union - Administrative, financial and lobbying capacities

by Strahinja Subotić [@SubaBG](#)

29 September 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (83 p.)

In order to become a Member State, Serbia needs to close negotiations on all of 35 chapters. The interaction with the EU officials is likely to increase as well in the subsequent phases of the process. This will give further importance to Serbia's presence and activities in Brussels, which are dependent on its administrative, financial and lobbying capacities. By promoting an image of a

serious, firm, credible and responsible EU candidate country (and acting like it), Serbia has the potential to increase and improve its appeal in Brussels and willingness of the EU representatives and Member States to cooperate with it and take its preferences into consideration.

ISSUE 51 - NOVEMBER 2017

European Policy Centre

Balkan enlargement and the politics of civic pressure: the case of the public administration reform sector

by Milena Lazarević [@milenalazarevic](#) and Corina Stratulat

5 October 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (4 p.)

This brief reviews the origins of civil society involvement in the public sector reforms, leading to a country's accession to the EU. The search for civil society allies represents a promising break with the legacy of previous accessions in which governments were the Commission's only trusted interlocutors. To avoid (or at least mitigate) the possibility of backsliding on reforms as it occurred in a number of Central Eastern European countries after their EU entry, the Commission is now wisely investing into the politics of bottom-up pressure for the Balkan aspirants.

Institut pro evropskou politiku EUROPEUM (EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy)

The good, the bad and the ugly: Chinese influence in the Western Balkans

by Alexandr Lagazzi [@LagazziA](#) and Michal Vít [@ceeidentity](#)

27 October 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (9 p.)

The paper suggests that the impact of Chinese influence on the Western Balkans is paradoxical: Beijing seems to benefit from EU-led convergence towards political stability in order to increase its opportunities to implement its economic agenda, whilst Chinese eager pockets result in a divergence from EU criteria and an undermining of EU membership prospects for the recipients.

Analitika

Two schools under one roof in Bosnia and Herzegovina: (mis)understanding the problem, and possible solutions

by Alina Trkulja

17 October 2017

Link to the article in [Bosnian](#) (46 p.)

The education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the individual practices that are applied are far from being effective in encouraging understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, as required by the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other international legal documents the state has ratified. Existing educational policies result in ubiquitous discrimination and inequality and even segregation in education. The most illustrative example of this practice are the divided / parallel schools, better known as "two schools under one roof".

Center for Research and Policy Making

Macedonian Obama or the platform from Tirana: a guide to the integrative power sharing model

by Zhidas Daskalovski [@daskalovski](#) and Kristijan Trajkovski

October 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (11 p.) and [Macedonian](#) (8 p.)

The authors claim that Macedonia needs reform of its political system so that the electoral laws would encourage interethnic agreements, the so-called interethnic accommodation.

ISSUE 52 - DECEMBER 2017

Group for Legal and Political Studies

Kosovo, European integration and the SAA: an analysis of citizens' perceptions

by Umberto Cucchi [@umbertocucchi](#)

3 November 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (20 p.)

This analysis confirms the continuous support of the EU and its institutions among the citizens of Kosovo. Kosovo citizens believe that the EU has the knowledge, capacity, and political will to lead the efforts to solve most of the issues that afflict the country. More than 50% of the respondents evaluated as positively the work of the EU in Kosovo, identifying it as a source of peace, democracy and economic prosperity, therefore beneficial for Kosovo. A future entry into the EU would allow to Kosovars the possibility to free travel and employment in other EU Member States, something considered as incredibly attractive, especially for young individuals.

Case - Centrum Analiz Społeczno-Ekonomicznych (Center for Social and Economic Research) / European Parliament

Serbia's cooperation with China, the European Union, Russia and the United States of America

by Christopher A. Hartwell [@insteconomist](#) and Katarzyna W. Sidło

November 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (58 p.)

The study examines Serbia's foreign policies towards the EU, the US, Russia, and China, in particular examining the influence of each power with regard to foreign aid, trade, investment and security. The analysis shows that each partner of Serbia has their own specific interest and comparative advantage in the country, with the EU focusing primarily on rule of law, aid, and increasing investment, the US on security, Russia on energy and foreign policy support, and China on infrastructure and markets. The scale of cooperation is divergent, however, and the EU accession process has pushed the EU to primus inter pares for the Serbian government.

ISSUE 53 - JANUARY 2018

College of Europe

Exiting or entering the Union: EU consistency in accession and withdrawal negotiations

by Özlem Terzi

December 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (5 p.)

This brief compares the EU's negotiating positions vis-à-vis the UK on Brexit with its positions vis-à-vis candidates which have started their accession negotiations, namely Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, whose candidacy represents a number of political aspects worth highlighting in the context of this paper.

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (German Institute for International and Security Affairs)

The EU and the Western Balkans: so near and yet so far

by Matteo Bonomi and Dušan Reljić

19 December 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (4 p.)

The [Western Balkans Strategy](#) was adopted by the European Commission on 6 February 2018. The EU HR for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, has stated the European Commission's intention to ensure that the Western Balkan countries are on an "irreversible" track to membership in the Union before the end of its mandate in 2019.

Külügyi és Külgazdasági Intézet (Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade)

The Western Balkans on the Visegrad countries' agenda

by Anna Orosz [@russianann83](#)

14 December 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (10 p.)

After joining the EU and NATO, the Visegrad countries agreed to give support to the Western Balkan countries in the Euro-Atlantic integration process. What does the Visegrad countries do in order to foster enlargement and how much it really matters? This cannot be analysed and assessed without the wider European context and without the understanding of motivation of the individual Visegrad countries. The former determines the framework of their actions while the latter has a great impact on the strength of common standpoint. This analysis takes a look on these aspects and highlights factors that could influence the Visegrad countries' weight in the EU's policy toward the Western Balkans.

Group for Legal and Political Studies

In search of consensus: a proposal

by Agron Bajrami [@AgronBajrami](#)

December 2017

Link to the article in [English](#) (13 p.) and in [Albanian](#) (11 p.)

The article examines the ongoing dialogue between Belgrade and Prishtina, facilitated by the EU.

Centar za međunarodne i bezbednosne poslove (International and Security Affairs Centre)

Analiza nacionalnih kapaciteta za doprinos međunarodnim civilnim misijama

by Dejan Milenković, Dušan Ignjatović and Igor Novaković

7 December 2017

Link to the article in [Serbian](#) (54 p.)

The main goal of the in-depth research analysis is to contribute to the creation of legislative framework in order for Serbia to send its civilian experts in peace support operations. The document offers a comparative legal analyses of the legal frameworks for sending civilians in peace support operations of six European countries: Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany. It also provides a short overview and clarification of what the civilian missions are and how they have evolved over time.

ISSUE 54 - FEBRUARY 2018

Centar za Evropske Politike (European Policy Centre)

2018 - The year credible EU enlargement policy returns?

by Srdjan Majstorovic

31 January 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (8 p.) and [Serbian](#) (8 p.)

2017 was the year of annunciation of the return of the EU Enlargement Policy. The European Commission President Juncker, in his State of the Union speech mentioned the need for defining a clear time perspective for the accession of the leading candidates Serbia, and Montenegro to the EU by 2025. This paper attempts to draw attention to certain essential elements that should be included in a new EU enlargement strategy. Proceeding from the assumption that the approach "business as usual" is unproductive and can lead to demotivation of candidates (and potential candidates), on the one hand, and the EU and its Member States, on the other.

Fondation Robert Schuman

The Western Balkans: between stabilisation and integration in the European Union

by Pierre Mirel

22 January 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (14 p.) and in [French](#) (14 p.)

Accession by the Western Balkans to the EU is one of the priorities of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council. The author recalls the conditions required for regional stabilization and integration into the EU.

Centre for European Policy Studies

A decisive year for the EU's re-engagement with the Western Balkans

by Erwan Fouéré

January 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (12 p.)

This paper presents a number of policy recommendations on the Western Balkans strategy.

European Stability Initiative

Don't believe the hype - Why Bosnian democracy will not end this October

30 January 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (12 p.)

This paper explains the background to Bosnia's latest fake crisis – what it is about and why there is no need to intervene – in simple answers to seven questions.

Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής (Hellenic Foundation for European Foreign Policy)

Η Νέα Κινητικότητα στο Ζήτημα της Ονομασίας της Π.Γ.Δ.Μ.

by Angelos Athanasopoulos (ed.)

4 January 2018

Link to the article in [Greek](#) (11 p.)

After many years of virtual inaction, the dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is again attracting political attention in Athens, Skopje and important Western capitals.

In this paper, prominent analysts offer their views on the latest developments in the diplomatic relations between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

ISSUE 55 - MARCH 2018

Bruegel

The Western Balkans on the road to the European Union

by Marek Dabrowski and Yana Myachenkova [@YMyachenkova](#)

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (23 p.)

In the 1990s, the Western Balkan region suffered from severe conflicts. In February 2018, the European Commission set an indicative deadline for admission to the EU of the two most advanced candidates – Serbia, and Montenegro. This could incentivize all Western Balkan countries, including those candidates that have not yet started membership negotiations (Macedonia and Albania) and those waiting for candidate status (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), to remove domestic political obstacles to EU accession, solve conflicts with neighbours, speed up reforms and accelerate economic growth.

Institut pro evropskou politiku EUROPEUM (EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy)

V4 - Chinese relations: a lost opportunity or a new start?

by Alexandr Lagazzi [@LagazziA](#)

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (6 p.)

The Chinese attention has shifted from the V4 countries towards the Western Balkans. In its political discussions and economic cooperation with China, the V4 has moved into the background, and to the forefront came the Western Balkans. In this brief, the author analyses whether this has been caused by the position of the V4 within the EU, or by greater Chinese interest in the Western Balkans. Further he suggests that Chinese attention should be exploited to form a common V4 China policy.

Centre international de formation européenne

China's Balkans Silk Road: does it pave or block the way of Western Balkans to the European Union?

by Magda Stumvoll and Tobias Flessenkemper [@tobifle](#)

14 February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (4 p.)

The presence of China in the Western Balkans has become increasingly visible. Once only remotely interested in this part of Europe, the world's second biggest economy is involved in a multitude of projects: investing considerably in infrastructure development and thereby advancing its influence along the Balkans Silk Road. Engagement in this part of Europe only accounts for a fraction of China's global strategic investment. Yet, the fact that it converges with the EU's commitment to the European integration of the Western Balkans renders it particularly relevant.

Center for the Study of Democracy

Assessing Russia's economic footprint in the Western Balkans. Corruption and state capture risks

by Martin Vladimirov, Milica Kovačević, Marija Mirjagic, Igor Novakovic, Nemanja Todorović Štiplija, Emina Nuredinoska and Slagjana Dimiškova

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (70 p.)

The Western Balkans have become one of the regions, in which Russia has increasingly sought to reassert its presence in the past decade. The assessment of the Russian economic footprint in Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina is aimed at better understanding the impact of the interplay between existing governance gaps and the inflow of authoritarian capital in the region. Although the Russian investments in the region increased, Russia's economic footprint as share of the total economy in the Western Balkans has shrunk or stagnated in the wake of international sanctions over the annexation of Crimea.

Group for Legal and Political Studies

In search of consensus: what is Kosovo's red line?

by Agron Bajrami [@AgronBajrami](#)

12 February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (15 p.)

The dialogue for the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia is currently at a rethinking stage. The EU sees the process as an important part of its Western Balkans enlargement strategy, with the success of the dialogue openly set as a prerequisite for bringing Kosovo and Serbia closer to the EU. Kosovo's progress is more complicated, due to the non-recognition of independence by five EU Member States, while Serbia's path to membership is wide open, if it reaches a comprehensive normalization agreement with Kosovo.

Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku (Belgrade Centre for Security Policy)

Kragujevac as a case study: co-operation in the defence economy between Serbia and Nato

by Katarina Djokic

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (20 p.)

The paper analyses the potential benefits for Serbia of co-operation with NATO in the field of defence economy. Although the Republic of Serbia has formally envisaged a series of mechanisms for co-operation with NATO in this area, practical co-operation is currently limited. One of the most tangible forms of co-operation is the use of funding from the Trust Fund for the Demilitarization of Surplus Ammunition to improve the capacities of the Kragujevac Technical Overhaul Facility.

Serbia – between the hammer and the anvil: an overview of the security of supply in South-Eastern Europe

by Dan Breban

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (19 p.)

With Gazprom pulling out of Ukraine's transit network of natural gas in 2019, South – Eastern Europe, a region with high import dependency on Russian gas, must prepare itself for a post- 2019 environment that could challenge the stability of the countries' security of supply. This is particularly the case for Serbia which imports over 80% of its natural gas from Russia. This paper highlights two important factors which can mitigate the weakening of Serbia's security of supply. To achieve any positive outcome Serbia has several options available that can influence both factors.

ISSUE 56 - APRIL 2018

Group for Legal and Political Studies

Reforming from the bench - marking offside: the (in)effectiveness of the EU benchmarking mechanism in the Western Balkans

by Ardita Abazi Imeri, Aleksandra Ivanovska and Amela Hrasnica [@AHrasnica](#)

30 March 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (43 p.)

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight and compare the key developments in relation to the selected benchmarks in the six countries, whereas an in depth discussion of the benchmarks in the separate countries is to be found in the national studies. Following a brief explanation of the methodology, this analysis provides a contextual overview of where the countries stand in the process of EU integration as well as an overview of the benchmarking mechanism across the Western Balkans.

EU's benchmarking mechanism on 'fundamentals first': results and challenges - Benchmarking in Kosovo

by Albana Rexha [@albanarexha](#)

February 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (18 p.)

This analysis represents a first major attempt to critically evaluate the degree to which the objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved in order to further advance in the EU accession process.

Ulkopoliittinen instituutti (Finnish Institute of International Affairs)

Propaganda and disinformation in the Western Balkans: how the EU can counter Russia's information war

by Sophie Eisentraut and Stephanie de Leon

March 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (9 p.)

In recent years, Russia has ramped up its influence operations in the Western Balkans. Utilizing propaganda and disinformation, Moscow stirs lingering regional tensions and undermines the EU's credibility in Western Balkans nations. It is in the EU's vital interest to confront Russian efforts to destabilize this region – European security relies on peace, prosperity, and stability in the Western Balkans. The analysis makes concrete policy recommendations how to push back Russian propaganda while reaching out to Western Balkan nations.

Forum Obywatelskiego Rozwoju

Abusing the people: global challenges of authoritarian populism

8 March 2018

Link to the article in [English](#) (74 p.)

This publication is a part of the effort to counter authoritarian populism in Serbia, the Western Balkans and around the world. The articles for this publication have been written by the leading scholars, activists and professionals in the international freedom movement and represent their personal views and reflections on relevant trends in their countries and globally.