SOME ISSUES OF REGIONAL SECURITY
IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Marko Babić

Uniwersytet Warszawski

Abstract. Southeastern Europe has been a tangle of historical, civilizational, political, economic, social, psychological factors that had for so many times caused political instability. Therefore, achieving stability and security in Southeastern Europe re¬quires simultaneous implementation of measures aimed at fostering economic and social development, democratization of the internal systems, building civil society, establishing the rule of law, settling disputes of ethnic and territorial nature through peaceful means. Author focuses on the issues of stability and security issues in the region as the result of the work of international community. Efforts to bring to a successful end two of its major projects – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are part of a solution. The European Union – it seems – had a dilemma what steps to take in resolving the age long regional dilemmas. It had chosen regional approach through Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe, for example. At the time when the Pact was created it was expected that regional cooperation would increase among the states. It was also expected that entire region would eventually become a part of the European Union. The idea was, probably, to motivate the countries of the region for faster reforms implementation and mutual "competition". However, it only discouraged regional initiatives.

The Balkan Peninsula, as a bridge between three continents has extremely important geopolitical position. It is characterized by intertwining of different civilizations, religions, cultures, political and ideological preferences and strategic military interests of local, regional and global reach.

Mixing of different peoples and religions, their eternal struggle for territories and interstate territorial boundary disputes were the most often causes of many conflicts in a long history of the Balkans. The conflicts often provoked various foreign powers to get involved in the "Balkan affairs" along the famous maxim: "divide et impera, cum radix et vertex imperii in obedientium consensus rata non sunt"[1].

Historians have left us sufficient amount of proofs confirming that the sharpest boundaries splitting the Roman Empire into the eastern and western part were set along this region. In medieval times the region was overrun many times by the armies of the Byzantine and Roman-German rulers, in the early eleventh century

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[1] "Divide and rule if the root and the summit of authority are not confirmed by the consent of the subjects."

the region dramatically felt the consequences of the division of the Roman-catholic Christianity and the Orthodox Church, then the conflict of Christianity with the advancing Islamic Ottoman Empire.

It is also important to mention the competition of European powers for influence in this area, especially around the weakened Turkish Empire in the late nineteenth century during the "great Eastern crisis". This has caused frequent changes of territorial and political boundaries and more intense mixing of peoples. Eventually the lack of ethnic boundaries has become a common phenomenon and cause of conflicts between the Balkan nations. This fact was extensively used by major powers in their policies of emphasizing differences and encouraging conflicts among the Balkan peoples in order to preserve their presence and influence in the region. Thus, the term "Balkanization" has made its way into European and worlds' diplomacy and international relations[2]. Finally, in 1914 the detonator of World War I was activated in the Balkans even though the strategic plans for the war had been prepared much earlier and far away from the Balkans[3].

Assuming the role of protector of some Balkan nations, the great European powers also extended their zone of influence in accordance with their strategic interests in the region. This was the case in the period between two world wars and continued under new political order in divided Europe after World War II.

Foreign powers' involvement in the Balkans has not decreased even after the end of the long Cold War and the disappearance of formal bloc division in Europe. On the contrary, instead of "balance of mutual fear" of armed confrontation in Central Europe, the great powers today seem to share a "balance of interests" that is being tested in the Balkans.

The aim of this paper is to present some issues around the national and regional security in the countries of the Balkan region[4].

I. Geopolitical position of Southeastern Europe

The great "Eastern crisis" of 1875-1878 was a landmark in the Balkan peoples struggle for national independence and it influenced the relationships among them. The crisis ended with a collective international recognition of independence for Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, with the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (although it nominally remained under the

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[2] See: M. Todorova, "Imagining the Balkans", Oxford University Press, New York 1997.

[3] See: V. Dedijer, *Sarajevo 1914*, Prosveta, Beograd 1966.

[4] It should be noticed that the Balkan Peninsula may be also defined as an area of Southeastern Europe. Those two terms are being used as synonyms. However, the term „Balkans" was being avoided in recent years due to negative historical connotations. The "Southeastern Europe" is becoming more popular term for the region, especially in the European Union's and NATO official statements.

sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire), as well as with the creation of an autonomous principality of Bulgaria and the development of national-liberation movement of the Albanian and Macedonian people[5].

Since that time the relations between the Balkan countries have changed significantly. Peoples of these countries and their ruling elites became new geopolitical "players"; those who have gained independence or autonomy began to express aspirations to other territories. From that time on, great powers were not the only obstacles for national liberation movements in the Balkans. Newly emerged Balkan countries with territorial aspirations played the same role. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro have started preparing for division of the remaining territories in the Balkans. As a consequence, the first three states have spoken out against the identity of the Macedonian people, and the last three against the independence of the Albanian people - as the Balkan wars of 1912-1913 showed.

The Peace of Bucharest in 1913 finally established state boundaries between the Balkan countries. They were basically confirmed by the peace treaties after World War I (after World War II have not essentially changed neither). Processes of Balkan states formation as well as changes in their international standing had been either supported or opposed by the great powers. It was understood that a decline of one power leaves an open space for another one and therefore the latter should fill the place with its own presence and influence. Major powers' conflicts in global international relations have always been "transferred" to the Balkan region. Solutions, however, were sought in accordance with broader interests and aspirations in the Mediterranean, Central Europe or the Middle East.

Strategic importance of the Balkan region has never been static. The same case was in other areas of the Mediterranean. This importance has been conditioned and determined by many factors of social, political, economic, cultural and military character – regardless of their nature: internal within the state, regional or factors of a broader international scope. Among the factors that have influence on the strategic position of the Balkans, important role play development and achievements of military technology (modern weapons and war equipment) and, in consequence – a military doctrine. According to this doctrine, there has been noticeable evolution of political and strategic interests and objectives of the major powers as well as the countries of the region.

For example, in the eighties the position of NATO in the Mediterranean was enhanced: although Greece expressed some reservations, it consolidated its position in NATO and the European Economic Community; Spain remained a member of

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[5] A. Mitrović, *Značaj istočne krize 1875-1878 za istoriju balkanskih naroda*, Marksistička misao, Beograd 1978, pp. 130-144.

the Western alliance, Italy strengthen its activities in the Mediterranean; French fleet although not under the command of NATO was ready to support the interests of the Western allies. Southeastern Europe with the eastern Mediterranean had a great importance in the strategy of the West (the US and other NATO countries) in terms of defense positions in the Middle East and Africa. The Balkans along with Turkey and the eastern Mediterranean represented the land, maritime and air connection between three continents – Europe, Asia and Africa. Bearing in mind the economic and strategic importance of neighboring Arab-Persian oil pools mainly for Western countries, these two regions (Southeastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean) made up almost a unique entity for making policy and crisis management.

Southeastern Europe, along with Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean have become an important factor in the confrontation between East and West. In a sense, it was a link that, in the military and strategic terms connected Western Europe with the Arab-Persian Gulf. This was so evident especially in regards to the energy crisis of the seventies, events in Iran and Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq conflict and other conflicts in Middle East and Africa. Earlier, NATO had mainly focused its military effort on Central European theater of operations, where the strongest groups of armies of the two military and political blocs (NATO and the Warsaw Pact) were to remain. However, the NATO's South Flank was gaining importance along with the increasing importance of the Middle East and the Gulf basin in the strategy of the West and the strengthening of Soviet forces in the eastern Mediterranean.

The traditional importance of the Balkans for the USA and NATO, especially the Greek and Turkish areas and the eastern Mediterranean, was in its role of preventing a potential Soviet advance directly to the banks of the Mediterranean. The imperial Russia had also aspired to establish control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits at the time of the Eastern question in the nineteenth century. It is interesting that the Soviet Union shortly after the end of World War II also demanded control over the Turkish straits[6].

The Soviet Union after World War II sought to strengthen its presence and influence in the Balkans. Since the Red Army liberated Romania and Bulgaria, those two countries have developed political and social systems modeled on the Soviet Union (Albania as well). All three states joined the Warsaw Pact in 1955. Immediately after the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in 1968, Albania withdrew from the Warsaw Pact. Yugoslavia due to unique nature of its communist revolution (detached from the Soviets), later on as one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, had preserved its independent non-bloc position.

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[6] R.N. Haas, *Managing NATO's Weakest flank: The United States, Greece and Turkey*, Orbis Fal 1986, p. 456; B. Buzan, *The Status and Future of the Motreaux Convention*, Survival, November/December 1986.

This virtually prevented the Warsaw Pact forces to appear on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, and thus the Mediterranean. At the same time NATO forces member states were prevented to connect by land on its southern flank – from northern Italy to Greece.

Due to the Balkans geographical situation the territory has always served as the shortest natural connection between Europe and Asia, between the Black Sea and Mediterranean, between Eastern Europe and Africa. There are also some important geo-strategic corridor crossings through the Balkans – from Lombardy to the Pannonian Plain, from the Pannonian plain to the Adriatic Sea, from the valleys of Morava and Vardar to Aegean Sea, from the valley of Morava, Nišava and Marica to Asia Minor, and from the eastern part of the peninsula – from the lower Danube to Marmara and Aegean Sea. In the East-West direction, there is a significant Black Sea – Adriatic route leading from Bulgaria to Albania.

In case of a conflict, all these corridors enabled NATO and Warsaw Pact forces to use its operational and strategic forces between geostrategic area:
- – NATO from the region of central and eastern Mediterranean, Italy, Greece and Turkey, towards the southern block of the main forces of Warsaw Pact in Central Europe battlefield and in Ukraine;
- – Warsaw Pact forces heading towards northern Italy, Adriatic, Ionian and Aegean Sea and Asia Minor and from there to the Middle East.

There is no doubt that interests of great powers in the southeastern Europe have always been interrelated. Zbigniew Brzezinski sees this region in the context of the interests of two leading continental European powers, France and Germany[7]. The point of intersection of interests of these two forces is the central continental Europe. The first point of intersection is located in the area of the Atlantic Ocean between Great Britain and France; the second one can be found in southeastern Europe on the territories of Serbia, Romania and Hungary. As for influence in Europe in the twenty-first century, solution would not be the first one because its role was played out in the nineteenth and twentieth century. A key solution for the European "chess players" should be seeking to secure a comprehensive impact on wider area around the second point. In addition to French, German and Russian influence, a new one has shown up – Islamic interest. The intersection of German, French, Russian and Islamic interests is no less than the region of former Yugoslavia. This region is a field of conflict between American and English interests on one hand and the interests of other European powers on the other. "The problem of power and superpower conflict of interest in southeastern Europe occurs for two reasons. First, as Brzezinski noticed, there is no "European" Europe. There are only different interests, which not infrequently exclude each other. Secondly,

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[7] Z. Brzeziński, *Wielka szachownica*, Politeja, Warszawa 1998, pp. 62-64.

the international community represents a heterogeneous group, and links between them are not constant but rather continuous variables"[8].

Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was also a European, Southeastern, Balkan and Mediterranean country with the shortest land connection between central and eastern parts of Europe towards Mediterranean and the Middle East. Major operational and strategic directions from Pannonia to the north of Italy, Adriatic, Aegean Sea and Mediterranean led though its territory. The countries of former Yugoslavia inherited, to a greater or lesser extent, that geostrategic position.

II. Cooperation between European Southeastern countries

Socialist parties introduced first ideas of necessity of cooperation and unity of the Balkan countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In January 1910, the Balkan Social Democratic Conference was held in Belgrade where delegates from Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Romania adopted a resolution treating unification of the Balkan peoples as a solution for political problems of the Balkans. This approach was based on understanding that struggle for national and social liberation was possible only through the creation of a federal Balkan state where conflicts of territorial and national character could be avoided[9].

Balkan communist federation consisted of the Communist Parties of Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia and Romania and existed between the two world wars (its activity ceased in late thirties). In 1930, Balkan states started undertaking actions to create optimal conditions of signing all-Balkan alliance of non-aggression and arbitration, aiming to preserve territorial/boundary status quo in the Balkans. As a result, four Balkan Conferences were held: in October 1930 in Athens, in October 1931 in Istanbul and Ankara in October 1932 in Bucharest and November 1933 in Thessaloniki[10].

The first conference emphasized necessity for the Balkan alliance based on the principles of full sovereignty and equality, mutual non-aggression, mediation and arbitration, as well as creating a customs alliance through economic and financial cooperation.

Third Conference resulted in preparation of the Balkan Pact, but Albania and Bulgaria disagreed with the principle of territorial status quo and therefore the pact was not adopted at that point. In 1934, the Balkan Entente between Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania and Turkey was established with mutually guaranteed security of their state borders (article 1). „The High Contracting Parties undertake to reach

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[8] A. Milardović, *Zapadni Balkan*, Pan-Liber, Osijek-Zagreb-Split 2000, p. 9.

[9] Preparations for the second conference failed due to disagreements of Bulgarian Socialists and the beginning of the Balkan wars.

[10] Very interesting information on political cooperation between Balkan countries gives Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia Milan Stojadinović (1935-1939) in his autobiography: "Ni rat ni pakt, Jugoslavija izmedju dva rata", Otokar Keršovani, Rijeka 1970 pp. 397-408.

agreement on measures which must be taken if cases should arise that could affect their interests as defined by the present Agreement. They assume the obligation not to take any political action towards any other Balkan country which is not a signatory to this Agreement, without a prior mutual notification and not to assume any political obligation towards any other Balkan country without the consent of the other Contracting Parties" (article 2)[11]. Signing of the Balkan Pact showed a common interest of member states to preserve status quo as well as protection against potential territorial claims of Bulgaria. Although Bulgaria signed a non-aggression treaty with members of the Balkan Pact on July 31, 1938, de facto rejected the offers of cooperation from other Balkan states (refusing to cooperate with western countries as well)[12].

After the end of World War II the situation in the Balkans has changed fundamentally. This was caused by many very complex processes that had impact on relations between the Balkan nations and states in several dimensions, often contradictory. The agreement between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow in October 1944 set spheres of interest in the Balkans: Churchill suggested that the Soviet Union should have 90 percent influence in Romania and 75 percent in Bulgaria; the United Kingdom should have 90 percent in Greece (British forces subsequently crushed Greek antimonarchist procommunist movement); in Hungary and Yugoslavia, Churchill suggested that they should have 50 percent each[13]. Albania was not mentioned.

After the Yugoslav-Soviet conflict in 1948 and breaking of all allied relations with Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union, the government of Yugoslavia was forced to take urgent measures to improve relations with Greece and Turkey. Thus, the three countries in 1953 concluded the so-called Ankara Agreement – Treaty of Friendship and cooperation on issues of common interest in economic, political, military and other fields. The treaty was to act as a dam against Soviet expansion in the Balkan region. It provided for the eventual creation of a joint military staff for the three countries. At that time Turkey and Greece were already full-fledged members of NATO. Communist Yugoslavia, however, did not want to join NATO. The Balkan Pact, however, left a space for Yugoslavia to associate with NATO in an indirect manner[14].

In August 1954, those three countries concluded the "Treaty of alliance, political cooperation and mutual assistance". Article 2 states what follows: "The Contracting

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[11] The Full text of the Pact at: http://www.rastko.rs/istorija/diplomatija/pbs_e.html.

[12] The main reason for pro-German tendencies in Bulgarian foreign policy was the desire to regain the lands lost by Bulgaria after the First World War.

[13] See: G. Roberts, *Stalin's Wars From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2006.

[14] D.R. Stone, *The Balkan Pact and American Policy, 1950-1955*, "East European Quarterly" 28.3 (September 1994), pp. 393-407.

Parties agree that any armed aggression against one or more of them in any part of their territories shall be considered an aggression against all the Contracting Parties, who, consequently, in the exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, shall jointly and severally go to the assistance of the Party or Parties attacked by taking immediately and by common accord any measures, including the use of armed force, which they deem necessary for effective defense". And further: "To ensure in a continuous and effective manner the attainment of the objectives of the present Treaty, the Contracting Parties undertake to assist each other to maintain and strengthen their defensive capacity" (Article 3)[15]. So, the Balkan Alliance of Yugoslavia Greece and Turkey was of a defensive character; its goal was to eliminate conflicts in the Balkans and develop peaceful cooperation without ideological restrictions.

In the course of 1954 and 1955 Yugoslavia's overtures to the Soviet Union resulted in a change of Yugoslav view regarding the military significance of the Balkan Pact. The visit of Turkish Premier Adnan Menderes to Yugoslavia in May 1955 (only three weeks before Khrushchev's visit to Tito) showed the difference between the Yugoslav and Turkish interpretation of the international situation. Turkish Premier Menderes was interested in the cooperation within the Balkan Alliance. However, Yugoslavia was reluctant to take any steps that might appear to give added significance at that time to the military side of the Balkan Pact. Soon after that, the Cyprus dispute between Turkey and Greece broke out and became a new obstacle for the Balkan Alliance. After the Hungarian Revolution, Tito showed some interest in reviving the alliance. But, because of the Cyprus conflict, Tito's attempt to mediate between Turkey and Greece failed. Thus, the alliances relationship was gradually lost[16].

The original idea of turning the Balkans into nuclear weapons free zone later extended to the idea of the Balkans as a zone of peace and cooperation. However, these ideas were not new but – especially in the eighties – gained much importance with the development of similar activities in central Europe and the Baltic countries region. Romanian Prime Minister Chivu Stoica in September 1957 proposed a Balkan conference aiming to transform the region into a nuclear weapons free zone and a zone of peace[17]. The idea was not immediately accepted. Only after the proposal put to the United Nations 2 October 1957 by Polish foreign minister Adam Rapacki, for a zone closed to the manufacture or deployment of nuclear weapons in Poland, Czechoslovakia, East and West Germany – Romanian proposal gained support. In June of 1959 Romania took a similar initiative, but this time without a unified agreement. The proposal was supported by Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia,

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[15] Full text of the Treaty at website of Yale Law School at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eu002.asp.

[16] D.R. Stone, *The Balkan Pact and American Policy, 1950-1955*, op. cit.

[17] See: R. Vukadinović, *Mediteran izmedju rata i mira*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb 1986.

major Greek opposition parties and the Soviet Union, however, it was refused by the Greek government, Turkey, Italy, Great Britain and USA.

Western European NATO countries rejected the proposal for the Balkans as a nuclear weapons free zone primarily for strategic reasons. They felt it would weaken their positions in Southeastern Europe and that would burden American strategy of forward defense against the Soviet Union. Therefore, the continued consideration of this idea remained only within activities of political parties and talks between Balkan countries leaders. Over the following years, Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia continued from time to time to underline the need for Balkan nuclear free zone on various forums. Romania in 1972 proposed a conference of the Balkan countries to consider the establishment of such a zone and in 1981 Bulgaria again raised the issue. The proposal gained new importance following deterioration in international relations, the frantic nuclear race between the superpowers and especially the deployment of the long-range theatre nuclear weapons – US cruise and Pershing II missiles and Soviet SS-20s[18].

Era of European détente had provoked many concrete actions promoting bilateral relations between the Balkan countries and multilateral meetings of government experts. It is particularly important to mention Greek-Bulgarian rapprochement in May 1973, when a joint declaration on the principles of friendly relations between the two countries including understanding and cooperation was announced, followed by a cycle of official visits of the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania[19].

In the eighties, multilateral cooperation between the Balkan countries was falling behind integration processes taking place in other European regions. While the

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[18] N. Andrikos, *A Balkan Nuclear Weapons Free Zone*, in: "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists", June/July 1985 vol. 41, no. 6, p. 29

[19] Activity of the Balkan countries on finding non-political areas and forms of multilateral cooperation started with a conference on economic and technical cooperation of representatives of governments of Balkan countries held in Athens in January and On February 1976. Drafted was a list of suggestions about the possibilities of cooperation in 162 fields in agriculture, trade, energy, protection of environment and health. Special importance has had Greek government initiative to form Balkans' Chamber of Commerce, which would provide policy guidance on issues of trade exchange and transport, resolving trade disputes and so on. The next meeting was held in 1979 in Ankara and cooperation in the field of postal traffic and telecommunications was discussed. At the meeting in Sofia in 1981 and Bucharest in 1982 on the agenda were the development of freight and road transport, cooperation in energy and energy resources. Meeting in Belgrade in 1984 was dedicated to industrial cooperation. The cooperation of the Balkan countries in the field of culture and science has also been fruitful. There were many folk music festivals – Balkan festival of songs and dances in Ohrid, the International Symposium on Balkan folk in Ohrid, Balkan Cultural Encounters at Volos (Greece), Balkan amateur theater festival in Corinth and so on. D. Zimić, *Neki primjeri multilateralne saradnje balkanskih zemalja u oblasti culture*, In: *Balkan krajem osamdesetih godina*, Beograd 1987, pp. 97-301.

Balkans were then in a fuller sense an integral part of Europe than ever in the past, the differences among the Balkan countries were as numerous. European security and cooperation processes greatly affected the Balkans and the region was no longer referred to as "the powder keg of Europe". It was treated as a part of Europe where most countries have more or less developed bilateral relations aiming to join efforts to solve mutual problems. On the other side, many strategic, political and other differences simultaneously had impact on the situation in the Mediterranean causing opposite trends. Review of actions and attitudes of the Balkan countries at the time, shows the existence of two concepts of multilateral cooperation – one comes down to creating a zone free of nuclear weapons, the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the region, reduction of military forces and the removal of foreign military bases. The second concept recognizes the need to develop the region as a zone of peace and cooperation, gradually changing the current situation and improving bilateral relations. The latter concept aimed to develop better political relations between the Balkan states and nations. That would contribute to the "elimination of military forms of tension and create a situation where different military-political ties do not reflect negatively on the Balkan relations, (…) disarmament and the withdrawal of nuclear weapons and foreign military bases from the Balkans"[20]. Nevertheless, the bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the Balkan countries intensively developed through the eighties only to be suspended due to the dissolution of former Yugoslavia in 1992.

III. New priorities for the regional security after 1989 in Southeastern Europe

At that time, some new initiatives for cooperation showed up such as Central European Initiative (CEI) in 1989[21], the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization

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[20] R. Vukadinović, *Mediteran izmedju rata i mira*, op. cit., p. 177.

[21] The origin of the Central European Initiative lies in the creation of the Quadragonale in Budapest on 11 November 1989 whose founding fathers were Italy, Austria, Hungary and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The Initiative aimed at overcoming the division in blocks by re-establishing cooperation links, among countries of different political orientations and economic structures. At the first Summit in Venice in 1990, Czechoslovakia was admitted and the Initiative was renamed Pentagonale. In 1991, with the admission of Poland it became the Hexagonale. The organization was renamed Central European Initiative (CEI) in 1992. On the same occasion, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia were admitted as Member States. The Czech Republic and Slovakia were admitted to the CEI in 1993 following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. In 1996 Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Ukraine joined the CEI as full-fledged members. The current membership derives from the adhesion of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (afterwards State Union of Serbia and Montenegro and later on Serbia) in 2000 and of Montenegro in 2006. At: http://www.ceinet.org.

(BSEC) in 1992[22], Free Trade Zones in Central Europe (CEFTA) in 1992[23]. There were no initiatives concerning cooperation between solely the Balkan countries during the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Main efforts were focused on finding a solution to end the crisis. However, some interesting ideas emerged in regards to a possible reconstruction of former Yugoslavia after the wars. For example, the idea put forward by a successful French businessman of Serbian origin – Boris Vukobrat in the document called *Proposals for a new Commonwealth of the republics of ex-Yugoslavia* in spring of 1992. The bottom idea of the document was that the peoples of Yugoslavia did not want the war, which they were thrust into by politicians fighting to retain power. Historical, cultural, economic, traffic, geographic and political reasons impose the necessity of the wholesome area of former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it was necessary that every particular region of the area can express its idiosyncrasy. Therefore Boris Vukobrat proposed the solution based on the implementation of two principles – regionalization and integration. Regions would provide the maximum democracy to their citizens, to exercise the maximum of economic capacities and national interests, cultural, historical, and traditional needs. Integration, on the basis of variable geometry, with all republics establishing relations with others as they wish, would provide the creation of a community after the example of European Union, in accordance with interests and needs of each individual republic[24]. Although interesting, the proposal has not won sufficient support by governmental institutions or NGO's of the countries in the region.

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[22] On 25 June 1992, the Heads of State and Government of eleven countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine signed in Istanbul the Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement giving birth to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). At: http://www.bsec-organization.org/Pages/homepage.aspx.

[23] CEFTA agreement was signed by Visegrád Group countries: Poland, Hungary and Czech and Slovak republics (at the time parts of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic) on 21 December 1992 in Cracow. It entered into force by July 1994. The agreement was amended by the agreements signed on 11 September 1995 in Brno and on 4 July 2003 in Bled. Slovenia joined CEFTA in 1996, Romania in 1997, Bulgaria in 1999, Croatia in 2003 and Macedonia in 2006. The new enlarged agreement was initiated on 9 November 2006 in Brussels and was signed on 19 December 2006 at the South East European Prime Ministers Summit in Bucharest. The agreement went into effect on 26 July 2007 for Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova and Montenegro, and on 22 August for Croatia. Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified it on 6 September, while Serbia completed the final legal procedures on 24 September 2007. The agreement aims at establishing a free trade zone in the region by 31 December 2010. Through CEFTA, participating countries hoped to mobilize efforts to integrate Western European institutions and through this, to join European political, economic, security and legal systems, thereby consolidating democracy and free-market economics. At: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_European_Free_Trade_Agreement. Full text of the Central European Free Trade Agreement at: http://www.worldtradelaw.net/fta/agreements/cefta.pdf.

[24] The full text can be found at the Peace and Crisis Management Foundation website at: http://www.fondmir.com/OLDversion/docs/prva_e.html.

End of wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995 (and Kosovo in 1999) brought a series of initiatives for regional cooperation and stability. Many of them had already been written down in the Report of the International Commission on the Balkans in 1996[25]. The Commission has seen a way out of the crisis in regional cooperation. Therefore, it has proposed five variants for the possible regional cooperation in the Balkans:

- The first variant of the cooperation initiative is a preventive one, creates a regional framework for resolving potentially dangerous issues and disputes. According to the Commission, there are two potential hot spots for new large-scale conflicts: Kosovo conflict and the Greek-Turkish conflict over Cyprus. The other, slightly less trouble spots are: the conflict between Serbs and Croats and the unification of Romania and Moldova[26]. Preventive work can be realized through establishing a network of regional committees to deal with aspects and areas of potential conflict and specific problems. This variant has gotten its final form by the end of 1996 within the following three initiatives:
    - the initiative of the Balkan countries through summit meetings,
    - of the European Union through the Royaumont Process and
    - of the USA through the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative – SECI.

Generally, this "preventive" variant was unsuccessful when it comes to prevention of armed conflict because such took place in Kosovo 1998/1999 along with the NATO conflict with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 24 March to 9 June 1999. Nevertheless, all of these initiatives have contributed to the dialogue opening between the Balkan nations and eventually concrete joint actions were taken.

- The second variant is the Stability Pact for the Balkans. The Stability Pact, according to the Commission, should be initiated by the European Union (but within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – OSCE). The goal was to get through bilateral and trilateral negotiations to create conditions for stability, openness of borders, guarantees for minorities, human rights and development. In a sense, this variant is identical to the solution of the Dayton Peace Agreement[27] in Annex 1-B which includes an agreement on regional sta-

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[25] L. Tindemans, L. Cutler, B. Geremek, J. Roper, T. Sommer, S. Veil, D. Anderson (ex officio), *Unfinished Peace, Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, Aspen Institute Berlin, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996.

[26] *Unfinished Peace, Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, op. cit., pp. 133-135.

[27] The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement, Dayton Accords, Paris Protocol or Dayton-Paris Agreement, is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on December 14, 1995. These accords put an end to the three and a half year long civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The full text of the Agreement can be found at website of the

bility[28]. This proposal became reality through the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe launched by the European Union in May 1999.

- The third variant of cooperation is the Confederation of the southern Balkans that could be implemented under the auspices of the European Union and the USA. Its formation would be launched in the form of the Conference on the southern Balkans. The Commission itself has found a number of reasons to find this idea questionable. At the current level of stability and confidence in the region this idea seems utopian, but it could possibly represent the future solution for the Balkans in general, not only the southern Balkans. Such a solution requires compromise on all sides as well as the consensus of major powers – the European Union, the USA and Russian Federation.

- The fourth variant was, the basic Commission's proposal for the Balkans' regional cooperation. The Commission argued that a free trade zone would be in a political sense the most realistic and in an economic sense the most appropriate starting point for the regional cooperation. This zone was to eventually become a part of CEFTA. This variant has found its full implementation in regional approach and other initiatives of the European Union. It was found also in an independent proposal of the Center for the Study of European policy in Brussels called "A System for Post-War South East Europe"[29].

- The fifth variant of the Commission is creation of the Balkan Association with the Partnership for Peace. It would be linked to wider structures of NATO and could ensure an ongoing and active interest in security in the region[30].

Unfortunately, it seemed that the Commission had not realized *sui generis* immaturity and unwillingness of the small Balkan nations and their new-born states to proceed with the processes of mutual integration (as well as global integration). On the other side, this problem was blurred due to their nominally declared willingness to link with Europe. Any results of international cooperation and integration primarily depend on maturity of the nation-states which means – its elites and citizens. It is expressed primarily in readiness and persistence of political will of the nation and

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Office of High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina at: http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=369.

[28] For example, article 1 of the Annex 1-B states as follows: "The Parties agree that establishment of progressive measures for regional stability and arms control is essential to creating a stable peace in the region. To this end, they agree on the importance of devising new forms of cooperation in the field of security aimed at building transparency and confidence and achieving balanced and stable defense force levels at the lowest numbers consistent with the Parties' respective security and the need to avoid an arms race in the region". See at: http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=369.

[29] M. Emerson, D. Gros, W. Hager, P. Ludlow, N. Whyte, *A system for Post-War South-East Europe – Plan for Reconstruction, Openess, Development and Integration*, Center for European Policy Studies, Working Document No. 131, Bruselles, 3 May 1999.

[30] *Unfinished Peace, Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, op. cit., p. 163.

state elite. It depends on the economic structure and infrastructure which should be sufficiently strong to withstand regional and global competition. Without deep public support such projects are difficult to implement as citizen must be aware of potential profits of integration as well as possible costs (losses).

The European Union search for solutions for the Southeastern Europe was in fact a search for solutions for the Balkan crisis. Therefore, the European Union has proposed a regional approach as a way to reconcile and rehabilitate relations between countries by introducing European values and standards, such as democracy and the rule of law, in order to foster their transition to a peaceful, stable and prosperous region. This aim was underpinned by the intention of primarily securing and stabilizing the region by offering incentives that will politically and economically draw and lock the countries closer to the European Union. It also required a clear commitment of the countries to regional cooperation. Such a request was entered into bilateral agreements between the European Union and all countries of the region. This, after all, was a similar approach towards the countries of EFTA, the countries of the Mediterranean, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The EFTA group, unlike the other partners of the European Union already had its own integration group – a free trade zone. Cooperation of EFTA and the EU grew into the formation of a common area of trade – European Economic Area (EEA). Through a mutual cooperation the EFTA group had effectively adapted to all incoming challenges. It turned out that this multilateral agreement creates the need for a mutual cooperation and the establishment of a common policy towards the European Union (which has expanded over time). At the same time, it stimulates self-reliance of less developed partners. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the same approach – now defined as a regional approach – has become a condition for the European Union cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Their integration group – CEFTA was considered (at the beginning) as an imposed solution. CEFTA[31], a multilateral agreement (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania) was signed in December 1992. All of the above countries became EU members in 2004. In May 2006, it was decided that Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania sign the agreement in order to avoid special arrangements for each of these countries (this idea was initially opposed by Croatia). However, somewhat modified agreement was signed by these countries on 19 December 2006 in Bucharest[32].

The European Union regional approach has been from an economic point of view a part of a strategy to strengthen the competitiveness of neighboring regions

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[31] More on CEFTA on page 11 of this paper.
[32] See more: *Jugoistočna Evropa 2000. Pogled iz Srbije*, A group of authors, Stubovi Kulture, Beograd 1999, p. 43.

which cooperate with the European Union. This was to be achieved through the development of their horizontal (mutual) and vertical integration (with the Europe an Union). From the political and security aspects, the regional approach has been part of a strategy to strengthen the EU's external borders. Therefore, there have been various forms of cooperation not only within the integration group, but also within groups for cooperation of neighboring countries that involved individual member countries of the EU (Central European Initiative, for instance). When it comes to the post-Yugoslav region, the European Union, in cooperation with other representatives of the international community, aimed to assist the development of democracy and rule of law, restoration of civil society, non-discrimination between countries in the region, the return of refugees and economic recovery – in brief, to ensure stability of the region[33]. It has been believed that there cannot be long-term stability in the region without a certain degree of mutual cooperation between countries in the region. Complementary economies and similarity of many regional problems wo-uld have provided the basis for it. It has also been believed that creating a regional network in the area of infrastructure, communications, industrial cooperation, education, activities against organized crime would have been a good starting point. Regional free trade zone through inter-state agreements on preferential trade would have been a goal. Nevertheless, for countries of former Yugoslavia (except Slovenia), cooperation with the EU was conditioned by a series of political conditions. Five countries to which the regional approach was applied were divided into two groups with different approaches in trade and other areas of cooperation:

–   those that have not participated in the signing of the Dayton Agreement – Albania and Macedonia,
–   the ones that are signatories of the Dayton Agreement – Bosnia and Herze-govina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro[34].

The effects of the EU regional approach were more of a selective bilateralism than of the regional approach (regardless of problems in Kosovo or NATO conflict with Yugoslavia)[35]. Different levels of association between the countries of the region and the EU had caused creation of the long-term plan for the Balkans. Existing,

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[33] Ibidem.

[34] This especially relates to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and embargo policy imposed by the European Union. See: Council Regulations (EC) No. 1294/1999, of June 15, 1999, JO L 153/63, June 19, 1999.

[35] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the stabi-lization and association process for countries of South-Eastern Europe – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania. COM (99) 235, 26 May 1999, p. 3.

undefined and loose regional approach has changed according to changing situation and new political context[36].

However, the European Council initiated a new approach. On April 14, 1999 the European Commission expressed its determination and willingness to bring to the countries of Southeastern Europe real perspectives for full integration. Regional approach developed into a process of stabilization and association of the region with the European Union in the form of Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA) (which should be signed between the EU and each country of the region). This was a continuation of the EU policy of *sui generis* contracted solutions for different regions (for example, with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe the EU had signed Europe Agreements, with the countries of the former Soviet Union – Partnership and Cooperation Agreements).

The regional approach remained the backbone of the EU policy towards the region but through the process of stabilization and association moved to a common EU strategy for the Balkans. However, SAA remained a "middle solution" between agreement on cooperation and the European agreement. In any case, the final stage of the regional approach was to be full integration with the EU structures. SAA meant a qualitative leap in the institutional as well as substantive connection with the EU. All countries of the region were linked in the same way. It was important that different stages of institutional links that had been effective before were avoided. Each country had its time to prepare for concluding such an agreement. However, there was a real possibility that due to the earlier fulfillment of political and other requirements, a country would conclude such an agreement before others. In that case the discrepancy had a disintegrative character for the region's cooperation and integration efforts. Fears remained that countries which enter into the agreement earlier might ignore regional cooperation. This was the case with Croatia, which at the beginning of 2006, strongly opposed the EU's initiative on building new forms of economic relations in Southeastern Europe. However, this problem was overcome by Croatia's accession to CEFTA.

While EU supported SAA, the USA launched SECI. This program has been complementary to the regional approach of the European Union. The basis for cooperation has been pragmatic – concrete projects financed with its own funds or funds of international private and public capital mainly for economic cooperation and environmental protection. Projects also encouraged private enterprises. "SECI has not been conceived as an assistance programme, but rather as self-help programme. It aims at bringing various stakeholders together and thus facilitate cooperation, decision-making, concrete action and commitment to development processes and thereof regional ownership of the integration processes of the region (…) Today, it relies on a dense network of

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[36] Ibidem, p. 2.

affiliations and collaborators through which it further contributes to the regional efforts for sustainable development and integration and the bridging of remaining obstacles to cooperation and development in South East Europe"[37]. European and American cooperation projects in the subregion have been economically complementary. But in political terms these two initiatives may not be complementary. The European initiative was part of a strategy for the UE strengthening of external borders and further political, security and economic integration in Europe. The USA initiative was in function of American policy in Europe. It remains uncertain, due to effects of the American role in the Yugoslav conflict, whether the American policy in Europe has been in line with the process of strengthening European integrations as it had been after World War II, when European institutions were formed and when the integration process had started. If not, these two initiatives can even be conflicting[38].

In the early nineties, it was not possible to meet all the aspirations of Central and Eastern Europe countries to join the European Union. However, it was natural that the ultimate European Union regional priority might be Central European countries as they shared the immediate borders of the EU. Second in a row were the Baltic States as a strategic priority of the European Union in relation to Russia. It should also taken into consideration, that some countries of Central and Eastern Europe such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia had already made considerable progress in developing a market economy and overcome the transformational crisis while most other countries were at a quite low level of development. With such differences it was not possible to create a universal program that would include all the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. Therefore, the group approach was chosen – region by region.

In the mid-nineties, the EU did not even have defined a common foreign and security policy and therefore any policy towards Southeastern Europe. The NATO military action against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 had changed priorities in the EU policy. Central European countries and the Baltic states quickly integrated into the EU structures (2004). Even faster became NATO members (1999). But, Southeastern Europe had been and still remained the biggest challenge for the European Union. It somewhat forced the EU to gradually articulate its mutual foreign and security policy towards the region. Finally, the European Union launched the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. The Pact was the European solution for the Balkan crisis, an effort to solve Europe's problems primarily on its own. Under this project a long-term stabilization of the Balkans should be held under the patronage of the European institutions, but with the active participation of the United States and the Russian Federation.

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[37] See at: http://www.secinet.info.
[38] *Jugoistočna Evropa 2000. Pogled iz Srbije*, a group of authors, op. cit., p. 45.

On 10 June 1999, at the EU's initiative, the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe was adopted in Cologne. In the founding document, more than 40 partner countries and organizations agreed to strengthen the countries of Southeastern Europe "in their efforts to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity in order to achieve stability in the whole region"[39]. Euro-Atlantic integration was promised to all the countries in the region. At a summit meeting in Sarajevo on 30 July 1999, the Pact was reaffirmed.

The Stability Pact posed a framework for the cooperation of the countries of the region of Southeast Europe and its partners:

– The countries of the region: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;

– The European Union Member States and the European Commission;

– Other countries: Canada, Japan, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, USA;

– International organizations: UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, UNHCR, NATO, OECD;

– International financial institutions: World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB), Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB);

– Regional initiatives: Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), Central European Initiative (CEI), South East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) and South East Europe Co-operation Process (SEECP)[40].

The Stability Pact relied on the Special coordinator. His most important task was to bring the participants' political strategies in line with one another, to coordinate existing and new initiatives in the region and, thereby, to help avoid unnecessary duplication of work. The Special coordinator chaired the most important political instrument of the Stability Pact, the Regional Table. There were three Working Tables, which operated under the Regional Table:

– Working Table I: Democratization and Human Rights;

– Working Table II: Economic Reconstruction, Co-operation and Development;

– Working Table III: Security Issues (with two Sub-Tables: Security and Defence, and Justice and Home Affairs).

The issue of security was undoubtedly a priority. The other two issues, democratization and civil society development and economic reconstruction were rather instrumental ones. Had the Balkan conflicts not been a constant threat to European

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[39] http://www.stabilitypact.org/about/default.asp.

[40] Ibidem.

security, stability and prosperity, reforms and development of Southeastern Europe would not have come to the forefront of the European preoccupation. In fact, the question of the Balkans at the end of the twentieth century has become the cornerstone of the common EU foreign and security policy that had crystallized during the Yugoslav wars. The Stability Pact gained priority in the European-American relations as well as within the EU political dialogue with the Russian Federation. This triangle seems to have given sufficient guarantees for overcoming disagreements. The structure of the Pact basically was the structure of bilateral and multilateral agreements on neighborly relations between states participating in it. Thus, the countries of the region find themselves as a guarantor for the rules that had accepted. It seems that for the countries of the region internal fundamental reforms were of main priority, involvement in regional, European and international structures are treated as means for the implementation of the above. On the other hand, international community goals are to calm the region and to integrate it into European and international order. This could be done only by achieving compatibility between developed multilateral structures and those countries which are to join them.

Finally, The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) was officially launched on the 27 February 2008, as the successor of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. The RCC focuses on regional cooperation in South East Europe (SEE) through a regionally owned and led framework that also supports European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The key role is to generate and coordinate developmental projects and create a political climate susceptible to implementing projects of a wider, regional character, to the benefit of each individual member. The work of the RCC focuses on six priority areas: economic and social development, energy and infrastructure, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital, and parliamentary cooperation as an overarching theme[41].

Resume

Southeastern Europe has been a tangle of historical, civilization, political, economic, social, psychological factors that had for so many times caused political instability. Therefore, achieving stability and security in Southeastern Europe requires simultaneous implementation of measures aimed at fostering economic and social development, democratization of the internal systems, building civil society, establishing the rule of law, settling disputes of ethnic and territorial nature through peaceful means, the promotion of mechanisms of regional cooperation and integration into European and Euro-Atlantic organizations.

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[41] See at: http://www.rcc.int/index.php.

Stability and security issues in the region will be greatly influenced by the result of the international community efforts to bring to a successful end two of its major projects – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The following measures might strongly affect the issues of stability in the region: economic and financial support to the region, speeding up the process of accession into European and Euro-Atlantic organizations and institutions; commitment made by all countries in the region that the integration with the EU are of their highest priority, finally, that all countries of the region become NATO members.

It can also be noticed – unfortunately – that Southeastern Europe is still not a unified security area, although there have been many attempts of regional cooperation. The level of the regional initiatives remains low. Territorial fragmentation and in consequence – a great number of territorial boundaries seem to be the biggest economic and political burden for the region. Security system reforms and cooperation with International Community are at different stages in various countries of the region. As mentioned above, there are specific regional security challenges such as Bosnia Herzegovina peace process, Serbia and Montenegro democratic changes, still controversial political, economic and legal status of Kosovo, problems with Macedonia's stability etc. The European Union – it seems – had a dilemma what steps to take next. It had chosen regional approach for challenges facing (through, for example, Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe). At the time when the Pact was created it was expected that regional cooperation would increase among the states. It was also expected that entire region would eventually become a part of the European Union. However, accession to the UE membership remained based on individual merits. The idea was, probably, to motivate the countries of the region for faster reforms implementation and mutual "competition". However, it only discouraged regional initiatives.

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18. http://www.rcc.int/index.php.

Niektóre problemy bezpieczeństwa regionalnego Europy Południowej

Streszczenie. Region Europy Południowo-Wschodniej, pomimo różnych inicjatyw integracyjnych i współpracy regionalnej w przeszłości, pozostaje podzielony i niestabilny politycznie. Inicjatywy wspólnoty międzynarodowej mające na celu osiągnięcie stabilności i bezpieczeństwa w tej części Europy koncentrują się na wspieraniu ro¬zwoju gospodarczego i społecznego, demokratyzacji systemów wewnętrznych, budowie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego, ustanowieniu rządów prawa, rozstrzygania sporów natury etnicznej i terytorialnej na drodze pokojowej, itp. Zwracając uwagę na szereg działań podjętych w tym regionie Europy, autor artykułu zauważa, że skuteczność i sukces tych inicjatyw będzie wynikiem gospodarczego i finansowego wsparcia dla regionu oraz przyspieszenia procesu przystąpienia do europejskich i euroatlantyckich organizacji, a także instytucji państw regionu. Przykładem są dwa wielkie projekty polityczne w Bośni i Hercegowinie oraz w Kosowie. Dylematem Unii Europejskiej jest mimo wszystko efektywność jej projektów w tym historycznie trudnym regionie Europy. Duża fragmentaryzacja regionu znacząco utrudnia współpracę regionalną między krajami południowo-wschodniej Europy, które potencjalnie miałyby stać się członkami UE. Integracja z Unią Europejską pozostaje jedną z nielicznych niekontrowersyjnych kwestii głównych sił politycznych w krajach regionu. Niestety nie zaowocowała ona wzmożoną współpracą w regionie, lecz umniejszyła inicjatywy regionalne.