



The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission) Briefing:
Spotlight on Bosnia - Obstacles to Progress and Recommendations for the International Response

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The violent nationalism that broke up Yugoslavia still haunts the region today, and is the ever-present specter of Bosnian politics. European countries have similar histories of violence and war, but that pattern has ended through the creation of international and supra-state institutions that help its members negotiate their future together and safely explore their pasts.

The United States has been working with the European Union to bring the countries of the former Yugoslavia into this safe sphere through the joint processes of EU and NATO accession. Yet, this is no ordinary accession: compared with postcommunist European countries, external enthusiasm for further EU enlargement has waned, given the new challenges facing the EU today. Internally, most of the countries of the former Yugoslavia are less ready, in terms of democratic consolidation and institutional capacity, to meet the demands of the EU and NATO accession processes. This shortfall is most evident in Kosovo and Bosnia, where international agencies continue to be strongly involved with day-to-day governance.

The fragile policy to bring Bosnia and its neighbors into the EU and NATO requires a strong partnership between the European Union, the United States and other international partners, as well as innovative solutions for addressing the unique hurdles to progress in the countries of the Western Balkans. Over the last year, the European Union Delegation has supported a project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars which has brought American and European scholars and practitioners together to discuss the obstacles to the EU accession process in Bosnia and the other countries of the Western Balkans. The findings and proposals from these meetings are summarized in the three policy briefs that follow.

For more information on this project and links to EU documents on its policy towards the Western Balkans, please go to: www.wilsoncenter.org/westernbalkanspolicy

Policy Brief I: The Working Group on the Western Balkans

Although the EU and the US agree that the long-term goal for the Western Balkans is European integration, progress has stalled. This series of working group meetings aims at launching a discussion on the hurdles to enlargement in the Western Balkans, the tools available to various international actors in the region, and how these resources might best be applied to reach the goal of integration most efficiently. These meetings, therefore, address issues that are at the core of the making the Transatlantic relationship work.

The Working Group is support by a grant from the EU Delegation. This brief is the result of a meeting held in June 2010.

Policy Brief from Meeting I: The Hardest Cases for EU Accession—Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since the second half of 2009, European and American policies towards the Western Balkans seem to have enjoyed a historic level of coordination and harmony. Rhetorically, at least, there is unequivocal agreement on both sides of the Atlantic that these countries will be members of the European Union, once they meet the conditions. EU membership, the thinking goes, will end the unhappy chapter of the violent demise of Yugoslavia, by bringing it into a secure, democratic and prosperous Europe.

The problem is that progress toward this goal has been extremely slow. As a baseline for comparison, we should consider that for the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic states that had submitted their applications by 1996, most acceded within eight years. By contrast, six years after the 2004 Thessaloniki Summit declared that enlargement to the Western Balkans would be the top priority of the EU's foreign policy, only two countries (Croatia and Macedonia) are official candidates for membership. Worse still, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo have not achieved a sufficient level of political development to be able to apply as candidates yet. While no one expected this process to be quick, the protracted period of accession threatens to undermine the entire policy, as reform momentum fails, undemocratic policies and corruption flourish, and apathy turns to hostility towards the EU.

Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina are the hardest cases. Both have problems with not only governance, but also sovereignty, and have international organizations actively buttressing their

governments. Sovereignty is essential for signing contractual agreements and treaties, which make up the legal side of the EU accession process. This legal problem is most acute in Kosovo, since its independence is contested by Serbia and has not been recognized as an independent state by several EU member states¹. While Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized internationally, it consistently fails “to speak with one voice” as a state. The rhetorical disunity between the country’s Entities is mirrored by its complex institutional and legal structure, and continues to rely on the support and guidance of the Office of the High Representative, which acts as an externally imposed governor of the country.

The EU accession model is facing a difficult challenge in the Western Balkans as a whole, where internal and external obstacles to reform thwart the EU’s conditionality. But in Kosovo and Bosnia, these obstacles are compounded, and it will be difficult for the EU to combine its tested EU member-state building model with its untested state building abilities.

In Kosovo, Bosnia, and Serbia, the conflict over territory dominates politics, permeating every level of government. The nationalist-driven contest over territory has not ended despite the end of overt war. Kosovo’s contest over territory goes beyond the question of recognition, but also manifests itself in the maintenance of parallel government institutions in Northern Mitrovica. In Bosnia, the ethnic conflict continues through the ethnically-segregated Entities and the parallel legal systems created by the Dayton Constitution. Although the EU Commission has identified the absence of state-level institutions and ethnic-based voting to be a hindrance to the country’s progress to EU membership, deep-seated ethnic divisions in the country have prevented attempts at institutional reform to succeed.

In theory, the EU accession process offers a distraction from ethnic and territorial concerns because the process forces leaders to focus instead on meeting the technical conditions for membership. Civil society demand for EU accession compels politicians to compromise on the wide range of issues necessary for the state to meet EU standards. However, a different dynamic is at work in Bosnia, where creating links between high-profile reforms (such as constitutional reform, or closing the OHR) and EU accession may be raising the ethnic stakes and creating a “catch-22” situation. Rather than driving reforms, local populations and their politicians view high-profile reforms as “selling out” to the EU, and these reforms are seen as a zero-sum game by all ethnic groups. In Serbia, this dynamic plays out in term of recognizing Kosovo.

A pattern of international involvement can be observed, in which high-profile initiatives are presented to the political elite and the public, with the result that nothing changes. If progress is made, it can only be seen on paper. The disillusioned external actors retreat for a time, until a new initiative is launched. This episodic involvement and paper progress undermines the credibility of external actors, and damages the credibility of the EU accession project.

To end this stagnation, some working group participants advocated substituting high-profile, “quick-fix” initiatives with incremental changes. These smaller changes may be initially less impressive and may extend the time-frame of the process. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the cumulative effect of all

¹ As of July, 2010, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Spain and Slovakia have not recognized the independence of Kosovo.

of these small-scale reforms will be a way out of the current impasse. Linking small-scale reforms with clear incentives, as was the case with visa liberalization policy, will help induce political leaders to act.

For this incremental approach to work, it will be important to consider the EU accession process as a series of smaller steps and for all of the actors involved to create a functional and coherent agenda. These other actors (the U.S., individual EU member states, Turkey as well as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) should be brought into this process to coordinate incentives and arguments that will help politicians to buy into the EU agenda.

The current economic crisis in the EU, the recent institutional reform initiated by the Lisbon Treaty, and other compelling issues are turning the focus away from the Western Balkans. If the EU is seen as less attractive to the Western Balkans, or if it seems indifferent to the region, the EU accession policy will falter. The EU must recognize that there are tools and actors outside the Accession process, and actively engage with them, lest the momentum for accession decline.

Working Group participants discussed how the current economic crisis has dashed the hopes of many countries in the region to follow in the development path of Ireland and the Baltic States. Some see the crisis as a blow to the region, since there is unlikely to be a game-changing economic model to follow. Nevertheless, the current crisis also creates opportunities, since financial issues can be used to kick-start a political dialogue. The example of Greece may convince politicians in the Western Balkans to create greater transparency and create a more conducive environment for business in order to be able to attract new foreign investors.

Part of the problem with the EU-U.S. strategy in the Western Balkans is that it is not clear whether EU accession is a remedy or a goal. Of course, it must be both, but in order for the goal of EU accession to be a remedy for the Western Balkans, there must be a greater focus on the process, rather than the end. Focusing solely on the EU as a goal, creates a binary system, and seems to place the responsibility for enlargement on the EU rather than on the Western Balkan countries. This perspective also gives the EU a reactive, rather than proactive, position, as it is simply there to judge events in the region.

But by flipping the rhetorical switch, it becomes clear that the process involved in acceding to the EU involves activity in the region, not just a decision by the EU. When accession is seen as a process, the many steps involved in EU accession can be presented as a menu of activities that are compatible with EU goals. The Commission already prepares country-specific reports on issues that it needs to address, and these reports should be read by all actors involved as the single voice of the EU in terms of what must be done.² With EU accession as a process with many 'menu' items to choose from³,

² Criticism of the EU for being a cacophony of voices could be assuaged by focusing all policies on the reports. The most recent reports and EU's strategy can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2010_en.htm

³ A helpful list of negotiation chapters with short descriptions can be found on the European Commission's website on Enlargement: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/negotiations_croatia_turkey/index_en.htm#5

politicians in the Western Balkans can build an agenda according to their capacity and the many actors that make up the international community can find a sector or issue that they can work on, and ensure that these different elements will eventually push each country further down the path towards the EU.

Policy Brief II: The Working Group on the Western Balkans

Although the EU and the US agree that the long-term goal for the Western Balkans is European integration, progress has stalled. This series of working group meetings aims at launching a discussion on the hurdles to enlargement in the Western Balkans, the tools available to various international actors in the region, and how these resources might best be applied to reach the goal of integration most efficiently. These meetings, therefore, address issues that are at the core of the making the Transatlantic relationship work.

The Working Group is supported by a grant from the EU Delegation. This brief is the result of a meeting held in October 2010.

Policy Brief from Meeting II: Engaging Civil Society

EU accession is a predominantly elite-driven process, in which elites from Brussels interact with an accession country's political elites to bring a country in line with EU norms. The traditional role of civil society in this enterprise is to elect pro-EU political parties, which compels parties to cooperate on reforms necessary for EU accession.⁴ Justifications and explanations are left to domestic politicians to sort out, with little direct communication between the EU and the population at large.

In the countries of the Western Balkans, however, leaving it to local politicians to explain and justify the EU accession process has become a liability. In the Western Balkans, politicians often pit EU accession goals against symbolic political goals or other national interests that make them seem incompatible with European integration. When the interpretation of EU actions is left to local politicians alone, they often twist the facts in their favor. For example, when Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania were initially not granted visa liberalization in the summer of 2009 (due their governments' inability to adopt the required reforms), local politicians accused the EU of discriminating against Muslims, rather than taking the blame for their failure.

⁴ See Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration after Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Although EU reports and information are amply available to the internet-connected public, this has not been sufficient to adequately explain how the EU accession process works, why EU membership is necessary, and what individuals can do to contribute to this goal. The answers to these questions must be pervasive in society: one statement or document will not be enough. Although there may be legitimate reasons for the EU institutions not to engage directly with foreign populations,⁵ the success of the policy in the Western Balkans may depend on the ability of the international community to be able to convince civil society to embrace their vision of the region's future.

Moreover, the EU views the accession processes itself as an effective public relations tool for the EU; it is in a sense a "learning-by-doing" exercise. In the Western Balkans, however, most of the countries have not yet achieved candidate status, which limits not only the level of interaction between the government and the EU, but also the financial tools available. A new strategy for the international community to engage with the public in the Western Balkans could help as a stop-gap measure.

What Civil Society?

To a great extent, the model for civil society development for EU accession is based on the experience of Slovakia, where an alliance struck between various NGOs, the media and trade unions successfully toppled Vladimir Meciar's autocratic regime and continued to hold politicians to their promises of achieving EU membership. In particular, the U.S. support of the Democracy Network played an important role in supporting locally-entrenched small NGOs, which ultimately helped to not only overthrow Meciar, but continued to be active afterwards in rebuilding the country. Thus, support during elections is not enough. Rather, financial sustainability for NGOs is essential in the long-term EU accession process.

Of course, context matters in applying this model. Policies that supported Croatia's civil society movement to oust Franjo Tudjman, were only effective to a point. There, foreign-sponsored NGOs that worked on minority rights and other issues were seen as puppets of the West, since those issues were not seen as vital in society. It was only in the second round of support (when the focus shifted to helping organizations that worked to improve social services) that foreign support for local NGOs struck the right chord. The lesson for future initiatives to engage civil society, therefore, should be that local values cannot be dismissed. Rather, just as local politicians do, the international community must be able to package their message in terms that will be accepted the given context.

⁵ The EU is founded on the principle that all members accede to the EU of their own will, based on their own merits and with no coercion by the EU itself. EU members must control their own sovereignty, be democratic, and membership must be achieved through the activities of legitimate governments who have the support of their constituents. Therefore, persuading the public that EU membership is a desirable goal and that the reforms necessary to meet EU standards are good for the society is generally seen as the work of local politicians.

Like the international community, civil society encompasses a number of different actors within a given society. Civil society can include organized groups, established constituencies, journalists or simply amorphous groups of citizens who temporarily unite on a specific issue. Policies to engage with civil society should be targeted to these different categories and adaptable in their approach. In 1997, the unifying element in society was that Slovakia was not accepted as an EU candidate along with its neighbors: no one was happy about being left behind, and it was clear that Meciar was to blame. Thus, the international community should work towards cultivating a civil society that can moderate political deadlock and keep politicians accountable.

It is also important for the international community to realize that its credibility is tied to the NGOs it supports. In the recent past, Western Balkan NGOs have felt abandoned by the international community at crucial moments and their local credibility has suffered as a result. For example, local NGOs were invited to work on police reform in Bosnia, and were active advocates for the reform package. However, rather than adopt that package, the international community settled on an empty document for political expediency, leaving NGOs to explain the results. Far too often, the international community's policies are focused on stability rather than on promoting democratic values.

Polls indicate that people are not well informed about the accession process. In Serbia, a large part of the electorate would support an independent Kosovo if it meant that Serbia would get into the EU, even though this would be inadequate for Serbia to accede. Frustration with the international community is high since the general thinking is that the international community is responsible for public goods in the region. At the same time, although support for the EU is still high, these numbers are slowly falling over time. In part this may be due to the ever-increasing time frame for accession, which has made people less optimistic about a future in the EU.

Nevertheless, public opinion polls reflect an electorate that is ripe for positive change. Especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, voters have little confidence in their government's abilities to tackle social and economic problems. Voters remain loyal to their parties, but there is growing frustration with politicians over corruption and their inability to address unemployment and improve public services. Polls also indicate that most people get their information from television, rather than from other sources, which indicates the best form of communication with the society.

Policy Brief III: The Working Group on the Western Balkans

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The Working Group is support by a grant from the EU Delegation and co-sponsored with the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). This brief is the result of a meeting held in November 2010.

Policy Brief from Meeting III: Reaching out to the Balkans in Times of Crisis

Many international organizations and individual states have their own policies towards the countries of the Western Balkans. This assortment of policies is a natural result of a diverse international community, which is composed of many actors, each with its specific strengths and unique tools. Yet, all of these policies compete for attention in the region, creating an environment of contradictory messages and complicated agendas. The result is a cacophony that confuses civil society and compels political leaders to cover their ears. The purpose of this meeting, therefore, was two-fold: to identify, analyze and find ways to overcome the region's most outstanding challenges and to foster stronger cooperation and coordination between the European Union and the United States on the Western Balkans.

The conference was divided in four discussion panels which focused on the following issues respectively: 1) the dynamics of the region's most outstanding disputes; namely Kosovo's status, the situation in Bosnia and the dispute between Greece and FYROM over the latter's name, 2) the current economic situation in the Western Balkans after the outbreak of the global and later Greece's financial crisis, 3) the role of some key international actors in the region (such as the EU, NATO, US, IMF, Russia as well as Turkey) and finally 4) the impediments towards the Western Balkans states' European future and the necessary strategies that need to be found and implemented in order to facilitate and accelerate their Euro-Atlantic integration.

Serbia and Kosovo

The fallout of the July 22, 2010 International Court of Justice Decision on the legality of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence has changed the dynamics between Kosovo and Serbia. The EU's initiative to bring Kosovo and Serbia to negotiations was praised: for too long the international community has done very little, while local leaders have used their publics' intransigent stance as an excuse for avoiding diplomatic settlements. Obstacles exist, however, especially since Serbia will enter into negotiations with three important limitations: 1) its Constitution forbids the recognition of Kosovo's independence; 2) public opinion is predominantly against recognition and; 3) the disunity between Kosovo Serbs living in Northern Kosovo and those living in other enclaves.

Therefore, the forthcoming direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina should begin with relatively "easy" topics (e.g., the cooperation of the two sides on issues such as the missing persons, refugees' return, energy, transports and communication as well as CEFTA) which will create a better atmosphere between the two sides. An effort to reduce Kosovo's unemployment should also be included in the agenda, since it affects the lives of both Albanians and Serbs and may lead to social protest.

Moreover, the outcome of these initial negotiations should not hurt either side. It would be unrealistic to believe that the current government in Serbia would recognize Kosovo,

especially since the situation in Northern Kosovo remains unresolved. Nevertheless, Serbia has critical interests in reaching an agreement with Kosovo, since it cannot otherwise combat corruption and organized crime, which thrive in Kosovo's unstable rule of law system. Moreover, the path to the EU is blocked for both Serbia and Kosovo until progress on status is made. Kosovo is the only state in the region that has not signed an SAA or visa liberalization agreement with the EU, and does not belong to NATO'S Partnership for Peace Program. For Kosovo, it is essential for it to attain the power to sign legal agreements with the EU. Therefore, there is a need for Kosovo to move beyond the current situation. Therefore, allowing Kosovo to remain a frozen conflict is not in anyone's interest, which ought to compel both sides to work together on their shared vision of membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The Global Financial Crisis

The Balkans' fragile economic growth model of the last ten years has had the following characteristics: 1) it was based on excessive foreign borrowing that led to trade deficits, 2) it was consumption-driven and 3) the labor market (despite the GDP growth) was significantly compressed. As a result, the global financial crisis has left the Western Balkans unable to attract the foreign financing that has been crucial for their sustainability. Most of these economies have experienced negative economic growth over the last two years, stagnating and declining incomes, and increased unemployment. In the medium term (at least for the next two or three years) Balkan economies are likely to remain stagnant, due in large part to the lack of foreign financing.

As a result of the economic recession, almost every country in the region is currently under external financial assistance programs (of the IMF's 18 rescue programs, 8 of are for countries in the SEE region). Balkan governments have responded to this crisis by trying to reduce their foreign currency credit growth, depreciating their currency (with both positive and negative consequences) and by pressing their commercial banks to adopt a more conservative approach in their lending strategy (since they have accumulated a significant number of non-performing loans).

The political and social consequences of this bleak situation are yet to be seen. Serbia and Croatia are the countries in which social protest may be most intense, and it may lead to the sacking of their current governments. In other countries, it is remarkable that there have not yet been large-scale protests.

To help avoid such turmoil, the international community should focus on helping these countries through their economic recession by: 1) large-scale inter-regional infrastructure projects (despite the current fiscal limitations and the lack of will among the Balkans' political and economic elites for regional cooperation); and 2) attracting FDI, especially from Germany.

However, where the economy has become a liability, politics has become an asset, which allows some optimism for the region. The Western Balkans have recently increased their regional cooperation, which has been highlighted by the increase of Croatian exports to Serbia, the joint-venture signed by Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia on rail transport and the new ferry that links Serbia with Vukovar. There is much more space for regional cooperation, particularly for inter-regional infrastructure projects concerning sectors like transport (e.g. rail, roads, and water) and energy (e.g. distribution networks of petrol and liquefied gas). A necessary precondition will be the development of transparent procurement rules.

External Actors

The UN, EU, US, OSCE, Russia, Turkey and recently the IFI's are the region's most important external actors, but the EU has primacy, given that it has given the region a perspective for membership. However, the EU's leverage and credibility as a transformative power has weakened over the last few years, mainly because of the EU's incoherent policy, which has been caused by the different goals and interests shared by the European Commission on the one hand, and several member states on the other.

The European Commission has always been more enthusiastic about enlargement than the increasingly "enlargement-fatigued" member-states. This internal split has led to several setbacks in the Western Balkans in recent years. In Kosovo, there is a split between the 22 member states that have recognized Kosovo's independence and the five that have not. This had stalled the deployment of the EULEX mission, which still has not been able, so far, to establish itself in Northern Kosovo.

In Bosnia, EU conditionality has lost its credibility over the last few years, mainly because of the EU's setbacks on Bosnia's constitutional and police reforms. In its hope to create a more centralized state, the EU had initiated and strongly supported these reforms, making them an indirect condition for Bosnia's EU accession. However, it was later forced to moderate its position after strong pressures by some member-states.

The new foreign policy framework, created by the Lisbon Treaty, has not helped matters. Whereas previous presidencies were able to keep the Balkans high on the EU's agenda, the implicit demotion of the rotating presidency in foreign policy will be deeply felt. It will be rather difficult, therefore, to expect that a new impetus or dynamic will be given to policies on the Western Balkans during the Hungarian Presidency. According to the preliminary Hungarian Agenda, the overwhelming emphasis of the Presidency will be on managing the economic crisis and reforming the EU budget, rather than on EU enlargement to the Balkans, which is only sixth on the list of priorities. Nevertheless, the Hungarian Presidency will try to take some initiatives including: 1) trying to close and even sign the Accession Treaty with Croatia, 2) urging the European Council to give a date for the start FYROM's accession negotiations, 3) launching visa-liberalization negotiations with Kosovo and 4) monitoring Serbia's dialogue with Pristina as well as its cooperation with the ICTY.

At the same time, the US has maintained a presence in the Western Balkans over the last year, and has attempted to be balanced and constructive. But, despite the view of a small number of US policymakers that there is some unfinished business in the Balkans (especially in Kosovo and Bosnia) and their partial distrust on the EU's abilities to lead the international chorus in the region, the primary US strategic interests are elsewhere in the world. Therefore, although the US is still engaged in the region, the scope, duration and comprehensiveness of its engagement may not be as robust as it once was.

The major US goals in the region are: 1) securing the Western Balkans, 2) making the region a net contributor in the US security efforts around the globe, instead of being a net recipient and 3) solving the remaining problems in Kosovo and Bosnia because of the prior heavy US engagement on these two cases. The US is trying to achieve these goals mainly by: 1) strongly supporting the region's integration in the EU and NATO, 2) providing diplomatic assistance (especially in Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia and FYROM) and 3) providing financial assistance (which currently is almost entirely headed towards improving the region's governance structures).

But there is a gap between the US ambitious objectives in the region and the US diminishing means. The US is trying to moderate this gap by using Europe's resources. Because

the US still has leverage on the region, future US engagement in the Western Balkans must be more tightly wound to the EU agenda for the EU integration policy to succeed. To that end, 1) there is a dire need for better coordination between the region's key external actors; 2) the international community should approach the region with a new strategy that goes beyond simply an EU accession model; and 3) there is need for a division of labor among the international actors, in order to conserve resources and increase the power of a united policy.

EU Policy

The EU's recent Progress Reports on the Western Balkans issued by the European Commission sent a significant message to the region. They reveal the following about the region's readiness to join the EU: Albania must confront its political crisis and adequately prove its democratic credentials; Serbia must confront its Kosovo obstacle, Kosovo must confront its organized crime problem, Bosnia must confront its internal divisions, and Macedonia must manage its nationalistic overdose. On the more positive side, Croatia is moving forward despite its problems on judicial reform, Montenegro received a positive avis and will become a candidate, and Bosnia and Albania have gained visa-liberalization status.

However, reading between the lines of the Progress Reports, the following conclusions can be made it seems clear that enlargement is no longer a priority for the EU. The lack of a common EU position on Kosovo and the failed policies in Bosnia make the enlargement policy to the Western Balkans seem more like an entanglement than a strategy. Most significantly, conditionality has lost a significant level of its former efficiency compared to previous enlargements. The international community must buttress this policy of EU integration, since it is the only positive future for the region.

To that end, the EU should become more of a visionary than a manager. Recently, Turkey has been engaging in the Balkans in a systemic and successful way, which should offer a model to follow, as well as another partner in the region. Moreover, the EU should remember that it is better than any other international institution in promoting minority rights, regional cooperation and bilateral disputes, recent setbacks aside.

Moreover, these setbacks should not be allowed to overshadow the clear progress in the region. For example, 1) the independence of Kosovo has brought the most pro-European government in Serbia; 2) there has been an increased number of Kosovo Serbs who have participated in Kosovo's elections during the past few years; 3) nobody worries anymore for a return of violence in Bosnia; 4) the Croat President's apologies for Croatia's policies during the Yugoslav Wars have created a basis for regional cooperation; 5) all states (except Kosovo) have achieved visa-liberalization status; and 6) the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo is ranked as the second most important priority in Catherine Ashton's Agenda for 2011.

In addition to the negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo, Greece's dispute with FYROM is the other looming bilateral issue that the international community ought to work quickly to overcome. On the name issue, the international community should help both sides reach a compromise, with clear incentives for both sides. For instance, one innovative solution could be for the EU to begin negotiations with FYROM with the condition that a new name would be immediately used in their bilateral relations and in which the Skopje Parliament would immediately pass a constitutional amendment on the new name on the day FYROM joins the EU. Such a settlement would give Greece the guarantee that the new name will immediately replace FYROM on their bilateral relations and that it will be erga omnes when FYROM joins the EU. On the other hand, FYROM will have the guarantee that if it will not join the EU it will not give

away its name. In any case, the only workable solution between Greece and FYROM should address the identity concerns and sensitivities on both sides.

The international community should relaunch the EU accession policy for the Western Balkans, and this iteration ought to be characterized by a deeper cooperation between all external actors; well-meaning attempts to end the bi-lateral issues between states and embrace innovative solutions that amplify the unique powers of each member of the international community.