

# **Security Risks and Instabilities in Southeastern Europe: Recommended Strategies to the EU in the Process of Differentiated Integration of the Region by the Union**

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## **Content**

### **I Introduction**

### **II Structural Instabilities and General Requirements for Strategic Approaches**

### **III. EU Strategies for Systemic Instabilities in Southeastern Europe**

#### **1. Security Risks and Instabilities**

#### **2. The System of Recommended EU Strategies for Southeastern Europe**

#### **3. The Arc of Stability and the Locomotive Strategy**

#### **4. Strategy Recommendations for the Process of Differentiated Pre-Accession**

### **Endnotes**

### **About the Author**

### **About the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS)**

### **Publications of ISIS**

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## **I Introduction**

The chain of events and developments in Southeastern Europe during the 1990s provoked increasingly sophisticated political reactions, political approaches and longer-term strategies towards the region on the part of the EU. The firm requirement for ethnic tolerance and respect of human rights constitutes one end of the range of EU positions concerning Southeastern Europe. The gradual beginning of the process of integration of some countries from the region in the Union constitutes the other end. At the end of the 1990s, these positions gravitated towards two principles – regionality and conditionality. These principles are partly overlapping and mutually reinforcing, but to some extent also contradictory. The institutional arrangements of these two principles by the EU are identified with the Stability Pact (July 1999) for the principle of regionality, on the one hand, and with the accession negotiations and the Stabilisation and Association Process for the principle of conditionality, on the other hand <sup>1</sup>.

The history of the Southeast European region has no better example of a benign external engagement than these two dialectically interacting EU principles. However, the experience of the four wars during the last decade in the Southeastern part of Europe - a plethora of continuing risks, instabilities, but also opportunities - calls for

re-thinking and improving the strategic principles and instrumentarium of the EU for Southeastern Europe. Counting on both regionality and conditionality principles, the EU has the chance of developing a consistent and encompassing strategy for Southeastern Europe. This strategy should exploit to the best the potential of the two strategic principles and their institutional expressions, while improving the management of a sustainable process of change from predominantly regional stabilisation and conflict prevention towards integration of Southeastern Europe into the EU. Depending on individual national cases, the contents of this management process (including the management of expectations) will be defined by the terms of differentiated pre-accession. In line with the dialectics of regionality and conditionality, some countries in the region may qualify for a pioneering role and act as regional generators of stability.

## **II Structural Instabilities and General Requirements for Strategic Approaches**

In Europe the process of integration in the EU context is the dominating and most powerful tendency of the 1990s and the beginning of the next century. The need of adequate strategies of the Union in meeting the challenges of the Southeast European region stems from two major, closely interrelated factors: 1) the existence of security risks and instabilities in that part of the continent, and 2) the necessity of differentiated pre-accession of Southeastern Europe by the EU.

Greater and dangerous instabilities in international relations are typical for transitional periods between the old and the new structure of the international system at its different levels. In these circumstances even the smallest changes may cause strong reactions to the transformation of the initial conditions. In the case of Southeastern Europe the instabilities are driven by the following structural causes:

1. The transition from a bipolar to a yet undefined structure of the international system with an interim outcome of a tendency towards unilateralism and of turning the area into one of the global knots of conflicting interests and states. A national aspect of this process in the region is the decision of the individual countries to gravitate towards one or another centre of global power. The EU with its Euro-Atlantic dimension is certainly one of these centres of global power. Another consequence is the age-old possibility for balkanisation, the fragmentation of the regional state relations and the subsequent polarisation of Balkan international relations around external poles of power. In the post-Cold War situation in the Balkans, the EU, USA and the other developed nations generate and stimulate the European integration of the Balkans, while Russia is hesitant – oscillating between broker of new balances of power and dependencies for the Balkan countries and a constructive role as a world leader of a 21st century type, stimulating region-building tendencies as an organisational expression of globalisation.

2. The painful shift of the region from the state of a non-existent common economic and trading area to a more co-operative regional economic space with all real and potential divergence of the economic interests of the individual local (and external) actors in that process of the evolution of rising new opportunities for prosperity.

3. The internal systemic transitions of the individual countries of Southeastern Europe and the varying national attitudes to the regional social, economic, political and strategic homogeneity and different orientations to the presently getting shape global centres of power – for principle or conjuncture reasons.
4. The varying patterns, rates and levels of adaptation of the individual countries of the region to the eastward expansion of the democratic civic state, based on the principles of the security community and market economy space – a process triggered by the collapse of real-existing socialism in its Soviet and Yugoslav versions.
5. The predominantly destructive disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation, the four wars that followed and the (re-) appearance of state-building issues in Southeastern Europe.

The prevention of the slowing-down or an eventual halt of the pace of the European integration process calls for coping with the security risks and instabilities, with their structural causes, and providing adequate strategic instruments of carrying out this task before and while the projected differentiated pre-accession of the region has started to progress. The strategic approaches of the EU to the region in the process of differentiated pre-accession in the coming years with the objective of successfully coping with these issues should meet certain general requirements:

- a. The system of the EU strategies needs to reflect how it will deal with the structural instabilities, with the multitude of resulting current instabilities and risks and their variation from country-to-country as well as how to utilise or neutralise the strategic potential of the national attitudes of the Southeast European countries. Hence, adequate and comprehensive EU-specific strategies for individual countries of Southeastern Europe are needed and have significant practical consequences for the outcome of the differentiated pre-accession of the region.
- b. A general requirement of the EU strategies is the adequate readiness to act in combination with the framework requirement to keep the costs as low as possible. This means that the EU must be in possession of an adequate mechanism of deciding what its priorities are and where the emphasis must be put in the particular period and situation.
- c. The strategies of the EU must reflect possible and probable contingencies realistically. They should also be backed-up by adequate personnel, financial and material capacity and resources. Effectiveness of performance is a must for any EU strategy applied to Southeastern Europe.
- d. An adequate analytic and decision-making mechanism should assess the sequence of evolving events and determine the timing of the use of the respective strategies in terms of early-warning time, rate of mobilising the means for application and the length of the availability of the applicable tools.
- e. A no less important requirement for the EU system of strategies is the mobilisation of European public opinion – its national and Union resources. A supportive EU

public may decide on success or failure of the Union's strategy of dealing with the risks and instabilities in Southeastern Europe in the process of differentiated pre-accession of the region. Respective EU strategies for the management of knowledge, information and perceptions are required.

f. The EU strategies should include effective interlocking and co-ordination with other international institutions or individual governments. Preventing duplication of efforts and waste of resources reinforces the capacities of the different organisations, fora and mechanisms and should therefore be an integral component of the EU strategies for Southeastern Europe.

A significant aspect of this last requirement is the solution of the Russian factor: How to bring and keep Russia within a benign external involvement in Southeastern Europe without damaging the Euro-Atlantic integration process of the region. The Southeast European terrain provides political, economic and strategic opportunities for Russia to join the regional and Euro-Atlantic integration processes as a welcome power. Obstructing or spoiling the integration game would have more negative consequences for Russia than acting as a constructive or even neutral player in the processes of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Southeastern Europe. Russia's positive image would be guaranteed if this world power does not hinder EU and NATO integration of the Southeast European countries should they opt for accession. EU-Russian relations should, therefore, include for the EU strategy this regional aspect.

### **III. EU Strategies for Systemic Instabilities in Southeastern Europe**

The systemic nature of the main security risks and instabilities, stemming from the structural causes, the legacies of the past, the ethnic and religious diversity of the area, its heterogeneous social contents and specific individual countries' policies and political cultures require a complex system of interrelated and interacting EU strategies with sophisticated management of their implementation.

#### **1. Security Risks and Instabilities**

Even a brief survey of systemic factors constituting security risks and instabilities pertaining to both Southeastern Europe and Europe as a whole includes the following elements:

Firstly, the economic, technological and infrastructure retardation of Southeastern Europe coupled by continuous internal national economic, social and political crises: The sources of instabilities are indigenous – internal economic, social and political with respective international ramifications. There are various historical antecedents of the belated economic, technological and infrastructure modernisation of Southeastern Europe. It suffices to mention only the Cold War period with the three types of states and blocs that existed at that time: NATO, Warsaw Pact and non-aligned. The infrastructure – transport, communications, economic relations, etc. – reflected polarised Cold War thinking and acting. The outcome was the separation of

the countries, and not linking them, a further distancing of the region from the other parts of the world that were adapting to the growing requirements of the economic, information, humanitarian globalisation. The broader picture was additionally darkened by the hardships of the transition societies (all except Greece and Turkey) that experienced the shift from state-owned property and central-planned economy to private ownership and market economy. Poor management of the transformation processes, including adventurous political and economic behaviour in some countries, repeated cases of criminal privatisation – all these instabilities generated a whole spectrum of security risks, occasionally threatening the continuation of state authority in individual countries (Albania, Romania and Bulgaria).

Secondly, ethnic and religious antagonisms, augmented by conceptual, perceptual, cognitive and emotional deficiencies and multiplied by the purposeful activism of political careerists: This is the most discussed source of the conflicts in Southeastern Europe in the last decade – a source for lasting instabilities, national and regional threats and risks to security. The ethnic mobilisation of the Serbs has focused the attention of the observers and participants in the conflicts in Southeastern Europe. Croats, Hungarians and Bulgarians are traditionally and justly complaining of violations of their individual and collective minority rights by the Serbian authorities. Still the children of Serbia are being brought up and educated in hatred towards neighbouring nations as eternal enemies. This negative ethnic stereotyping in Serbia is an overt educational goal with negative messages for the sake of internal Serbian consolidation on a destructive nationalist basis. However, there is only one example of inter-ethnic relations that might be more or less classified within the conceptual frameworks of the clash of civilisations – the relations between Serbs and Albanians. All the other ethnic and religious differences and conflicts are definitely within the realm of political management and legal regulation: their escalation or resolution depends on political will, resources and strategies.

Thirdly, state-building challenges, turning into security risks and major instabilities for the whole region: The catastrophic disruption of the former federal state of Yugoslavia, the appearance and the assumption of political meaning of the Albanian Question and of the Serbian Question as well as the difficult process of transition from totalitarian, authoritarian and centrally planned systems to pluralist democracy and market economy are the three determinants of this source of security risks and instabilities in Southeastern Europe, also known as the triple transition.

Unlike the Czechoslovak Republic and even the Soviet Union, the Yugoslav Federation, driven by political careerists and ethnocentric leaders in the dominant republic of the former federal state – Serbia, ended its obviously no longer needed federalist existence in a most destructive way. The subsequent state-building of the constituent republics of the former federation were additionally burdened by the assertive and aggressive Serbian political behaviour: the wars of Serbia against Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina; the continuing destabilising activity, driven by Belgrade, of the Serbian political and intelligence agents in Macedonia (FYROM); the obstructions created by Serbia for a democratic social and political organisation of the constituent republic of Montenegro in the new Yugoslav Federation; the inadequate treatment of the complex issues of the Kosovo region of

Serbia by the political leadership in Belgrade that led to the rise of even more complicated ethnic and constitutional problems.

The two national questions, with their irredentist political advocates bear troubling promises for the future: the consolidation and continuation of the irreconcilable Albanian and Serbian Questions. The stability of the states in Southeastern Europe – borders, population, intentions for the future - may become dramatically contingent upon the ethnocentric plans of the Serbian and the Albanian political leaders and on the unresolved inter-ethnic hatreds and mistrust. The irredentist inclinations and political platforms increase the fragility of the newly independent states, bordering the territories with Serbian and Albanian population. The potential instrumentalisation of ethno-demographic pressure for destructive purposes was already purposefully used by the dictatorial regime in Belgrade in 1999, provoking the near-collapse of neighbouring states – Albania, FYROM, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. The notion of Greater Albania and political behaviour, stemming from it, creates similar problems for neighbouring Serbia, Greece and FYROM.

State-building problems are worsened by the transitional economic, social and political issues that most of the former Yugoslav republics and now sovereign states experience. The transition from real-existing socialism to functioning consolidated democracies caused major problems of institutional stability even in well-established states as the Bulgarian and the Romanian throughout the 1990s. The problems in Albania, FYROM, Bosnia-Herzegovina were qualitatively worse.

Fourthly, FRY, Albanian extremism and the persistent hard-security risk of war: Because of Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina or an aggressive behaviour either by Belgrade or by Albanian irredentists, low and medium intensity conflict remain a possible development. Therefore, as long as the need of stability in Kosovo exists, KFOR and its UN, NATO and EU dimensions continue to be a valid hard security need and no compromise is possible. The hard security threats originate in Kosovo itself, but the Serbian military's claims that the Yugoslav Army has the constitutional right to return in the province – a sovereign territory of Serbia and FRY - clearly demonstrate the pending danger of serious military clashes. The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is similar, though at a lower level of risk: The SFOR contingent will be needed until all the provisions of the Dayton Agreement have been implemented and the stability is guaranteed.

There must be no neglect of an eventual use of mustard gas, developed or acquired by the regime of Milosevic as a last-resort weapon to defend his power. The features of present FRY regime resemble more and more those of other dictatorial states from the past of Europe. There is no room for underestimating the activity and the initiative of the direct and interested supporters of the regime of the Milosevic family and the employment of hard military systems for its protection – in Serbia, in Montenegro, in Kosovo, eventually in Bosnia and Herzegovina. No neighbouring state of FRY is excluded from this potential danger.

Albanian irredentism is no less of a security threat and source of longer instabilities in Southeastern Europe. Its potential for low-to-medium intensity fighting requires

adequate international deterring and battle forces. The international forces in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYROM should continue to serve this additional security need.

Fifthly, soft security risks: It is no surprise that analysts and politicians believe the fight against criminality and the risks and threats originating from it have become a priority integrative factor in Europe. Southeastern Europe is full of organised crime, terrorism, clandestine immigration, smuggling and drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering, proliferation of small weapons (and reportedly even radioactive materials).

Crime, corruption, human and drug trafficking have specific national, social, economic, cultural and psychological roots. The peculiarity of the situation of the plethora of soft security risks and instabilities in Southeastern Europe is favoured by the general belated modernisation of the region in terms of economics, technology, social and political development, management as well as by the fragility of the state institutions in the newly independent states of former Yugoslavia, linked with the difficulties of state-building; the situation of failed states (Albania), delayed transition processes (in Romania and Bulgaria); by the long years of wars and the potential hard security risks, economic sanctions, opportunities for crime created by the ethnic and religious divisions and last but not least criminal methods of implementing the transformation processes in the post-communist countries of the region with the participation of pervasively corrupted administrations.

The EU's strategic approaches in treating this awesome set of security risks and instabilities should not be misled by the expectation of an automatic shift from hard to soft security risks in Southeastern Europe. The soft security risks will be definitely reduced with the containment of the hard security risks. The uncertainties, inherent in the current situation in FRY and the irredentist Albanian factor do not provide much perspective as to how and when this shift would take place. However, once the influence of hard security risks decreases in Southeastern Europe, a continuing attention will need to be devoted to the interaction between the other factors, nourishing the soft security risks and the realisation of the risks themselves.

Sixthly, the tensions between the two parts of Southeastern Europe – the Western Balkans and the EU accession states: Information and perception influence the knowledge, the decisions and activities. That is why perceptions of the Balkans should become more sophisticated and reflect the complexity and plurality of factors determining the regional social, political and security developments. This is crucial in preventing information delivery or perception attacks transform into miscalculations about strategy, concrete decisions or into an incorrect cognition. Situational awareness, experienced by the people engaged with the Balkans necessitates a comprehensive and encompassing picture rather than certain outlines. In the last decade, moreover, Southeastern Europe was by and large identified with former Yugoslavia.

The term Western Balkans correctly differentiates the zone with predominantly security problems from the rest of the region, dominated by region-building issues. The challenge for the observer and for those engaged in the region is to sense the



post-conflict reconstruction developments in the Western Balkans and the ensuing security risks for the other parts of the peninsula, while reflecting Southeastern Europe in its entirety.

The present tension between the two parts of Southeastern Europe will inevitably transform and probably – increase, when the more advanced stages of the process of differentiated pre-accession of the region in the EU are implemented. A compensatory mechanism will have to be implemented to preserve stability and in order not to let disparities in institutional memberships transform into higher tensions and security risks. The prospect of membership for all countries from Southeastern Europe in the EU, made explicit at the Feira European Council, is to be the corner stone of such a mechanism <sup>2</sup>.

Seventhly, the ecological security risks and a long neglect of the environmental degradation. The consequences of the over-industrialised centrally planned economies of the former states of ‘real socialism’ in combination with cross-border pollution created a fundamentally unsatisfactory environmental situation in the last two decades. The cases of polluted rivers, including the Danube, the continuing degradation of the Black Sea environment from the biggest rivers in Europe remind from time to time about the immense tasks, facing the people of Southeastern Europe in upgrading the ecological situation of the region. The pollution, caused by the strike of NATO against FRY – especially through the fires in the oil-refineries and the depleted-uranium bombs, further worsened the ecological situation. Thus, Southeastern Europe assumed the features of a permanent humanitarian and ecological disaster zone with the permanent risk of earthquakes and the risk of turning the Black Sea into a dead sea.

Eighthly, risks stemming from the wider regional neighbourhood of Southeastern Europe: The CIS, the Black Sea-Caspian Sea area, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East are no less unstable direct neighbourhoods of Southeastern Europe. In fact its only stable and stabilising neighbourhoods are the EU member and first-round accession states to the north and south. All three other neighbourhoods regions are potent with and actively bear conflicts, security risks and longer-term instabilities. The risk of proliferating some of the tensions and instabilities to Southeastern Europe for the short or medium term is mostly in the realm of soft security.

The EU strategies to cope with these risks and instabilities should utilise the existing opportunities for a constructive evolution of the three listed neighbouring regions as well as the potential of the stability in the other parts of Southeastern Europe that directly borders the CIS, the Black Sea-Caspian Sea area, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

## **2. The System of Recommended EU Strategies for Southeastern Europe**

Despite the predominance of risks, some positive factors and strategic instruments of the EU currently at work may also be listed as a counterpoise:

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The Greek membership in the EU.

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The accession negotiations with Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, adding to the implementation of the Europe Agreements with these countries from the mid-90s<sup>3</sup>. A specific aspect of this evolving relationship in the security and defence area is the projected inclusion in the appropriate forms of the gradually shaping Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) of the EU. The specific Southeastern European aspects of the CESDP in combination with the various forms of NATO involvement in the region may produce a most effective net result.

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The upcoming talks for concluding a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Croatia and FYROM, adding to the Phare Programme instrument and the perspective of an eventual launch of Stabilisation and Association talks with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, adding to the Phare and other EU aid programmes. The motivating, mobilising and organising effect is real in the two pairs of countries towards more stability and cooperation even at this stage of the evolving process.

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The candidate for EU membership status for Turkey, in addition to the membership in the Customs Union of the EU.

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The Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe (July 1999).

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The projected regional organisation for free trade and economic co-operation.

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The co-ordination of present EU efforts in Southeastern Europe with other regional initiatives such as the Southeast European Co-operative Initiative (SECI), the Organisation for Black Sea Economic Co-operation (OBSEC), etc.

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The Pact of Stability, and, to some extent, the accession negotiations with Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania as well as the Stabilisation and Association Process applied by the EU to Southeastern Europe accentuate the necessity of region-building, conflict prevention, conflict management, post-conflict reconstruction and resolution of the causes of the conflicts <sup>4</sup>. The regionality principle of the EU reflects the bottom-up tendency of regionalism, stability, co-operation and integration in the EU and the top-down policies of support of the positive developments in Southeastern Europe. On the other hand, it also reflects the common need of the majority of countries from Southeastern Europe and the EU for security and stability on a democratic basis. Region-building is directly linked to the strategies of conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation and conflict resolution.

The accession negotiations and the Stabilisation and Association Process of the EU with countries from Southeastern Europe are the institutional reflections of the conditionality principle <sup>5</sup>. The latter also reflects the fundamental structural disparities of the individual countries as well as the territory divisions within the Southeast European region: the Eastern Balkans - generating stability and with a record of integration and region-building activities - and the Western Balkans - characterised mainly by wars, disintegration, various conflicts, hatreds and instabilities.

However, the Western Balkans are also in a step-by-step process of getting ready for the kind of relations dominating the Eastern Balkans – a logical reaction to the continuous social degradation and to the positive example of the alternative, presented by Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and recently – by Croatia. This is why the recommended improvements of current EU strategies are supposed to stimulate positive developments in the Western Balkans, contribute to the neutralisation of the negative ones, and provide the boosting of the Eastern part that would solidify the EU vision and practices for stability and prosperity in Southeastern Europe. The special border role of the Eastern Balkans to other EU neighbourhoods – CIS, Black Sea--Caspian Sea area, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East adds substance to that strategic approach.

The following suggestions are therefore perceived as useful elements of a ***comprehensive strategy*** or even a **Common Strategy** <sup>6</sup> that will utilise to the full the potential of the regionality and the conditionality principles within a more dominant and decisive EU policy towards Southeastern Europe.

Firstly, radically deal with the retarded, shaped for Cold War type of relations economic, energy, transport and communications infrastructure. Southeastern Europe needs to become a compatible component of the all-European transport and communications infrastructure. The EU policy should be aimed also at overcoming the fragility of the transition processes in Bulgaria and Romania and turning the two countries, alongside with Slovenia and Croatia into net contributors of the EU economic potential. For this reason the EU should concentrate on the issues of capital investment, management of foreign financial aid, unemployment, the conditions of living of the younger generation and retired people. This would help the countries in transition overcome the clientelist loyalties and networks – the nourishing environment of organised crime and corruption; stimulate the rise of a middle class

and change the trend of establishment of few extremely rich with life-style of western luxury in contrast to more than 80 per cent very poor majority.

Special attention should be devoted to the reorganisation and future of agriculture in the countries of Southeastern Europe – a major source of economic reproduction of the people of the region. A longer-term strategy of adaptation and compatibility with the agricultural sector of the EU would prevent future conflicts of interest. Dealing seriously with this issue by the EU would most probably lead to diminishing the influence of conservative political elites in certain countries of Southeastern Europe geared towards isolationism and protectionism.

A significant aspect of this strategic approach of the EU is its support for bilateral, trilateral, multilateral and regional projects by countries from Southeastern Europe and by external actors in the Stability Pact framework. Self-help in upgrading the economy and infrastructure of the region is a realistic, sustainable solution that deserves substantial backing and stimulation, but without overestimating its potential. Regional economic co-operation may positively add to the EU integration of Southeastern Europe.

Secondly, focus on the Serbian assertive nationalism and the Albanian irredentism and develop comprehensive programmes and plans for treating the two issues. A special accent should be placed on getting out from the vicious cycle of Serbian-Albanian relations: conflict-hostile perception-threatening behaviour-more hatred-acts of cruelty-acts of revenge-a more intense, even violent conflict<sup>7</sup>. The key question is how to switch from a threatening to a more conciliatory behaviour. Two factors would bear key importance in that aspect: the improvement of the cognitive element of the perceptions about Southeastern Europe on which longer-term psychological inclinations are based, on the one hand, and the achievement of decisive progress in the countries of Southeastern Europe that symbolise the EU integration future of the region (Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia), on the other hand. It is predominantly the positive, developed and progressive direct environment of the most repulsive and dangerous ethnic antagonism that would dilute the ethnic tension and steer the way of the opposing sides to normal, European routes of social and political behaviour. Our concept is that the change of behaviour from a threatening type to a conciliatory one is linked to presenting and proving there are more options for the two sides – not in the field of conflicting attitudes, but in the area of constructive efforts and higher living standards. At the same time full implementation of the Dayton Agreement, UNSC Resolution 1244 and the Military-Technical Agreement for Kosovo<sup>8</sup> must be guaranteed as well as bringing to international justice all the war criminals and those who committed genocide and crimes against humanity.

All the other security risks and instabilities that stem from ethnic and religious differences are politically manageable directly. Each potential or real ethnic issue in Southeastern Europe should be mapped and monitored so that adequate political and legal instruments are applied in time to prevent escalation. There are also modest efforts by players in the region to act as mediators in complex and tense conflicting relations between Serbs and Albanians. Bulgaria, for example, has initiated such efforts for the Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, with some positive results. These and

similar activities in the field of building-up a negotiating culture for dealing with conflicts deserve the support of the EU.

Thirdly, stabilising state borders and state institutions in Southeastern Europe. An international conference, recently initiated by the French EU Presidency, may lead to the support for particular countries in Southeastern Europe; further isolation of the regime of Milosevic as well as confirmation of the democratic principles of state-building in the region. The inviolability of state borders is a major principle for the stability of the individual states and a corresponding international conference reiterating this fundamental international legal principle.

Another source of strengthening the state-building in Southeastern Europe is the improvement of the social and economic situation in the countries of the region, the assimilation and internalisation by the political and social elites of the principles of democracy as well as religious freedom and ethnic tolerance.

Yet another, extremely significant component of the strategy of the EU in this field is the insistence on the involvement of ethnic minorities in the activity of the state institutions. In parallel, friendly relations with the neighbouring country, where the majority of the population is of the same ethnic origin as the ethnic minority of the respective state can also contribute to the stability of the state institutions. Denial of ethnic separatism is of paramount significance for the stability of the state borders and state institutions.

The regional process of co-operation and security from Sofia 1996 and its continuation after the end of the Kosovo war – this time without the participation of FRY, underlines this aspect of the regional stability. EU may continue to monitor and support the regional activism of improving the security situation and the climate of co-operation. A pending return of FRY in the process contingent on the state of democracy in this country is another incentive for the opposition against the regime of Milosevic.

Fourthly, preserve a vibrant strategy of countering hard security risks and instabilities. It would be premature for at least 10 years from now to pull out the international forces from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and FYROM. The need to possess a deterring and effectively fighting potential on the ground of these ex-Yugoslav territories would serve also as a guarantee for the progress of the differentiated pre-accession of Southeastern Europe by the EU.

The EU should utilise to the maximum the positive effect of regional multinational military co-operation and force-building. The Rapid Reaction Force of Southeastern Europe (MPFSEE) as well as the accession negotiations of Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia are appropriate opportunities to adapt the regional component of the evolving CESDP. It may effectively interact with the extensive NATO networks in the region. In terms of eventual missions of the Southeast European component of the CESDP of the EU – since 1994 peacekeeping, search and rescue, humanitarian, peace enforcement and emergency planning are tasks and operations already experienced by the contending for EU membership nations from the region in co-operation with PfP

countries from Southeastern Europe. Participation in IFOR/SFOR and in KFOR missions provided the best lessons of co-operative security and the evolution of regional strategic culture of European and Euro-Atlantic type – a fundamental prerequisite for improved homogeneity of the states in the region.

Another direction in the hard security and defence area that the EU may utilise is the stimulation of transparency, confidence-building and the establishment of combined military units of countries from Southeastern Europe. Transparent, accountable and responsible armed forces, military budgets and democratically controlled military are strategic goals of priority importance and with a multiplying positive effect for the stability and peace of the whole region.

The EU should also provide the necessary conditions and include into defence industry programmes the regional actors and their military-production complexes on a differentiated basis. The already institutionalised co-operation of the Ministers of Defence of the countries of Southeastern Europe, the South Eastern European Defence Ministers group (SEDM) provides an opportunity to be involved in some way in the activity of the newly shaped military institutions of the EU – the Military Committee and the Military Staff of the Council of the EU. Certainly this would require also a higher level of institutionalised co-operation of the Union and the North Atlantic Alliance.

Fifthly, counter soft-security risks by the economic and social development of the region; by resolving the ethnic conflicts; by ending the wars and the economic sanctions regime.

However, the EU should carry also a direct fight against the soft-security risks and instabilities by insisting on the harmonisation of the legal codes of the Southeastern European countries with the Union laws. This should be reflected on the legislative activity, the judicial reform and the interior ministries' co-operation in the region. Furthermore, the existing network of bilateral, trilateral and multilateral police co-operation may be placed in an interactive relation with the EU police co-operation on issues of common interest.

Sixthly, overcome the tensions between the militant and retarded on its way to EU integration Western part of the SEE region and the region-building and stable Eastern part by the following strategic approaches: first, provide clear criteria for membership, pre-accession and differentiated pre-accession to all countries of Southeastern Europe, and second, promise the perspective of joining the EU integration train and the faster integration train, when conditions for that get ripe, while applying interim programmes that would accelerate the individual national processes of ripening and adaptation to the EU membership criteria.

A well balanced and individualised application of the Accession Negotiations, the Stabilisation and Association talks and the Stability Pact instruments in combination with the various forms of NATO involvement in the region, including its enlargement policy, is the key to the Union's strategy in that field.

Seventhly, meet the ecological security risks of Southeastern Europe by qualifying this issue as an all-European problem, introducing EU environmental programmes in the region and catalyse the national mobilisation and regional co-operation of the countries from the Balkans to improve the environmental situation.

Co-operation on environmental issues in Southeastern Europe has the potential of a positive spill-over in other areas of relations. This is why the EU strategy should target at enhancing the co-operation on cross-border and regional ecological issues.

Eighthly, dealing with the risks, stemming from the neighbourhoods of Southeastern Europe – the CIS, the Black Sea-Caspian Sea zone, and the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East requires a three-fold EU strategy:

Implement and develop the existing instruments of relations of the EU with these neighbourhoods: EU-Russia and EU-Ukraine structured relations; extension of more EU programmes and projects to Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and other states,

Join forces with NATO in countering the risks and instabilities from there and assign the special border role to the countries of Southern, Southeastern and Eastern Balkans in parallel with the connecting economic and infrastructure role relative to the three neighbouring areas.

### **3. The Arc of Stability and the Locomotive Strategy**

The EU country strategies in Southeastern Europe should be tailored according to the ability of the individual states in the region of 'self-correction' of the national attitudes in the process of the EU differentiated pre-accession. From this perspective a leading element of the EU country strategies is the encouragement of the national initiative and efforts to building democracy, market economy, respect for human and minority rights according to international standards and the rule of law. The EU is supposed to augment the national potential of dealing with all these tasks. A necessary protective measure in implementing this strategic approach is a careful analysis and judgement of the participation of groupings of organised crime in positions of power that traditionally belong to state authorities or of the links that might exist between the Governments or individual Ministers and criminal or Mafia structures.

Another general requirement to the EU country strategies is the prevention of playing external to Southeastern Europe powerful states or institutions against each other by interested adventurous local regional actors in a conflict. The experience of Milosevic in playing that game should be a good lesson to the responsible powerful states, pretending also to bear global responsibilities.

An additional component is the so called utilisation of the **locomotive strategy**: rendering of encompassing support to countries that draw the train of regional stability in the interest of the individual states, the region of SEE and in the direction of EU integration. This strategy corresponds to the **arc of stability** in Southeastern Europe: Slovenia-Hungary-Romania-Bulgaria-(Greece/Turkey). What matters most for this strategy is its **multiple effect**: it gives a potential solution to the

tension between regionality and conditionality principles; defines the particular priorities of the differentiated pre-accession in the EU of South-Eastern Europe; mobilises the capacity and the responsibility of countries from the region towards individual and regional integration in the Union; provides an opportunity of burden-sharing on the way to the EU integration, etc.

Having in mind these general requirements, the EU should draft individual country strategy with the intention that each of these individual strategies would interact with the first two levels of strategies suggested at the two higher levels of abstraction and aimed at guaranteeing the success of the differentiated pre-accession of Southeastern Europe. Here are some ideas that might be helpful and add to the drafting of the individual 'country strategies' of the EU towards South-Eastern Europe, depending on the specific security risks and instabilities that need to be dealt with:

### **3. 1. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

The main security risks and instabilities stem from the undemocratic regime in Belgrade, from its destructive potential, including a war-making one, and the persisting organisational incapacity of the Serbian opposition to present effectively a political alternative to its people. Very probably this organisational inefficiency of the opposition is a function of the general repressive character of the regime and the planned infiltration of the very opposition by the security services of the Milosevic government.

Another major problem is the conceptual grounds of the eventual future alternative to the present leader in Belgrade, i. e. how far would the eventual new leaders of FRY have drifted away from the assertive nationalistic Serbian mindset – the trouble-maker for the region of South-Eastern Europe and for its own people in the last ten years. In practical terms the dominating thinking in Serbia continues to rely on the notion that a nation is a biological and not a historical category. There are no much promises that the present and future decisions will not be based on 500-600 years old premises. The tendency to grab a spontaneous democratic movement of young people and place it under the banners of Great Serbia thinkers and thinking is a long-term destabilising factor in Southeastern Europe. Its repercussions are on the policy that logically stems from it: of a return to a new version of division of Europe into opposing blocs. It is only on the basis of disintegration that Serbia would be in a position to play eventually the role of the regional hegemonial power or at least the balancer of power in Southeastern Europe. The acceptance by Russia of the observer status of FRY in the Russian-Belarussian Union is a logical component in the mosaic of an eventual divided Southeastern Europe in a divided Europe – never whole and free for democracy, diversity and liberty.

#### On the issue of recommended strategies of the EU:

The FRY must be prevented of acquiring or/and producing chemical weapons. It must be deterred militarily for the mid-to-long term.



Democratisation of FRY, including an eventual constitutional reform that would reflect the democratic will of the nations and the national minorities of the federation and democratic standards of Europe.

Review of the sanctions regime. It should illuminate and paralyse the individuals, dragging FRY and its people to social stagnation and historical obsolescence and provide incentives to the individual Serbs to adapt to the European environment of the Balkans in a co-operative and compatible way. Diplomatic fora for the further isolation of the regime in Belgrade – international and regional, should be stimulated.

The option of starting talks with the eventual new authorities in Belgrade for stabilisation and association agreement should be kept open as an incentive for positive change of the policy, society and its mentality.

### **3. 2. Kosovo**

Being de jure a province of the sovereign Serbian republic, Kosovo constitutes a special case within the FRY issue. It presents six major security risks:

A blockage of the post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The lasting and persisting ethnic intolerance, driven by the two main communities – the Albanian and the Serbian with changing roles of initiators of the antagonistic relationship.

The pending constitutional arrangement of the province.

The hard security risk of a new military confrontation.

The risk that the Kosovo separatism may trigger separatist behaviour in other regions and countries with Albanian population – Southern Serbia, FYROMacedonia, north-western Greece.

The risk that the volatile situation in Kosovo is continuously exploited for the purposes of polarising an Islamic extremist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, FYROMacedonia, Sanjak as well as for inducing tensions between Turkey and Greece.

Apart from the strategic approaches, stemming from the above considerations, the EU should concentrate also on the following options:

First, keep a permanent and active dialogue with the governments of the countries, where Albanian brethren live and contain also by all other existing channels the rise of Great Albania nationalism. The political leaders of FRY, Kosovo, FYROMacedonia and Albania as well as the administrative leadership of north-western Greece should preserve their dialogue with the EU and, as much as possible, among themselves.

Secondly, the EU should not stop its co-ordinating effort to international organisations (UN, OSCE, CE, NATO) and important external to the region governments for keeping their political pressure on the internal political factors with a potential to dilute ethnic tensions and guarantee a more tolerant ethnic behaviour. The education of the culture of ethnic tolerance is a long-term issue that the EU should take care of.

Thirdly, continuation of the deterring and restraining presence of the UN-mandated international forces – as long as needed for the stability of the province and Southeastern Europe.

Fourthly, prevention of the polarisation of the extremist Islamic movement in the region and its linkage with other hot places in the world – the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, etc. The stimulation of the Greek-Turkish rapprochement would guarantee the multiplying effect of destroying both the pan-Islamic and the Pan-Orthodox axes formation in Southeastern Europe. The policy of Bulgaria on the ethnic and religious issues may be exemplified and encouraged throughout the region.

### **3. 3. Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Security risks, requiring a special attention in Bosnia and Herzegovina are:

The fragility of the post-conflict reconstruction activity.

The fragility of the state with its unstable central institutions.

The hard security risk of military confrontation – between the ethnically defined entities and with FRY.

The EU strategic approaches should therefore include:

First, the knowledge/information/perception strategic component of gradually erasing the ethnic hatreds and stimulating the perception of the commonality of interests in the present and the future for all ethnic groups in a larger European context.

Secondly, preserve the international protectorate as the regulative administrative hat – as long as needed for the ripening of the local conditions towards a responsible self-rule, stability and integration. This strategic approach should be added by a purposeful and keen selection of new, modern, tolerant, international- and integration-minded leaders and politicians, who are in favour of regional stability and cooperation and have closed the pages of ethnic hatred and antagonism. They must demonstrate a willingness to work for the federal authority and not for the semi-independent ethnic groups.

The strengthening of the central authorities of the practically three-party federation should have its domestic and international dimension. Building trust among the different national parties, involving the central institutions in successful international tasks and projects, bringing the nascent Bosnian armed forces into contact and co-

operation with the existing multilateral military networks in Southeastern Europe – these are some of the potential trends for work.

Thirdly, keep as long as needed an effective military force – for deterring and effective combat purposes.

Fourthly, bring the issue of strengthening the Croatian component and its contribution to the stabilisation of the federal structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the list of requirements for starting the stabilisation and association negotiations with Croatia.

Fifthly, continue the autonomous commercial preferences of the EU for Bosnia and Herzegovina as an incentive to increase political predictability and state-institution effectiveness. The implementation of these requirements may give the start of stabilisation and association negotiations of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Union.

### **3. 4. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROMacedonia)**

The security risk and instability list in FYROM includes:

The hard economic conditions, caused from the deprived economic status within the former Yugoslav socialist federation, the difficulties of the transformation of the economy process and the devastating effects of the Belgrade-driven ethnic cleansing with expected consequences of creating a new ill person of the Balkans issue – the young state of FYROMacedonia.

The ethnic balance and the fragility of the mutual tolerance relationship between the two main ethnic entities.

The national identity obsession of the political elite, especially of the pro-Serbian political forces, and the dangerous interaction of this issue with the ethnic stability issue.

A continued dependence on and influence of Belgrade on the pro-Serbian political forces in FYROMacedonia. The influential factors on Skopje are the nostalgia for the stability of ex-Yugoslavia; the anti-Bulgarianism, orchestrated by Belgrade; the agents of the intelligence and security services of FRY, having strong positions in the Social-Democratic Party (former Yugoslav communists) ranks. These three factors interact and produce a destructive for the young Macedonian statehood critical mass.

A hard security risk of war – with Albania (due to the Albanian irredentist behaviours) or with FRY (because of Serbia's intentions to destabilise the ethnic and state-border situation in Southeastern Europe and preserve the conflicting attitudes in and to the whole region).

The EU strategic approaches should consider:

First, the needed support of the pro-EU and Euro-Atlantic integration political forces.

Secondly, the need of distancing the young state from the destructive nationalistic, anti-European, anti-regional and conflict-driving influences of Serbia – the Milosevic regime and Serbian nationalism in general.

Thirdly, the need of economic and financial support, especially after the traumas, inflicted by FRY on FYROMacedonia with its 1999 ethnic cleansing campaign against the Albanians in Kosovo.

Fourthly, the need to stimulate the young state's nation-building problem in a constructive direction, pressing on the positive achievements in the post-1992 period and not on the antagonistic pattern of slicing common Balkan history, language and culture. A lesson that needs to be learnt by the present and future leaders in Skopje is that the commonality of the roots of different nations and states is not necessarily a factor of antagonism and paranoia, as demonstrated by FYROMacedonia to Greece and Bulgaria in the 90s. On the contrary, this is a good reason for developing positive peaceful relations with the neighbouring countries – the building-block of European integration.

Fifthly, act to block the Albanian irredentist tendencies that may lead to the disruption of the state.

Sixthly, keep an international military force in FYROMacedonia for deterring and preventive purposes – an additional guarantee for the sovereignty of the state, the nation and all their additional attributes. The participation of FYROMacedonia in the various multilateral military networks in Southeastern Europe should be stimulated.

Seventhly, use the negotiations for concluding a stabilisation and association agreement as a guiding instrument to promote the previous six requirements.

### **3. 5. Albania**

Launching in the future stabilisation and association negotiations with Albania should be utilised to the maximum for dealing with all these issues. Much of the present perceptions in Europe on organised crime, drug trafficking and illegal immigration are linked to the 'Albanian connection'. However, these threats to security matter both for the safety of the EU countries and for the internal stability of Albania and the wider region of Southeastern Europe.

The improvement of the economic, financial and internal political situation is certainly an area, along with the solution of the up-enlisted threats to the stability of the country that the EU may substantially influence.

The so-called 'Pan-Albanianism' is another area that seems politically manageable in the EU-Albanian relations. The incentive of EU and NATO memberships is strong enough to help Albanian society and politicians overcome the temptations of polarising the 'Albanian issue'. Insisting on developing co-operative neighbourly relations, on a benign role in solving the Kosovo constitutional issue should be a part of the EU country strategy to Albania.

#### **4. Strategy Recommendations for the Process of Differentiated Pre-Accession**

The present strategic instruments of the EU – the Accession Negotiations, the Stabilisation and Association Negotiations and the Pact of Stability for Southeastern Europe, should be preserved and developed to a more versatile contents and performance and, eventually placed within an encompassing strategic framework.

The EU strategic approaches to Southeastern Europe should reflect a vision of overcoming the structural causes of mid- and longer term instabilities and security risks. They should be tested if they meet the requirements enlisted in the first section of this chapter.

However, coping with the needs of the more effective strategic approaches as well as with the requirements of a regular decision-making process, concerning Southeastern Europe would necessitate a more systematic, comprehensive and caring of the regional perceptions ‘knowledge basis’, including a more vigorous analysis- and recommendation-support arm, composed of Union and Southeastern Europe experts on the region.

The integration of Southeastern Europe is one of the short-to-mid-term litmus tests of the EU capacity to act as a world actor by solving major security and other social issues of global significance in its own backyard. Hence, placing the Southeast European region’s integration in the priority short-to-mid-term list of global tasks is of vital importance for the Union as one of the centres of global power.

Since the integration of Southeastern Europe in the EU is also – like European integration in general, an incremental process, probably with a higher velocity of implementation, regional and country strategies of the Union should give way to and stimulate in the short-to-mid-term the core group of ‘willing and able’ countries in the region, that have started their integration in the EU, respectively – their ‘locomotive engine’ strategic role they play, while preserving the encompassing, inclusive approach to the integration of all countries from the region in the mid-to-longer-term. If there are countries that initiate and implement ‘Europe’ policy in the Balkans, then the EU should also bring itself closer to the local generators of stability and ‘European-ness’. At the same time the ‘locomotive strategy’ of the EU will bring closer to EU membership these countries from the region, which most ardently and effectively work now for the closer integration of Southeast European region in the Union. This kind of evolution of Southeastern Europe would also clearly demonstrate to the Serbian people the benefits of democracy, free markets and European integration.

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