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Serbia, the Last Car on Balkan Express

Summary: It is often said humorously that there were three kinds of states in the Western Balkans in EU context: candidates, potential candidates and Serbia. The largest country of the region, which has significant economic and social potential, satisfactory administrative capacities and over 70% of public support for EU accession remains unable to strengthen and improve its process of integration in the great European family. Contrary to the situation in other countries, there was no broad social consensus on the need for EU membership in Serbia. Moreover, a new turn on the Serbian political scene becomes more and more obvious. The Democratic Party of Serbia conducts political and qualitative distancing from Europe and European values. Another important moment is the strengthening of the Socialist Party of Serbia. On the other hand, the prospects for the creation of a minority government of democratic forces are not very optimistic. Therefore, Serbia is threatened to continue to remain a 'one issue' state if European minded politicians do not stay strong in insisting on the difficult job which has to be undertaken in spite of their promise for a parallel fight for Kosovo. This will, however be impossible without a clear and true support of the EU, even if it means taking some 'risky steps' for that.

In 2003, the EU – Western Balkans Summit¹ in Thessaloniki made an extremely important decision concerning the future of West Balkan countries. A concrete and powerful message that opens a clear European perspective for this region was sent out. Coordinates selected, road signs put up. An invitation to dance the tango has been extended.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_summit_en.htm.

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Having in mind that the European Union made a commitment to integrate the Balkans, expecting earnest work from Balkan countries in making the EU to keep its promise was only logical.

This promise sparked off expectations in several directions. First, clear European perspective was supposed to influence regional political trends and, above all, trends in the economy.

Changes in political preferences in Western Balkan countries were supposed to include putting European integration on the very top of the daily political agenda. The European Union began developing its relations with the countries of the region on the basis of a regional approach as long ago as 1997. The approach sets political and economic conditions as the basis for developing bilateral trade relations with the European Union. Later on, in view of the challenges of the Kosovo crisis and the changing situation in the region, the Commission extended the regional approach into a long-term *Stabilization and Association Process* (SAP).

While it is proved to be a real incentive for the region's countries to carry out essential but often painful reforms, it also implies the need to comply with tougher conditions for political and economic development and regional cooperation. The crucial point set was that each country must be assessed individually in the light of the progress it has made.

The conditional nature of the European Union was considered as a major opportunity for the European Union to exert an influence and therefore it became one of the fundamental aspects of the strategy for *Europeanization* and fulfillment of criteria such as the rule of law, democracy, media freedom, human rights and the rights of minorities; free and fair elections, completion of the first steps towards economic reform, a readiness to cultivate good neighborhood relations and compliance with the *Dayton Agreement* (cooperation with the *International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia*, the return of refugees, etc.).

To support these countries with the necessary comprehensive institutional reform and bring them closer to the European community of values and creation of the market economy, financial instruments have been designed with significant funds² to be provided to the region as the CARDS (*Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization*)³ program and finally the IPA (*Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance*)⁴ program.

² Financial support for the Western Balkans: between year 2000 and 2006 amounted 5385 million Euros; IPA assistance for 2007 – 2011 is 4 billion Euros. More in "European Forum" No. 3, *Vreme* (March 27, 2008).

Five Years After

Five years after the summit in *Thessaloniki*, two countries, Croatia and Macedonia have the status of candidate. Accession negotiations have not yet begun with Macedonia, while Croatia hopes to attain membership very soon. Albania and Montenegro have signed the *Stabilization and Association Agreement*. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the last condition for the SAA signing was fulfilled by the adoption of police reform laws. Serbia has initiated the *Stabilization and Association Agreement* in December last year, but signing still depends on fulfillment of the condition concerning full cooperation with the ICTY.

It is often said humorously that there were three kinds of states in the Western Balkans in EU context: candidates, potential candidates and Serbia.

According to the EU's so-called 'regatta principle', any accession candidate will be judged on the basis of its own individual readiness for membership. At the same time, it is important that all the boats reach the destination port. How does this principle influence the integration process of Western Balkan countries?

Having in mind the previous experience, countries rarely enter the EU individually but as part of a group. This was the pattern in the most recent rounds of enlargement, when ten states joined together in 2004 and another two, Bulgaria and Romania in 2007. This has created fears in Western Balkans among some countries that they will be lumped together with – and held back by – countries seen as laggards.

While good neighborhood relations and regional cooperation are a part of the *Copenhagen Criteria* for accession, this is often seen as contradictory to

While good neighborhood relations and regional cooperation are a part of the Copenhagen Criteria for accession, this is often seen as contradictory to the regatta principle. It is difficult to understand why a possible 'caravan' strategy was abandoned in case of accession of Balkan countries.

³ Adopted with the "Council Regulation (EC) No 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000". More information at http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/cards/general/2666_00_en.pdf.

⁴ Since 2007, EU pre-accession funding is channeled through a single, unified instrument designed to deliver focused support to both candidate and potential candidate countries. The legal basis for this assistance is "Council Regulation 1085/2006", adopted on July 17, 2006.

the regatta principle mentioned earlier. This contradiction can of course be explained by the fact that the EU itself is built on regional cooperation and one should rather consider this an essential practicing ground for future membership. However, it is difficult to understand why a possible 'caravan' strategy was abandoned in case of accession of Balkan countries, which could have offered encouragement to every country in the direction of intense cooperation and accelerated process of normalization of relations for the purpose of joint accession to the EU.

While finding a healthy balance between competition and cooperation can be difficult, it has not prevented countries that are ahead in the accession process from offering regular consultations and support to those further behind. The similarities in the languages spoken in most of the countries of the region made it possible for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro to work closely together on the translation of the so-called EU *acquis communautaire* into local languages.

This is not the only shining example for regional co-operation. It has been developed to such a level that the ownership for this process is now in the hands of the 'region'. *The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe* (SP SEE) transferred its responsibilities to the *Regional Co-operation Council* (RCC). From March 2008 on, the RCC will play a key role in consolidating achievements of the Stability Pact to date and in making further progress in the different areas of co-operation. It will also continue to provide a platform for supporting further Euro-Atlantic integration of South Eastern Europe. It is obvious, that the reality is not so rosy in the region in many fields, including the relations and co-operation among the countries. There is still a lot to be done. The good news is, however, that much more substantial developments are achieved on the ground than most of the politicians could imagine. People to people contacts are an everyday reality in the Balkans in the most various fields. This is in many cases not the merit of political support and decisions but would be definitely difficult to happen without a wide regional and international structure what the SP SEE has provided since 1999.

What is the real context within which Balkan countries are trying to conclude their processes of integration?

After two rounds of enlargement towards the East (the 'great enlargement' of 2004 with ten countries and accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007) it seems that countries of the region are condemned to suffer all negative consequences of these enlargements, together with the significant change of atmosphere within the EU. Enlargement fatigue that dominates the EU public is based on consequences of last enlargements, but also on conflicting internal visions on the EU's future. Today, the greatest opposition to the future

membership of Balkan countries comes from France, Germany and Austria. On the other hand, economically speaking, Austria has greatly benefited from the accession of East and Central European countries and it is one of the greatest investors in the Balkans.

The negative image of the Balkans is surely one of the main factors of unfavorable influence on the attitude towards membership in the EU. The solution to this problem greatly depends on us. It is a big mistake to think that we are so important and unavoidable that Europe constantly ponders over us. The reality is that we are absent in Europe's everyday life and we need to work very hard to push any news about us when it is generally known that there's not much interest in positive stories.

Question without Answer?

Contrary to the situation in other countries, there was no broad social consensus on the need for EU membership in Serbia. The largest country of the region, which has significant economic and social potentials, satisfactory administrative capacities and over 70% of public support for EU accession remains unable to strengthen and improve its process of integration in the great European family. One high EU official said: "Serbia could have been the locomotive in EU integrations of the West Balkans, but at this moment it remains as the last car on that train composition".

In regard to EU integrations, the year 2008 began unsuccessfully for Serbia. The *Stabilization and Association Agreement* was not yet offered and the *Political Agreement on Cooperation* was refused by the Serbian government. Relations with Europe have worsened after the declaration of independence of Kosovo. Eight years after the democratic 'renaissance', Serbia has not yet started its march down the 'road of no return' towards Europe.

In order to accelerate the process of European integration in Serbia, there are two preconditions: one is political consensus about the nature of European integration and the other is related to meeting technical preconditions for practical enforcement of this acceleration. Contrary to the national consensus, political elites in Serbia have not yet reached a consensus on this matter.

Political will for the process of EU integration is not only a phrase that Europe has no alternative or commitment of the country to become a member of the EU. This process should be filled with content, which is related to the process of fulfillment of standards. In Serbia, fulfillment of those standards and conditions generally has a negative connotation.

While reaching political consensus remains a hard task, according to the EU Commission's evaluation, it seems that Serbia may establish its strategy

for an accelerated process of EU integration on technical and administrative capacities which are adequate for the realization of such a process, thanks to the most advanced administration in this region.⁵

"Administration, however, can 'push' the process only that far. Real success and acceleration can be achieved only with the support from the political elite with a clear consensus on this matter", wrote Tanja Mišćević, Director of the *EU Integration Office of Serbia*.

EU and Serbia

While many and diverse protagonists in Serbia invest huge efforts for the purpose of development, democratization and *Europeanization* of the society, which cannot be successful without the strong parallel campaign to raise the awareness about reform processes and development processes, as well as about the essence of European integration in the sense of implementation of European values and heritage of contemporary European society where the Balkans and Serbia surely belong, the so called 'folk block'⁶ led by Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica has focused their election campaign on satanization of the European idea.

Teofil Pančić, renowned columnist, above all blames political elites for the obstruction of development and opening of Serbia and its accession to the EU, caused by their commitment to their own interests. "That is why the name the European Union is constantly being connected with the worst of things. The idea is to conserve ourselves in a state of floating between heaven and earth".

"Contradictory messages sent from Serbia to Europe are equally bad for citizens, for the world and for the EU. Relativization of the importance of EU integration processes in Serbia is in fact a relativization of the adoption of European standards and development into a civilized democratic society", said Ms Sonja Licht, President of the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, in her comment on Vojislav Koštunica's statement that EU membership "should be put aside", because Serbia will become a member of the EU before only after "many, many years". Koštunica's coalition partner, Velimir Ilić made

⁵ From an article of T. Mišćević, "European Forum" No. 3, *Vreme* (March 27, 2008).

⁶ The election coalition composed by the *Serbian Democratic Party* and the *New Serbia*.

a similar statement saying that "[the] EU may no longer exist when we get there".

On the other hand, even the *Serbian Radical Party* now speaks that Serbia should become a member of the European Union. According to some political analysts in Serbia, a significant number of *Radical Party* voters are not nationalists, only people who are dissatisfied with the social environment in this country and who believe that the *Radical Party* can lead Serbia to Europe.

Will forthcoming elections lead to a historical 'happy ending' in Serbia, in the sense that Serbia's path should no longer be questioned? Of course, there are always at least two alternatives. In this case: Serbia can only move towards the EU or not move at all. Serbia may decide to stay outside of global trends and outside of integration processes, but that would mean that Serbia is willing to become an isolated country where there won't be any political democracy of rule of law. Europe itself is not the goal; it is a process and a means to secure development and better living in Serbia.

One of the authors of the famous *Radio B92* show *Peščanik (Hourglass)*, Ms Svetlana Lukić has said that the issue of signing the *Stabilization and Association Agreement* is actually a matter of "elementary self-preservation and survival. We alone are not capable of making this country decent and therefore, someone from the outside should show us through the provisions of that Agreement what needs to be done." According to her words, Serbia is governed by a 'political cast' that rules completely outside of the public's reach, which are capable of doing anything they want.

EU and Serbia plus Kosovo

Certain Government representatives in Serbia have managed to do what 'Brussels' would dare not: condition the European future of Serbia by the issue of recognition of independence of Kosovo. Vojislav Koštunica, Prime Minister (of the Provisional Government of Serbia) and leader of the DSS-NS coalition (*Democratic Party of Serbia* and *New Serbia*) claims that Boris Tadić and his coalition's insistence on signing the *Stabilization and Association Agreement* actually includes a hidden intention to recognize the independence of Kosovo as a "first NATO country". At his election rallies, Koštunica speaks about the *Agreement* as a document that obliges Brussels to reveal which borders of Serbia are being recognized. Do they offer cooperation to the 'whole' of Serbia that includes Kosovo or to Serbia without Kosovo? For Premier Koštunica, the fact that the *Agreement* initiated by the Government he lead on November 7,

2007 will be completely identical with the one which should be offered to Serbia today, is of no importance in these new circumstances.

To this day, Serbia has signed a significant number of international and regional Agreements that clearly regard Serbia with borders defined by the Constitution of Serbia and by the current international documents together with the *Resolution 1244*. The same framework is accepted by the EU and stated in the Article 135 of the *Stabilization and Association Agreement*.

Quite understandably, recognition of one-sided declaration of independence of Kosovo by the majority of EU member countries and sending the EULEX⁷ mission to Kosovo can easily be misinterpreted by the public as hostile steps against Serbia. In the middle of demagogic and absolute focus on Kosovo in the context of painful transition and heavy social crisis, together with many months of deception of Serbian society with unreal promises and mythological 'good night stories' about the inseparability of the 'cradle of Serbia', integrity and rationality of citizens in Serbia who are suffering the hardships of coping with everyday challenges should at least be praised. That's the least that could be done.

Not many people in Serbia can identify themselves with ugly images that circled the globe on February 22, this year, after the large protest organized by the Government of Serbia against the independence of Kosovo. I do not believe that this was the main goal of protesting citizens who were invited and bus transported to the capital city for a peaceful protest in expression of national discontent. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine that spontaneously formed groups of young people can set fire and devastate several Embassy buildings in Belgrade without having at least a silent approval from the Government. Blinded by their mantra about Kosovo, the Premier of Serbia and some Government Ministers have shamelessly used the youth of Serbia to explain the disgraceful acts of organized groups of hooligans as honorable patriotic steps of young enlightened people ready to fight for basic human rights and principles of international law violated by 'taking away Kosovo from Serbia'.

Inspired by the enthusiasm of their passionate speeches and by the declared commitment of Serbia to focus exclusively on the struggle to bring Kosovo back in tames that follow, members of the 'folk block' have decided to start challenging their own coalition partners and gave them conditions, which ultimately resulted with the break-up of the Government and with the announcement of new parliamentary elections which are to take place at the same time as local and regional elections scheduled earlier for May 11.

⁷ On February 16, 2008 the EU Council decided to launch *EULEX Kosovo – a European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo*.

Historical Elections – A Déjà Vu

"Why does every election round after the year 2000 in Serbia bear a historical importance? Because we cannot allow a return to the nineties and we must finally make this political path an irreversible one to the future, not back to the difficult past" said Boris Tadić, president of Serbia. However, the question is how to explain to two thirds of citizens that support the idea of Serbia becoming a member of the EU that political elites and the EU demand the confirmation of their support for a European future yet again, after the already expressed clear confirmation of that support on presidential elections held in January this year, which by the way also proved the superiority of citizens' minds over minds of people who run this country. At the same time, some have a plan to confuse the citizens of Serbia with contradictory, incorrect and unclear messages about the EU and integration in everyday broadcasts. In creation of all this confusion of the Serbian public, a good part of responsibility lies with Brussels that sends out empty phrases and unclear messages at best.

Serbia is completely polarized. Everything is black and white. If you are pro EU, you are against Kosovo, and vice versa. However, there is no public debate on these matters. Serbia is now in the phase of continuous campaigning for or Presidential, local, parliamentary elections. A campaign for Kosovo: *Kosovo is Serbia*. Some people truly feel like the nineties are back. People of a different opinion are being intimidated; public statements are radical from both sides. The election campaign is dirty and based on mutual accusations, almost completely without realistic and concrete solutions for the most acute problems of this country. The civil society is confused and exhausted. Due to intensive mobilization in previous times, NGOs and other civil organizations have had less time to focus on and to develop a substantial institutional basis for their operations. This with less and less donor support leads to a situation in which NGOs do not only have to stir positive changes in society but to fight to survive as organizations.⁸

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⁸ "Déjà Vu: Civil Society Within a 5-Year Perspective", *Serbian Civil Society Brief*, Pontis Foundation (March 14, 2008).

After several years of inactivity, *Otpor* activists have relaunched their activities. They call for the protection of ideas set on October 5, 2000. Forthcoming elections are crucial, because changes initiated on October 5, 2000 are now being halted and “there is a danger of returning to the times like those of the previous decade” said Nenad Seguljev, one of the *Otpor* activists.

What kind of Government should Serbia elect on May 11 in order to seriously embark on the journey of European integration and in order to become a candidate country by the end of this year? First, it is important to have a Government that understands the process of European integration above all as a process that requires their consensus and support. It has to be a Government that lasts. Is that possible in Serbia?

New/Old Political Reality in Serbia

According to professor Jovan Komšić, renowned political sociologist, “almost all large political parties in Serbia put Europe and European values on their flags, but only the *Democratic Party*, *G17plus* and *Liberal Democratic Party* remain truly on a pro European course, which they follow on the basis of their strong and clear program goals. The *Serbian Radical Party* sends out controversial views on desirability of accession to the EU, because they are trying to maintain a wide area for maneuvering in the midst of battle for power. This behavior can be explained by their will for power which requires more votes, having in mind that two thirds of citizens in Serbia support the EU perspective”.

There is a new turn on the political scene today. As May elections draw nearer, the Democratic Party of Serbia conducts political and qualitative distancing from Europe and European values. Another important moment that may bear much influence on creation of post-electoral coalitions is strengthening of the Socialist Party of Serbia. Milan Nikolić from the *Center for Alternative Studies* agrees that it is possible now that the Socialist Party of Serbia will take over the role played by the *Democratic Party of Serbia* so far the political party with greatest coalition potential. However, their ‘blackmailing’ politics will greatly depend on election results. In this regard, socialists have seriously decided to regain voters lost to the *Serbian Radical Party*, which was recognized as a successor of Slobodan Milošević’s political agenda.

One of the most optimistic outcomes of the May 11 elections could be a minority government of democratic forces. The other scenario brings about the coalition between *Serbian Radical Party* and Koštunica’s *Democratic Party of Serbia*. The minority Government may last a year or two. When that period

expires, the *Radical Party* can still prevail. However, after two years of democratic government, provided that reform processes will be intensified, relations with EU may be improved to the level of making most important processes almost unstoppable. This is provided also that a true public support for the EU, instead of a mere declarative support, will be pursued much more intensively. In this case, citizens will surely vote next time for the European future.

The so called ‘democratic block’ has been in power in Serbia for eight years already. As it is the case in every democracy, their strength is declining. Dissatisfied citizens demand changes. In addition to that, many of them may vote against the endless EU rhetoric, which in their minds never produced any tangible results. Therefore, the EU’s failure to take earlier definite steps in the direction of the liberalization of its visa regime against Serbia and this region was a big mistake. Solution of visa problems is one of the most concrete expectations of citizens from the process of EU accession.

Expectations

The time has come for Brussels to realize that using double standards has a very negative influence on the European path of Balkan countries. While Serbia remains strictly conditioned by Ratko Mladic’s extradition to the Hague, which is a condition that must be fulfilled before signing SAA, a different model was applied earlier in Croatia, which would in the case of Serbia mean that Mladic’s extradition would be a condition to become a candidate

status, instead of being a condition for signing the SAA. On the other hand, Macedonia has fulfilled the majority of conditions required for negotiations for liberalization of the visa regime, but those negotiations are to begin first with Serbia instead of Macedonia. Just like many other issues, liberalization of visa regimes should be based on fulfillment of technical standards, instead of political standards.

The European Union should create tailor-made politics for Serbia. Not toward governments in Serbia. Concrete and clearly understandable messages should be sent out and true partners should be supported. For Serbia and for other countries of this region, being closer to Europe is crucial. That is the way to become completely committed to the process that leads only to progress.

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Leadership is lacking both, in the region and in Brussels. Courage shown in crucial moments in the past would have solved many problems in a much easier way. It is still not too late to act like that. Serbia is threatened to continue to remain a 'one issue' state if European minded politicians do not stay strong in insisting on the difficult job which has to be undertaken in spite of their promise for a parallel fight for Kosovo. This will, however be impossible without clear and true support of the EU, even if it means taking some 'risky steps' for that.

For accomplishing the task the countries of the region have on their integration path, the role of an emerging new European generation in the Balkans is not to be underestimated. They are there; they do not wait and do not leave, but act to change their societies. This new generation is ready to be involved and to share the responsibility for development of the region.

In Lieu of Conclusion

The Balkan Express is not speeding towards Europe, but it is moving. Years have passed on this move in the same direction. It is shamefully late and this lateness has not been explained. If one asks when will this train arrive to its destination, one may be answered by a counter question: Why? Are YOU in a hurry? Life on this train composition is chaotic and full of surprises and challenges. People in various cars were stuck to their seats in the beginning, but now many dare to cross to other cars. They have realized that it makes this long trip much easier. Some thought that there was more fun in the neighboring car and they crossed over to see if it was true, some ran out of cigarettes and they were compelled to ask others to satisfy their need. On The Balkan Express train, smoking is allowed until it gets much closer to the station in Europe. There are many problems, but train conductors have no good explanations to offer the passengers. It is clear that they're trying to calm all the commotion and to balance the hardships created by serious technical problems coming from the very bad general condition of the train and the machine. They try to co-operate among each other. On the other hand, unclear directions from Europe about frequent traffic redirections are of no help. The last car on the composition is barely attached to this train; there are very serious problems over there. It's still holding and engineers are doing their best to repair it and keep it running with the rest. However, this train will not stop, that is out of the question. It still remains to be seen whether the last car on the composition will roll in at the final station together with other cars or it will be rolled away in the opposite direction.

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Tijana MEMIŠEVIĆ

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Thorny Way to Euro-Atlantic Integration Structures

Summary: Bosnia and Herzegovina is due to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU in the following months, after it met the last of the conditions set forth by the EU – laws on police reform. However, B&H remains vulnerable to internal, regional and international conditions, due to its complex and ineffective administrative division, dominance of corrupt nationalistic elites ruling on their respective territories at the expense of the state, weak and lacking state institutions, struggle with war crimes justice as a necessary prerequisite for reconciliation, and the lack of a comprehensive and firm strategy by the EU. Recently, Russia recognized a weak spot of the EU in both Serbia and B&H, turning them into a playground of the display of power against the EU and the USA, and reinforcing in the process the political crises in both countries which might prove detrimental in the long-run to transition and reform. The response by the EU and NATO should be resolved to integrate the whole region of the Western Balkans, but based on the strategy which would produce substantial reform of societies in the region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), due to its internal organization made of two entities, The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and Republika Srpska (RS), and the domination of nationalistic politics, remains vulnerable to both regional and internal crisis and lags behind in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration. The *Dayton Peace Agreement* in 1995 ended the war, but established entities with vast powers at the expense of the state. Those entities fell into the hands of nationalistic parties, and power-sharing mechanisms, initially introduced to prevent domination of one of the constituent peoples over the other two, became a tool of the politics of obstruction at the hands

of nationalistic leaders eager to preserve the status quo. At the same time, Euro-Atlantic integration requires a functioning state, and a clearly defined negotiation partner capable of introducing necessary reforms.

Here lies one of the major obstacles to EU integration – the ruling elite of the RS is unwilling to give up the prerogatives RS enjoys, and in order to preserve them, they use nationalistic rhetoric to mobilize the population for this cause. Political representatives from the RS frequently obstruct the functioning of state-level institutions, and therefore prevent adoption of laws, introduction of reforms and development of long-term strategies for transition and economic development. This is accompanied by attempts of the government of the RS to fully control other branches of the government on the territory of the RS (judiciary, police), and public space in general, including control recently obtained over all major media in RS. Constant historical revisionism and the stimulation of fear of ‘the other’ proved to be the best recipe to rule over a homogenized population and keep them isolated from other populations in B&H.

A more diversified political elite in FB&H demands the EU to keep up with their own standards and insist on the criteria that the EU institutions set for B&H, because they perceive these as a tool to decrease the powers of RS and improve the effectiveness of state institutions. The reasons for this political agenda are many and differs from party to party – for some (*Party for B&H*, party of Haris Silajđić) it is another populist theme readily exploited to mobilize Bosniak voters, and for others it is the way to liberate public space and give priority to the concept of citizenship rather than a collective concept of constituent peoples and power-sharing mechanisms. The idea of reducing the RS's power is generally attractive for IDPs and refugees abroad who would prefer to return to their places of residence prior to war. The non-Serb population on the territory which is the RS today constituted almost 50% of the population before the war. Internal organization of the RS¹ and nationalistic politics of RS political leaders has largely been directed against the return of pre-war non-Serb population.²

¹ The Constitution of the RS prior to amendments introduced the following decision of the Constitutional Court of B&H on all three constituent peoples being equally constituent on the whole territory of B&H from 2000, and did not include any power-sharing mechanisms or provide any mechanisms for participation of non-Serbs in institutions of the RS.

² For details on intimidation and violence against non-Serb returnees to the RS see: “Le-gacy of War: Minority Returns in the Balkans”, *Human Rights Watch*; http://hrw.org/hrw.org/wr2k4/16.htm#_Toc58744965; and other *Human Rights Watch* reports at <http://hrw.org>, also the “Annual Reports on Human Rights” by *Helsinki Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina*; <http://www.bh-hchr.org>.

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Memišević, T., “Bosnia and Herzegovina's Thorny Way to the Euro-Atlantic Integration Structures”, *International Issues & Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* Vol. XVII, No. 1/2008, pp. 16–28.

The on-going crisis over the police reform can be understood in this light. In 2004, the EU set criteria for police reform as the requirement to continue with EU integration. It was passed on as unsolvable from stage to stage of the integration process, until the criteria remained for signing *Stabilization and Association Agreement* (SAA) with the EU. Currently, the entities have control over the police, and there is no Ministry of Interior on the state level. As a consequence, there is no coordination in investigating crimes, and criminals can freely cross entities' borders, while police can not. This issue has multiple layers in the politics of B&H.

The RS ruling elite is against police centralization for numerous reasons. First, the ruling party of current RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik, SNSD (*Party of Independent Social Democrats*) is heavily involved in criminal activity, including non-transparent and suspicious privatization of strategic industries involving large-scale corruption³, and full control over the police is another shield against criminal investigation. Second, the *Decision on Constituent Peoples* case by the B&H Constitutional Court from 2000 had the consequence that RS police should employ members of different ethnic groups according to the 1991 census, which means that approximately half of the policemen in the RS should be non-Serbs. Currently, it is only 7%.⁴ Preserving the mono-ethnic composition of the police is an important part of the politics of preventing the return of non-Serbs to the RS. Third, the RS police itself have an interest against centralization and a multi-ethnic structure due to the war crimes legacy. Although the international community lustrated policemen in B&H and no person with a suspicious war past can perform this duty, there have been numerous cases of RS policemen consequently processed for war crimes. The list of Srebrenica genocide perpetrators containing

³ See investigations by *Transparency International in B&H* on TEP Gacko (RS Government arrangement with CEZ, Czech Electric Company), privatization of RS Oil Industry, and construction of the new RS Government building. In all cases, there are substantial financial, procedural and legal irregularities, and large amounts of budget finances figuring in these cases are unaccounted for (www.ti-bih.org).

⁴ See "Bosnia's Stalled Police Reform: No Progress, No EU", *International Crisis Group* (2005), Appendix B, p. 17; http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/europe/balkans/164_bosnia_stalled_police_reform_no_progress_no_eu.pdf.

more than 18.000 names, which was approved by the government of the RS, also contains names of several hundred policemen still in active duty.⁵ High Representative in B&H, Miroslav Lajčák, decided in summer 2007 for 93 persons to have travel documents seized for suspicion of war crimes and participation in the network protecting suspected war criminals in relation to the Srebrenica genocide, of which 35 are active RS policemen.⁶ There are reasonable bases on which to assume that a centralized, ethnically more diversified and professional police increasingly free from political influence would be more ready to investigate such cases.

On the side of political parties from FB&H the police centralization is perceived as a desirable process, again for different reasons. Initial criteria set out by the EU in 2004 included police centralization on the state level, liberation of police from political influence and efficient organization of police administrative units, which in the work of an initial police reform commission led by foreign experts meant police regions crossing entities' borders.⁷ This was again seen as a decrease in powers of the RS, the possibility to liberalize police and increase its effectiveness, and diversify its ethnic composition across entities' lines, therefore also facilitating the return on non-Serbs to the RS. It is however questionable to what has been the agenda of support for such reform on the side of some Bosniak leaders. While among some Bosnian Croat, Bosniak and citizen-oriented politicians, the interest is genuine, among some, like SB&H, or some politicians from SDA (Bosniak party, *Party of Democratic Action*), support for reform serves just for mobilizing popular support. Among the general population in FB&H, especially among Bosniaks, there is a resentment towards RS police in general, which is negatively perceived not only due to the behavior towards returnees and individual war crime cases, but also because the general sense of injustice to even negotiate about the status of RS police, as the International Court of Justice ruling from February 2007 indicated RS police and the former army of the RS as institutions which

⁵ The actual names of these policemen have never been published, but several official and NGO sources confirmed that up to 900 people from this list occupy public positions, of whom are up to 500 are policemen.

⁶ "Order Seizing Travel Documents of Persons who Obstruct or Threaten to Obstruct the Peace Implementation Process", http://www.ohr.int/decisions/war-crimes-decs/default.asp?content_id=41111; and "Decision to Remove Dragomir Andan from his Position as Deputy Head of Administration for Police Education of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska", July 10, 2007, www.ohr.int.

⁷ "Final Report on the Work of the Police Restructuring Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina", Sarajevo (December 2004).

carried out genocide.⁸ Ever since the end of the war, neither RS Government nor RS police have attempted the reform of police forces with regards to its war time past. Quite the contrary the RS police, after the war, became a tool in the obstruction of justice and the intimidation of returnees. RS police have had a very poor record in investigating war crimes against non-Serbs during the war investigating attacks on and murders of returnees after the war (none of the approximately 100 murders of returnees have never been solved), and delivering suspected war criminals. There have been numerous cases of RS police destroying the evidence from the time of the war which are vital to bringing war crimes perpetrators to justice.⁹

The EU integration process is hindered due to the dynamics of B&H nationalistic politics, powers given to administrative units ruled by nationalistic parties, a multitude of institutions without a clearly defined authority, and wartime legacy giving heavy weight to all major political issues. Reforms required by EU integration either have real multiple political layers due to the complexity of B&H politics, or those are artificially created by elites through exploiting unsettled issues from the war and nationalistic themes.

The EU, with its strategy of complying with internal political pressure and making compromises with its own standards and rules, does not act efficiently. If conditionality is to work, the rules of process and requirements should be firmly set.

The set of political parties ruling in 2005 reached an agreement on police reform in October, loosely complying with EU requirements but still representing an initial agreement, which passed in all three parliaments, B&H, FB&H, and RS. The period between 2002 and 2006, during the term of High Representative Paddy Ashdown, was characterized by extended reforms,

⁸ International Court of Justice Judgment of February 26, 2007 on the case "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina vs. Serbia and Montenegro"; <http://www.unhcr.org/refugees/2006/bosnia0306/>.

⁹ See "Limited Assistance by Republika Srpska Police" in "A Chance for Justice? War Crime Prosecutions in Bosnia's Serb Republic", *Human Rights Watch* (March 2006); <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/bosnia0306/>.

the transfer of powers to state (numerous new ministries and agencies were established on a state level), the creation of a state Ministry of Defense and unification of entities' armies, and speedy adoption of some laws required by the EU. This was due to international pressure on nationalistic political parties, especially SDS (the wartime party of Radovan Karadžić), which partially moved away from extreme nationalistic rhetoric and conduct of the past towards the cooperation and consensus. It was during this period that the RS Government recognized the genocide in Srebrenica, made a list of suspected perpetrators and revealed several locations of mass graves of non-Serbs. However, besides the pressure created by the firm requirements set by the international community, which led to politics of cooperation, additional engineering of politics in B&H by the international community led to a complete marginalization of SDS and the rise of the SNSD of Milorad Dodik, which was perceived as a social democratic party with potential to loose the grip nationalism had over politics.

However, already in the election campaign prior to general elections in 2006, Dodik changed the rhetoric to the old-style of SDS, even reviving the idea of a referendum on RS independence from B&H (forbidden by *Dayton Peace Agreement*), which secured him the win in elections. Initially, Dodik justified such rhetoric by the need to mobilize the Bosnian Serb population in the RS behind him. After the elections in 2006, Dodik profiled as a hard nationalist with the agenda to preserve all the prerogatives the RS enjoys, and these goals he has sought to fulfill through politics of obstruction, blackmail and proactive politics of creating artificial political crisis as a diversion from real political and economic issues. Under the given circumstances, and the support and control he and his party have had in the RS, he refused former agreements, including the agreement on police reform from October 2005 (passed by the RS Assembly), and mined any progress previously achieved in negotiations over constitutional reform.

What is more problematic is that the international community succumbed to Dodik's pressure. This is to a certain extent justifiable by the fear of crisis coming with independence of Kosovo at that time, although there was no real potential for crisis spilling over to B&H, as a recent weak reaction to actual Kosovo independence in the RS proves. A firm stand by the international community on important issues in B&H have always proved as the most efficient way to remove potential crisis and create a more cooperative atmosphere. Disagreement among EU members and with the USA, and falling for the threats of nationalists and making compromises has without exception always led to crisis. Subsequently, police reform criteria have been reduced to requiring cosmetic changes – the adoption of the laws on

the establishment of agencies on state level coordinating the police work, without actual police free movement and unification and without establishing the relationship between those agencies and police forces.¹⁰ These laws were adopted by the Parliament of B&H on April 16, 2008 after the long and difficult negotiations characterized mainly by the firm stand of RS representatives against substantial police reform which would under any circumstances have an impact on current legal and organizational status of RS police. B&H politicians and citizens were promised signing of the SAA by the end of April 2008 against the adoption of those laws. In the final phase of the police reform soap opera now lasting five years, the EU reduced its initial criteria for police reform which promised substantial change towards efficient and professional police unified on the state level to the establishment of several state-level police agencies without clear authority and without even touching upon the existing police structure, already proved as inefficient and more importantly, fully politically controlled. The EU did so under the pressure of one local nationalist leader manipulating the changing international relations – primarily the new active role of Russia in the Western Balkans and the coming independence of Kosovo – in the face of the weak EU lacking the comprehensive strategy and resolution in the region. In this case, as in many before concerning the Western Balkans, the EU was just reacting to assumed coming crises that could have been avoided with smart strategy and proactive politics applied on time, and reacting in such a way only to prolong the deadlock in political and security issues in B&H.

In fall 2007, the High Representative announced that he will impose reform on the functioning of state institutions aimed at increasing their efficiency. Power-sharing mechanisms and the requirement of consensus between all constituent peoples have been regularly exploited to obstruct institutions, quite often by representatives of one of the constituent peoples simply not showing up at decision-making meetings. The reform allowed for decisions to be reachable with unjustified absence of the representatives of one of the constituent peoples, simply forcing them to attend meetings regularly and take over the responsibility for reaching decisions.¹¹ RS leaders presented this as an attempt to dismantle RS altogether and marginalize Bosnian Serbs,

¹⁰ "The Law on Independent and Monitoring Bodies of Police Structure of B&H" and the "Law on the Directorate for the Coordination of Police Bodies and on Agencies for the Support of Police Structure of B&H".

¹¹ "Decision Enacting the Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina", High Representative, October 19, 2007; http://www.ohr.int/decisions/statemattersdec/default.asp?content_id=40687.

mobilizing the RS population in nationalistic frenzy, all in order to create artificial political crisis as the way to exercise pressure on EU. The crisis was blown-up by calls for an RS independence referendum, linking Kosovo with the RS, and even wrapped-up threats of open military conflict. This campaign was well orchestrated in the media, reaching its peak in international media (*Financial Times*, *Guardian*) reporting on B&H as on the edge of a new bloody conflict (without exploring the minor details such as with what army, what money, whose international or regional support), putting EU institutions on the defensive with the upcoming Kosovo declaration of independence. This campaign was supposed to culminate with demonstrations in Banja Luka on October 29, 2007, to show mass rage among the Bosnian Serbs against the international community and the real potential of crisis. This ended up in less than 10,000 people appearing, carrying photos of Vladimir Putin.¹² High Representative, Miroslav Lajčák, outmaneuvered the RS leaders by offering to initiate the SAA if political leaders themselves agree on proposed reforms. Popular support in B&H for EU integration are around 70%, and fear of loosing support for failing in this process has been slowly but steadily entering political life in B&H. Political leaders indeed reached an agreement, there was no need for the High Representative to impose reforms himself, and the SAA was initiated on December 4, 2007. Crisis blow out in the matter of hours.

This recent crisis and the way in which it was solved is a good example of how politics in B&H works, and how a well-thought out and firm strategy by the international community bare fruits. The EU is a good catalyst for B&H, but only as long as the EU itself provides touchable prospective and framework for the countries in the region and stands by its standards and criteria. In dealings with politics of obstruction, blackmail and threat, the EU should agree on proactive politics instead of always reacting to the crisis local political leaders create. In reducing its strategy to reacting instead of basing it on a long-term vision for B&H, the EU both loses maneuvering space and creates spoiled political leaders counting on their pressure, however unreasonable, having a desired effect, which certainly does not contribute to a political culture of accountability and cooperation.

Mentioned support for EU integration across all groups in B&H is rather high, and this fact should be exploited to increase civic culture in B&H. Citizens are the ones who should primarily make politicians accountable for

¹² "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Serbs Protest Imposed Reforms, But Is It Smoke or Fire?", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (October 30, 2007); <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2007/10/C8F20343-416D-4886-ABF8-093AAA9BE1C3.html>.

their deeds and who should expand capacities to express their real interest. One of the major problems in B&H is that due to the nationalistic politics which tend to keep groups isolated and distrustful of each other, there are not many cross-cutting interest groups exercising pressure on B&H institutions, making the job of maintaining control over respective territories easier to political elites. There is a substantial lack of information and public debate on EU integration issues. Consequently, technical issues are easily politicized and citizens have not real grounds to decide on what kind of politics to ask for and support. For example, police reform is primarily directed at increasing the effectiveness and separation from political influence. Political leaders instead present the issue against the reform as the matter of security and threat to ethnic group existence, exploiting fears of 'others' they have continuously stimulated among population. The EU for itself has been making many political compromises over standards and rules of the game, making citizens even more confused about the integration process, prospects of EU membership, benefits it will bring to them, and actual values the EU stands for.

Mentioned adoption of the laws on police happened primarily due to the resolve by the EU to speed up the process of EU integration of B&H – the EU promised the signing of the SAA by April 28, 2008, and presented this as the 'last chance' to continue with the process for Bosnian politicians. Such approach provoked the reaction of civil society, exercising the pressure on politicians to reach an agreement and adopt the laws, and raised expectations among the general population to finally reach the next stage in the relations with the EU.¹³ In the meantime, the coming elections in Serbia and the traditional threat of the Serbian Radical Party coming to power, forced the EU to last-minute attempts to support pro-EU political forces by deciding to sign the SAA with Serbia in a matter of

days although Serbia has not met the condition of full cooperation with the *International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)* (delivery of major war crimes suspects, including Ratko Mladić). During this drama, the news reached B&H that it will not sign the SAA as promised until maybe as late as June 15, due to the technical difficulties in EU institutions concerning the translation of the SAA to all EU and three B&H languages. This was a blow to Bosnian citizens of whom many saw negatively the police reform laws but approved of their adoption with the prospective of the SAA, and added to skepticism towards EU strategy and values. This has been especially controversial as Serbia signed the SAA without meeting the condition of crucial importance for reconciliation in the region and of strong emotional connotations for many B&H citizens – the delivery of one of the worst war crimes perpetrators, Ratko Mladić. Many citizens saw this as the confirmation that B&H is the permanent victim to the situation in the region and to EU pragmatism.

Important problem concerning the EU integration process in B&H is that due to the abovementioned factors and the unsettled issues from the war, including political compromises over war crimes in which the international community also participates, B&H as a society lacks consensus over the values and the direction in which the country should go. Under the given circumstances, some political leaders might turn to other solutions than the EU if it suits their interest, and character of current political elites is such that they do not recognize their interest in any reform process because it will reduce their power-base through liberalization and accountability to citizens. From this point of view, the great importance of the SAA as the contractual framework with the EU, which will put the process of EU integration on well defined tracks and narrow the maneuvering space for political elites, is obvious.

Such tendencies of political elites and the lack of consensus over values revealed as a real potential threat for both B&H and Serbia in relation to the changing foreign policy of Russia, which saw a weak EU spot in those two countries and turned them into a playground in its relations with the EU and USA.

Increasing support of Russia for the political right in Serbia found its strongest expression in political activity against the independence of Kosovo. Russia, in its attempts to weaken the EU from the inside, hit the spot well as the EU, lacking both the unity and strategy, proved unprepared for Kosovo independence. In B&H, Russia extends its support to Bosnian Serb leadership primarily in matters concerned with the international presence in B&H. During the Peace Implementation Council meeting, which took place in the

¹³ "Non-Governmental Organizations Call for Parliamentarians to Adopt Laws on Police Reform in B&H", *FENA* (April 9, 2008); <http://www.sarajevo-x.com>.

middle of the autumn crises, Russia made pressure to abolish Bonn powers given to the *Office of the High Representative*. Russia even threatened, while Bosnian Serb leaders were hinting at the possibility of conflict, not to approve an extension of the EUFOR mandate in the Security Council towards the end of last year. The interest of Bosnian Serbs leadership in abolishing Bonn powers of OHR has been to allow them a free hand in politics of obstruction, and play freely on the card of secession. None of the initiatives passed, as the real interest of Russia has been to make a show of its increasing importance in the international arena, rather than a genuine strategic interest in the Balkans, of which Russia is aware will be sooner or later integrated into the EU and NATO. This nevertheless has far-reaching consequences to B&H politics, as new Russia's approach creates a source of self-confidence among Bosnian Serb leadership against the EU and a potential source of political conflict and slow-down of EU and NATO integration. Political leaders have already begun to spread the idea among the population, leaning on resentments they have been stimulating among the RS population against the EU and the USA, that Russia might be the alternative and a real source of future support. At a minimum, with what the RS leadership has already done, they can use threats of Russia's support and influence to get further concessions from the EU and NATO. The potential victory of the *Serbian Radical Party* in the coming elections in neighboring Serbia might add force to such politics of RS leadership, as there is a little doubt that the Radicals' Government will be targeting at destabilizing B&H through the RS while relying on Russia's support. The potential of such crisis can be reduced only by EU resolve to integrate B&H and readiness to have a firm stand towards Russia concerning the region of the Western Balkans.

During the last meeting of PIC in February 2008 there has been again a pressure from Russia against the use of Bonn powers, which were however confirmed for an indefinite period.¹⁴ After the declaration of independence by Kosovo, Bosnian Serb leadership passed the declaration conditioning the potential RS independence referendum by the recognition of an independent Kosovo by B&H and a greater number of other states. The actual reasoning behind the declaration was to confirm the status of RS within B&H, and keep alive a pressure towards the EU by constantly reminding of the potential for secession, however unreal it is.

RS leadership is well aware that independence of the RS is not plausible and that it would be for many reasons a dangerous adventure without any

international support, and that actual independence would pose a greater threat to current political leadership. The real interest of RS leadership is to have as much independence as possible from state institutions and OHR, but within B&H, and to control fully all branches of government and public space in the RS not the least by always keeping the card of independence in relation to the RS population (nationalistic mobilization). B&H and the international community.

The declaration came at the time of attempts to reach any plausible agreement on police reform which would open the way for B&H to sign SAA in April. Politics of pressure and blackmail by RS leadership however had its effect in reducing the content of police reform to a minimum.

The good move of the EU, aware of the new developments in relation to Kosovo and Serbia as well as of new Russia's strategy in the Western Balkans, was to make a genuine offer to B&H and speed up reasonably the integration process by offering B&H to sign SAA in April this year.

During the mentioned last PIC meeting, in support of the previously argued Russian interest in the Western Balkans, Russia's representatives joined the EU and the USA in criticizing the declaration by the RS Assembly. With genuine interest in relations and economic interdependence with the EU, Russia backs away from exercising real pressure when it comes to B&H. Kosovo and Serbia prove at the moment to be a better bargaining chip. But B&H might pay the price of the EU being unwilling to get into real political conflict over B&H, as it might result and indeed results in the EU weakening its resolve concerning the substance of transition in the country (i.e. minimum police reform). In addition, future real danger for B&H concerning Russia's presence might be NATO integration. Russia's has already proved its interest in hindering NATO rather than EU integration in the Western Balkans, a strategy already visible in its relationship with Serbia, and hinted in relation towards Montenegro. RS leadership might place a real effort backed by Russia to prevent B&H from joining NATO, their interest being that the security framework of NATO would marginalize the potency of political threats by RS independence.

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¹⁴ "Declaration by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council", PIC SB Political Directors, February 27, 2008; http://www.ohr.int/pic/default.asp?content_id=40758.

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Gaye EYLEN ÖZERKAN, S. Ceren MUTLU

Turkey's EU Journey and Turkish Civil Society

Summary: Turkey's EU accession process is progressing at uneven speeds since Turkey became an official candidate country in 1999. Turkey achieved an impressive series of reforms between 2000 and 2004, and the Turkish public has welcomed the reforms with enthusiasm. The first part of this article presents a summary of the reforms that have led to the start of accession negotiations; and the way the negotiation process has been progressing since 2005. It also presents the underlying factors behind the apparent slowdown, related with EU-Turkey relations, as well as domestic factors. The second part of the article presents an overview of the impact of the EU accession process on Turkish civil society, the role played by civil society organisations on Turkey's accession process and concludes with a discussion of the difficulties faced by civil society organisations caused by the current state of the EU – Turkey relationship. The concluding part then focuses on the contribution of European civil actors to the positive impact of Turkish civil society organisations on Turkey's EU accession process.

Turkey's EU saga reached a turning point at the Helsinki European Council in 1999, from which Turkey emerged as a candidate country for EU accession. Two successive Turkish governments have undertaken an impressive series of reforms between 2000 and 2004 and the Turkish public has welcomed the reforms with enthusiasm. As a result, the European Council in 2004 concluded that Turkey had met the Copenhagen political criteria, and Turkey has started negotiations after the Copenhagen European Council in December 2005. While one would have expected a continuation of reforms

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under each of the negotiation chapters to proceed with the same motivation that led to an opening of negotiations, there has clearly been a slowdown in the reform process in Turkey.

The EU accession years to date have seen the strengthening of civil society and NGOs have emerged as more important and influential actors in Turkish society. They have not only increased in number and capacity, but have also extended their impact including their contribution to EU-Turkey relations.

The first section of this article presents a summary of the reforms that have led to the start of accession negotiations; and the way the negotiation process has been progressing since 2005; and tries to present the underlying factors behind the apparent slowdown, related with EU-Turkey relations, as well as domestic factors. The second section of the article presents an overview of the impact of the EU accession process on Turkish civil society, the role played by civil society organisations on Turkey's accession process and concludes with a discussion of the difficulties faced by civil society organisations caused by the current state of the EU – Turkey relationship. The article then concludes with a discussion of what European civil actors could do to contribute to the positive impact of Turkish civil society organisations on Turkey's EU accession process.

Rate of Reform and Public Support: the Ups and Downs of Turkey's Accession Process

Initial Years of Reform: Unison under the Coalition Government

The fact that Turkey became an official candidate for EU accession from the 1999 European Council Meeting was a surprise for many who suspected that Helsinki would result just like Copenhagen only two years ago and afterwards the EU would be blamed for applying 'double standards' to Turkey. Yet the announcement of Turkey's candidacy caused euphoria in Turkish society. Turkish businesspeople, civil society organisations, politicians, journalists and opinion leaders all hailed the news with joy. The fact that Turkey would be subject to the same terms and conditions as the other candidates alleviated concerns of 'double standards'. Membership finally seemed possible.

The sense that EU membership could become a reality, boosted excitement for the EU in the Turkish public, which materialised in a series of reforms undertaken by a most unlikely coalition government. Turkey had a coalition government from 1999 until 2002 that consisted of one leftist (*Democratic Left Party – DSP*), one centre right (*Motherland Party – ANAP*) and one nationalist party (*Nationalist Movement Party – MHP*). Although they did have their differences, the prospect of EU membership enabled them to act together in the Parliament to pass reform packages in order to realise legal and constitutional

changes required for Turkey to meet the Copenhagen political criteria. 34 amendments were made to Turkey's constitution in October 2001. These amendments included shortening of pre-trial detention periods, the abolition of the death penalty, changes that made the prohibition and dissolution of political parties more difficult, expansion of the freedom of association and the strengthening of civil authority in the National Security Council.¹

It remains a remarkable achievement that the coalition government acted in unison to pass these reforms deemed controversial by conservative and nationalist circles, considering that Turkey had suffered from over 15 years of PKK terrorism. The Civil Code was changed in November 2001, and significant changes were made in order to ensure elimination of gender based inequalities, as a result of the networking and lobbying activities of the Turkish women's movement. Further packages were passed in order to harmonise Turkish law according to Constitutional amendments and to introduce further liberties in the fields of human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of association.

The reforms have been very well received by Turkish society. Reforms were particularly supported and complemented by civil society action, and there was clear willingness for implementation of the new

regulation. Training and roll out programs were underway in many sections of public administration from the police force to the judiciary.

Reforms under the AKP Government: Motivation at its Peak

The elections in November 2002 was a landslide victory for the *Justice and Development Party (AKP)* and resulted in a single party government and a parliament with only two parties – the ruling AKP and the social democratic *Republican Peoples Party (CHP)*. The ousting of the parties of the previous government from the parliament was not interpreted as being related with the harmonisation reforms undertaken, but more with the economic crisis in 2001 that was predominantly due to inadequate management of the economy and especially the banking sector.

The Copenhagen European Council in December 2002 greeted the new government with the conclusion that, 'if the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission,

The reforms have been very well received by Turkish society.

¹ For a full discussion of the democratisation and harmonisation packages during the coalition government, please see article by S. Aydın, F. Keyman, 'European Integration and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy', Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)/Economics and Foreign Policy Forum (EDP), *EU-Turkey Working Papers* No. 2 (August 2004).

decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the EU will open negotiations without delay'.² This conclusion provided sufficient motivation for Turkey to continue with the reform process with zeal. The AKP government undertook eight reform packages in 2003 and 2004, with noteworthy support of the opposition party, CHP.

Laws were amended, improving democratic and human rights; far-reaching steps were taken that constituted important elements for strengthening of democracy and human rights in Turkey. New laws rebalanced military-civilian relations, transformed the criminal justice system and introduced long debated fundamental rights such as the possibility of broadcasting and education in languages other than Turkish, including Kurdish. The reforms were often expressed by the government as being for the benefit of Turkey and Turkish citizens, regardless of the final prospect of EU membership, and were welcomed by Turkish society, including business and civil society organisations that had long wished for protection of liberal rights, and a deep entrenchment of democratic processes and rule of law in the country. Support for EU membership in Turkey was 71% during fall 2004.³

These series of reforms led the European Council in 2004 to conclude that Turkey has met the Copenhagen political criteria, and Turkey has started negotiations following the Copenhagen European Council in December 2005.

The Fifth Enlargement and Cyprus

While Turkey was absorbed in her own process of reforms during the early 2000s, eight candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe, plus 'Cyprus' and Malta had become ready to join the EU with the fifth wave of enlargement.

For 'Cyprus', the Greek Cypriot Administration had been negotiating with the EU as if it represented the whole island, whereas in reality it only represented the Greek Cypriot part of the South.⁴ The wish to resolve the division on the island prior to EU accession had led the EU to support the

Annan Plan proposed by the UN in order to establish a new state based on two equal entities – the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots. This plan was put to referendum on both sides of the island. The plan was fully supported by the EU, and by the newly elected president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Ali Talat, who had full support of the AKP government. However, although the Greek Cypriot government had signed the *Annan Plan* in Burkenstock, Switzerland in March 2004, as the date of referendum approached, they changed their stance and campaigned against the *Annan Plan*. Thus, the referendum results showed a 65% 'yes' from the Turkish Cypriots, as opposed to 76% 'no' from the Greek Cypriots.

EU leaders expressed great surprise and disdain over the results and the Commissioner responsible for Enlargement of the time Günther Verheugen is quoted to have said that he felt "cheated by the Greek Cypriot government". Normally, this situation should have prevented Cyprus from becoming an EU member; however, prior to the referendum, Greece had stated that they would block enlargement all together if Cyprus would not become a member as a result of the referendum. Therefore, rather than stalling enlargement all together, the EU chose to do something against its own founding principles and acquired a member with an unresolved border dispute. Despite the lack of a solution 'Cyprus' became an EU member, the northern part of the island continued to be referred to as 'areas in which the Government of Cyprus does not exercise effective control' in official EU documentation, and EU *Acquis* is suspended for them.

Although the Turkish Cypriots had overwhelmingly accepted the *Annan Plan*, it was the Greek Cypriots who had had nothing to lose by saying 'No' that joined the EU. Had the EU used its conditionality approach for the referendum, one wonders whether the results would not have been different. This has had significant negative effect on the psychology of the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, this situation created a sense of disillusionment in Turkish public opinion as well as the government. Even though Turkey had dramatically changed her Cyprus policy over the past few years and supported the *Annan Plan* for resolution, her steps had not been reciprocated by the Greek Cypriots and the result had been to their favor. The European Commission swiftly reacted and submitted two proposals; one for establishing an instrument of financial support for encouraging the economic development of the Turkish Cypriot community and one for establishing special conditions for trade with the North.⁵ After long discussions and pressure on the Cypriot government, the Council approved the financial

⁵ Proposal for a "Council Regulation on special conditions for trade with those areas of the Republic of Cyprus in which the Government of the Republic of Cyprus does not exercise effective control", COM(2004) 466 final (July 7, 2004).

² Presidency Conclusions. Copenhagen, European Council (December 12 - 13, 2002), SN400/02.

³ *Eurobarometer 67* (2007).

⁴ The division on the island dates back to 1974, when the Turkish army landed on the island as one of the three guarantor states of the Republic of Cyprus (Greece and the UK being the other two) in order to bring an end to violent attacks against Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriots who intended to make Cyprus a Greek island and unify it with Greece after a coup d'état organised by a Greek army officer. For a full overview of history of Cyprus until 1980, please refer to: Z. M. Nedjatigil *The Cyprus Conflict: A Lawyer's View*. (Nicosia: Tezel Ofset, 1982).

support in 2006.⁶ However this has not been enough to relieve disappointment. Furthermore, the second proposal by the Commission to lift the isolation from the North is still to be approved by the Council. This has a deepening effect on the disappointment of not only Turkish Cypriots, but also of Turkey.

As an important side note, as of February 2008, Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopolous, who was strongly against any settlement based on the *Amman Plan* has left his place to AKEL Candidate Demetrios Christofias, who claims to be in favor of settlement. Whether the *Amman Plan* can be taken as a basis for resolution on the island remains to be seen, but the Turkish Cypriot President and the new Greek Cypriot President have agreed to start talks with the aim of coming to a solution by the end of 2008.

Starting Negotiations: Where are the Fireworks?

While one would have expected a continuation of reforms for each of the negotiation chapters to start with the same motivation that led to the opening of negotiations, this has not been the case. The actual way the negotiations have been initiated has been a turnoff for many in Turkey. October 3, 2005, when the European Council has decided to open negotiations with Turkey was a scene for intense struggle over Turkey's membership prospect: Austrian Prime Minister Ursula Plassnik insisted that Turkey be offered associate membership, as opposed to full membership. Britain was holding the EU's presidency at the time and UK Foreign Minister Jack Straw played a leading role in finding a compromise formula: a change of wording regarding the EU's right to block Turkish membership during the negotiation progress which included the idea of member states' belief that it was becoming impossible to comfortably absorb the country. A member of the European Commission responsible for Enlargement, Ollie Rehn himself, has expressed his view that "accession negotiations with Turkey are bound to be a long and winding road".⁷ Turkey was finally a negotiating country, yet building on the Cyprus disappointment, the way the opening of negotiations had caused havoc among European leaders, and the addition about absorption capacity to provide leeway for something less than full membership curbed the enthusiasm in Turkey for EU negotiations. The recently fading sense of 'they will never take us whatever we do' had begun to be felt more strongly again.

⁶ "Council Regulation (EC) No 389/2006" (February 27, 2006).

⁷ Speech by O. Rehn, Member of the European Commission, responsible for Enlargement, NATO Parliamentary Assembly Brussels, February 21, 2006.

Times of Diminishing Enthusiasm and the Second AKP Government

Screening of the 35 chapters of negotiation went smoothly. Progress reports in 2006 and 2007 have showed that Turkey is continuing political reforms, although somewhat more slowly. Some important legislation was been adopted in 2006 and 2007, such as the law abolishing the competence of military courts to try civilians, or the law creating an ombudsman. Moreover, the Parliament has adopted a law on religious foundations which is expected to address the difficulties faced by the non-Muslim communities in Turkey, such as the ownership and management of their properties.

However, it is clear that enthusiasm among Turkish society about EU membership and the government for EU related reforms is not what it used to be. Decline in political zest can partly be explained by the heated political atmosphere in Turkey since early 2007:

It is clear that enthusiasm among Turkish society about EU membership and the government for EU related reforms is not what it used to be.

Being part of the Customs Union since 1996, Turkey needed to sign a protocol extending the agreement to all new member states, including 'Cyprus'. Turkey did sign the protocol in July 2005, but added a declaration that its signature does not imply Turkish recognition of the Republic of Cyprus. The EU foreign ministers issued a counter-declaration stipulating that Turkey must extend such recognition to Greek Cyprus prior to accession and demanded direct access for Greek Cypriot vessels to Turkish seaports and airports.

Only one year after the dismay of the *Amman Plan*, it seemed extremely unfair to the Turkish public that such a demand was being made on Turkey. The AKP government who had fervently advocated for the *Amman Plan*, now refused to make another step, thinking that it would not be a balanced act unless there was reciprocation for the constructive approach taken earlier.

There were suggestions that Turkey was ready to consider opening up its ports, provided this was reciprocated by the EU with the approval of the Commission proposal on free trade with the Turkish Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots feared that such a move could be a tacit recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

Hence, there came no suggestion of reciprocity from the EU. Instead, there came a blow to the Turkish negotiation process from the European Council in December 2006: eight of the 35 negotiation chapters had been frozen due to lack of extension of the Customs Union to include 'Cyprus'. The anti-EU camp in Turkey was delighted: "the EU had begun to show its real face", they claimed. The pro-EU camp could not hide their disappointment: it seemed that some members of the EU had forgotten about its founding principles of peace and reconciliation, but was taking advantage of the stalemate in Cyprus to stall Turkey's negotiations. Public opinion on EU membership turned sour. Support for EU membership fell to 52% in spring 2007.⁸

Reasons for Euroskepticism: Hard Times for the pro-EU Camp

Without clear indication for how the EU envisaged the stalemate in Cyprus to be resolved, there came further blows that shook confidence of Turkish people in Europe: Nicolas Sarkozy's presidential election campaign clearly stated his views that Turkey should not become a member of the EU. He claimed that Turkey is in 'Asia Minor' not in Europe. He argued, "I do not think Turkey has a right to join the European Union because it is not European". As President, he was readily joined by German Chancellor Angela Merkel in declaring that Turkey should not become a member, but a 'privileged partner', without even providing any information about its scope or structure.

The EU and Turkey have agreed on the objectives, principles and rules of the accession negotiations through a framework document, and this framework document clearly foresees that the objective of the negotiations is accession. European leaders do not hesitate to question this agreement. That it can even be proposed that the EU take a step back from its commitments, is seriously damaging Turkish trust for the EU, opening a debate for whether EU's founding principles cannot be questioned if *pacta sunt servanda* is ignored.⁹ The credibility of the EU's commitments are questioned and Euroskeptics leverage this suspicion for increasing their support.

⁸ *Eurobarometer* 67, 2007.

⁹ S. Ülgen, "Quand Sarkozy dit Non!", *Le Figaro* (May 11, 2007).

Supporters of EU membership in Turkey are often reminded that EU accession will be difficult, will be like an endurance test, will involve serious transitions that can be painful. Turkish people are well aware of the difficulties that implementing the Acquis entails and are still committed to making this change happen, provided that there is a fair game in which the rules do not change along the way. To modernise Turkey's judiciary, reform its public sector, curb corruption and streamline its administrative procedures constitutes a significant challenge, which will be Turkey's benefit with or without EU membership, for sure. Nevertheless, the motivating and facilitating effect of such reforms when they are linked to EU conditionality and trust for the EU cannot be denied. On the other hand, when trust for the sincerity of the EU is low, fears of loss of sovereignty are heightened and even reforms that would otherwise have been welcome can be met with resistance if they are linked with demands of the EU; hence the EU can have a negative and stalling effect on reforms, instead of an accelerating one.

EU Commissioner Ollie Rehn has stated that¹⁰ "by keeping [its] word and sticking to the accession perspective, [the EU] can create a virtuous circle of credible commitment, rigorous conditionality and reinforced reforms." This could create "a more Europe-oriented Turkey" provided the EU remains "... at every stage, both firm and fair – not just firm." If these words went beyond rhetoric, and European leaders embraced it, then Turkey's accession negotiations would proceed with the same enthusiasm as the reforms at the beginning of the decade.

There is technically every possibility for Turkey's negotiations to be never-ending. During the negotiations, EU member-states must agree unanimously to open or close each individual chapter; thus, every member-state has the right of veto over the entire process. Furthermore, at the end of the

Turkish people are well aware of the difficulties that implementing the Acquis entails and are still committed to making this change happen, provided that there is a fair game in which the rules do not change along the way.

¹⁰ Speech by EU Commissioner O. Rehn: "Turkey's Accession Process to the EU", Helsinki, November 27, 2006.

membership discussions, the draft accession treaty will have to be approved by all EU member-states either by national parliament or referendum. It could be expected that France or Austria may choose the referendum option. These details that could be ways to block Turkey's membership are often presented by the anti-EU camp to illustrate the fact that the accession process is a definite losing game. It is not easy for the pro-EU camp to argue otherwise. To obtain unanimity for opening and closing of each of the chapters would require commitment from every one of the leaders of the member states. Given the possibility of a referendum in France or Austria would require a massive communication effort for public opinion to change, and this would only be possible if the political leadership wished to change it. Lack of the latter guarantees the inability to do the former.

Civil Society's Role for Turkey's Future in the European Union

Civil Society in Turkey and the EU Accession Process: a Two Way Relationship

Turkey's EU accession process has seen a significant growth both in numbers, in capacity and capability of Turkish civil society organisations, as well as areas covered. The so called 'third sector' is now a vibrant section of Turkish society, with multitudes of organisations ranging from business associations to grassroots organisations of youth or women or the disabled to think-tanks and platforms on a variety of subjects of pertinence to the society, environment, politics or international relations. The approach of the European Union targeting the development of the civil society in Turkey, through EU funds and know-how transfer, ranging from direct training efforts to networking opportunities have had a noteworthy impact on strengthening Turkish civil society.

As civil society organisations have become stronger and more capable, they have emerged as important actors in Turkish society and the democratisation process. Consequently, they have become important actors in Turkey's EU accession, acting as pressure groups in the harmonisation process; challenging the government discourse on policy areas; as channels of information between the public and the state authorities; as a system for the development of social capital; have made a presence and had their voice heard in European platforms, and last but not least, have brought Turkish and European people together on projects. Civil society participation creates important platforms where problems of misconceptions, miscommunications and prejudices have been addressed.

Civil society effectiveness is a very important element in Turkey's accession process for its facilitation and contribution and complementary

role to government led initiatives both in Turkey and in Europe. Turkish civil society organisations heavy involvement in Turkey's accession process both in Turkey and in Europe has had a positive impact and should continue to do so. However, in line with the present pace of EU-Turkey negotiations, Turkish civil society suffers from inadequate fund availability other than EU funds and is facing difficulties to develop a collective action together with European NGOs.

This section of the article will discuss the impact of the EU accession process on the civil society sector and the role of civil society in Turkey-EU relations. Finally in this section, possible ways for European counterparts to strengthen Turkish civil society working on the EU process will be discussed.

Impact of the EU Accession Process on Turkish Civil Society

As part of the EU harmonisation process, an amendment was made to the Associations Law¹¹ in 2004, which has provided more freedom of association by facilitating establishment and membership procedures, as well as reducing controls over associations' activities and reporting requirements. This has resulted in an increase in the number of civil society organisations established in various areas and boosted the level of civil society activity.

Since 2001, but especially since the official start of negotiations in 2005, the EU has been one of the largest fund providers for Turkish civil society organisations. The EU has funded projects of 241 institutions, including national and local level NGOs, think-tanks and universities so far.¹² EU projects have not only contributed to the sector in financial terms, but also with respect to capacity building and institutionalization. EU funded projects have made a considerable contribution to the professionalism of NGOs, giving them a chance to enhance their project management and networking skills. EU funded projects have also been useful platforms for NGOs to transfer issue based know-how from their European counterparts. The Civil Society Development Centre has been established with EU funding in

Turkish civil society organisations heavy involvement in Turkey's accession process both in Turkey and in Europe has had a positive impact and should continue to do so.

¹¹ *Department of Associations*, http://www.dernekler.gov.tr/_Dernekler/Web/Gozlem2.aspx?sayfaNo=51.

¹² *Central Finance and Contracts Unit*, Grant Contracts Database, 2007.

order to help civil organisations improve their work through specific studies and actions designed to fill in their gaps in information, material means and assertiveness and also to help NGOs improve their organisational, institutional, managerial, financial and legal bases as well as communication and human resources capacity by encouraging their participation to decision making processes, communication with the public at large, involvement in international cooperation and networks for communication and information exchange.¹³

Capable and well rounded human resources in civil society are important for Turkey's harmonisation with the EU *Acquis*, as well as legal and financial capacity. Several projects funded by the EU have targeted capacity building via education programs, research projects and workshops. These studies vary from knowledge building through technical analysis of particular sectors in harmonisation with the European Union, to development of human resources capacity through educational programs. The EU funds have provided Turkish NGOs with the means to contribute to capacity building for further reforms. Furthermore, during the application, monitoring and evaluation periods of the programs, the administrators of the programs, the *Commission Delegation or the European Union Secretary General* (EUSG) or the *Central Finance and Contracts Unit* (CFCU) provide guidance to applicant NGOs and grant holders, from which the Turkish NGO's have accrued skills for better project management.

Along with the increasing number and capacity of Turkish NGOs, the need for better networking skills have emerged, not only among Turkish NGOs but also with their European counterparts. NGOs are willing to develop projects via European or Turkish partners. Through these projects while Turkish NGOs have got in touch with their European and also Turkish counterparts, they have started to participate in local and international networks, for instance the *European Policy Institutes Network* (EPIN).¹⁴ European partners have also contributed to NGO development by transfer of know-how. The new member states which have already been through the legal harmonisation with the EU *Acquis*, have made their know-how available for Turkey as a candidate country. Know-how transfer has often been mutual, as the European counterparts often have a chance to enhance their capability working with Turkish NGOs as well.

¹³ www.stgm.org.tr, Our Objectives.

¹⁴ EPIN is a network of 28 think-tanks and policy institutes from EU member and candidate countries, focusing on current EU and European political and policy debates.

The Role of Turkish Civil Society in the Negotiation Process: as Pressure Groups and More

Strengthening of civil society since 1999 has contributed to the development of democracy in Turkey¹⁵ and EU – Turkey relations have been one of the areas where civil society has contributed the most. NGOs act as pressure groups in the harmonisation process, challenge the government discourse on policy areas, constitute channels for information between the public and state authorities, constitute a system for the development of social capital, make a presence in Europe, and last but not least, bring Turkish and European people together on projects.

The Turkish women's movement has been a remarkable case for lobbying and advocacy during the reform process, and they have leveraged the EU accession process very successfully. Civil society leaders from women's NGOs and academics have formed a platform that worked together to identify the changes that need to be made to the Constitution, the Penal Code and the Civil Code that were changed during the process in order to eliminate gender based discrimination. Their work has resulted in achieving significant gender equality in legal terms.

The amendment to the Association Law in 2004 has created a more conducive environment for civil society organisations to have a political position that could challenge the official state positions or to bring new subjects to the public agenda.¹⁶ Pressure groups involved in international relations or the EU accession process sometimes support and sometimes challenge official state positions in Turkey. They have also been very active at the European level, participating in or leading events in Europe, in touch with European civil society associations, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

TUSIAD¹⁷ is an influential organisation that has introduced civil initiatives in the EU – Turkey relationship with a strong political stance in favour

¹⁵ S. Aydın, F. Keyman, "European Integration and the Transformation of Turkish Democracy", Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)/Economics and Foreign Policy Forum (EDP), *EU-Turkey Working Papers*, No. 2 (August 2004).

¹⁶ E. Dogan, S.C. Mazlum (eds) *Sivil Toplum ve Dis Politika: Yeni Sorunlar, Yeni Aktorler*. (Istanbul: Baglam Publications, 2006), p. 15.

¹⁷ TUSIAD, *Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association*, was established in 1971 to bring industrialists and businessmen together in an independent association. By the late 1980s, the association started to gain a political identity. TUSIAD has offices in Brussels, Washington, Paris, Berlin and Beijing.

of membership to the European Union. TUSIAD operates at the Turkish government level as well as at the European level with lobbying facilities. Lobbying actively for the establishment of a Custom's Union between Turkey and the EC in early 1990s, TUSIAD opened its Brussels office in 1995. TUSIAD has supported governments in favor of reforms and challenged them when pace of reforms have slowed down. Participation of TUSIAD and TOBB¹⁸ to the EU integration process has brought media attention and more reference to the process in the policy agenda.

NGOs, especially think-tanks such as TESEV¹⁹, EDAM²⁰, ARIMovement²¹ or IKV²² organize panels and conferences, and present position papers that introduce new and liberal dimensions to the discussion on international relations. Civil society organizations also take a stand when some European member states act against their expectations. For instance when the French Parliament passed the so called Armenian 'Genocide' bill²³, several business associations reacted collectively and sent petitions to their French counterparts²⁴. They have even managed to mobilize the French counterpart of TUSIAD, namely MEDEF²⁵ to act against the bill in France. This may be considered an example of the rapprochement between civic actors and the misreading of this rapprochement at least by the French government.

¹⁸ TOBB, *Chambers, Commodity Exchanges and Union*, was established in 1950 in order to represent the Turkish private sector and enhance the status of their members.

¹⁹ TESEV, *Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation* is an Istanbul-based think-tank established in 1994 is wholly independent of government and focuses on policy questions facing Turkey and the region.

²⁰ *ARI Movement*, an independent movement, established in 1994, works to promote participatory democracy and youth empowerment in Turkey.

²¹ EDAM, *Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies* is an independent think-tank, established in 2005, whose work focuses on Turkish foreign policy, Turkey-EU relations and Turkey's position in the global economy.

²² IKV, *Economic Development Foundation* was established on the initiative of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and Istanbul Chamber of Industry in 1965, in order to inform the Turkish business world and the public about developments in the European Union and Turkey-EU relations.

²³ In 2001, France approved a bill officially recognising the Armenian "genocide". The new bill passed by the lower house of French Parliament in October 12, 2006 foresees a one-year prison term and fine for anyone denying the massacres.

²⁴ <http://www.haberler.com/izmir-fransa-daki-sozde-ermeni-soykirimi-haberi/>.

²⁵ MEDEF Original name in French *The Mouvement des Entreprises de France* in English *Movement of the French Enterprises* is the largest union of employers in France.

Turkish civil society also contributes to the learning of Turkish society about the EU. NGOs provide information about the EU, its terms and concepts, its policies, institutions and processes. Such information is shared with the public by think-tanks and NGOs via their publications, educational programmes and also well developed web pages. Furthermore, national think-tanks are involved in projects where Turkish specialists share expertise with their European counterparts, conducting research projects that provide an important source for policy makers.

Through development of civil society NGOs and think-tanks and also through freer debate, Turkey has recently started to discuss issues that were once considered taboo. These topics include the so called 'Armenian Genocide', 'the Kurdish Problem' or 'Cyprus'. Bringing in different opinion groups from Turkey and their counterparts from abroad to the same platform is one of the main tools to reduce mutual prejudices and miscommunications; while on the other hand dialogue helps foster better solutions for the problems. However, many claim that some member states' attempts to block Turkey's membership have been extremely counterproductive for this evolving discussion atmosphere to further flourish.

Economic and social stability within a democratic system which guarantees the rule of law doubtlessly defines the primal objective of the EU process. Turkish civil society has also adopted an important role in the transformation of the society into such a system through developing social capital. Civil society motivates people to work together or act together voluntarily for a common good; such actions foster trust and hope among the members of the society. In the case of Turkey's perceptions of the European Union, fears and prejudices often seem to overwhelm constructive approaches. Development of social capital through local and national level civil society activism which may not necessarily address accession related topics, would still be contributing to the process of the EU integration of Turkey.

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How to Strengthen Turkish Civil Society: What Role for European Civil Actors?

At a time when European and Turkish public opinion are drifting away from supporting Turkey's membership to the EU, fostering sound communication between the Turkish and European public is crucial for overcoming prejudices and negative discourses.²⁶ As discussions in Turkey on the EU evolve around misperceptions and fears of loss of sovereignty, these are further reinforced by the overemphasis of the media on negative discourse of the EU leaders.²⁷ Civil society can act independently from the official discourse, and create more sincere discussion platforms. These platforms are conducive to solution oriented discussions and elimination of mutual prejudices.

It is vital, therefore, to increase the number of platforms where Turkish and European civil society organisations meet and interact and discuss matters of importance. These discussions need to take place in Europe, with the presence of Turkish representatives; and in Turkey, with the presence of Europeans. This is of course happening to a certain extent, but the extent to which such opportunities are created are apparently not yet sufficient for the discussion to involve enough people that can have a positive impact on public opinion. The way to increase the outreach of such activities is to have more of them and to involve more people. The subject need not be 'Turkey's EU accession'. NGOs can talk about gender issues or global warming or transport policy: each such instance creates an opportunity for dialogue and furthering mutual understanding and appreciation.

Furthermore, it is important for 'friends of Turkey' present in all member states to express their support for Turkey's membership in fora created to discuss the future of Europe or EU – Turkey relations, where there is no Turkish presence. It is very important for these views to be shared with people who are sceptical about Turkey's membership or even outright against it.

It would be useful for NGOs or foundations from other member states to establish offices in Turkey. German foundations have been effectively supporting and partnering with Turkish civil society organisations. The

²⁶ According to *Eurobarometer 67* (2007) Turkish support for EU membership which hit 71% has fallen to 52%. European public opinion polls, on the other hand, indicate decreasing support for Turkey's membership. According to 2006 Fall Eurobarometer 59% of Europe is against Turkey's membership to the EU.

²⁷ U. Ozkirimli *Milliyetçilik ve Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri*. (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2008), p. 60.

Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Conrad Adenauer Stiftung and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung all have offices in Turkey and have directly been in touch with most civil society organisations and think-tanks. Their support has been critical in the realisation of many projects, ranging from research and discussions on foreign policy, human rights to democratisation, to organisation of panels and conferences. There are also other German foundations, such as the Robert Bosch Stiftung, who support Turkey's EU accession. Although some other member states effectively support civil society projects by funds allocated through their missions in Turkey, such as the British Council of the UK, the Matra Fund of the Netherlands, or the Section for Turkish-Swedish Cooperation at the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul, it is very efficient and creates long lasting relationships when European foundations or civil society organisations partnering directly with their counterparts in Turkey.

As explained in the sections above, Turkey's accession process is not moving ahead at a desirable rate. In this environment, it has become difficult for Turkish civil society organisations and think-tanks to fundraise for EU related projects from Turkish businesses. Although businesses continue to make donations as social responsibility projects, they prefer to finance non-politicized subjects such as education of young girls, provision of healthcare equipment to hospitals or the opening of libraries in rural areas. Consequently, the EU itself remains the major source of financing for EU related projects of think-tanks; but this is neither frequent enough for NGOs to conduct all their projects, nor enough for sustaining the think-tanks themselves. Under these circumstances, it would be extremely constructive for European businesses and foundations that support Turkey's membership to increase their contribution for strengthening Turkish civil society. This could be via projects led by Turkish think-tanks, as well as by think-tanks in their countries, in cooperation with their Turkish counterparts.

Conclusion

Turkey's EU accession process is progressing at uneven speeds since Turkey has become an official candidate country in 1999. Turkey has achieved an impressive series of reforms between 2000 and 2004 and the Turkish public has welcomed the reforms with enthusiasm. Negotiations have been opened in 2005 but it is necessary to revive the enthusiasm now among the public so that pressure can be exerted upon the government for further reforms. Civil society institutions and especially think-tanks play an important role in Turkey's accession process, acting as pressure groups, facilitators

or intermediaries. It is vital for NGO activity to continue to bring Turkish and European societies closer. It is therefore recommended that European businesses and foundations that support Turkey's membership also increase their contribution for strengthening Turkish civil society.

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Turkey-EU 2008: Time for a New Swing in the Boring Plot?

Summary: *After almost half a century of reluctance and few years of constructive dialogue, due to goodwill on the side of the EU and reform spirit on the side of Turkey, the mutual relations are again approaching point zero and Turkey's membership prospects seem shady at the beginning of 2008. At the same time, the reasons for why should both Turkey and the EU work on Turkey's future as a member have not passed yet – quite the opposite. What has diminished however is the determination on both sides to pursue the membership as the ultimate goal of negotiations. It is therefore legitimate to ask whether the Union and Turkey can search for alternative ways of strengthening their relations (and working towards a common interest so many times declared) until the suspension of negotiations will be revoked. This essay by no means suggests alternatives to membership – the goal is to reflect upon the possibility of closer alignment of external policies as one of options for not losing the energy generated by the opening of negotiations.*

Since 1999 when membership started to look more realistic (at the Helsinki Summit Turkey was given the status of a candidate) until October 2005 when the negotiations were finally opened, opponents and supporters of Turkey's EU membership exchanged their views on virtually every issue concerning the benefits or losses for both the Union and Turkey. While one can list many common interests and mutual benefits, the group of arguments that spoke the most convincingly in favor of Turkish membership was its strategic location and the EU's hope that with Turkey on its side, it will be

¹ "A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy", Brussels, December 12, 2003; <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

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more capable of implementing the European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003.¹ Enlargement commissioner Olli Rehn has called Turkey “a benchmark of democracy in the Middle East and the Muslim world”², and EU documents related to accession mention Turkey’s benefit for the Union’s neighborhood – “As a Moslem secular country with a functioning democracy it is a factor for stability in the region. Through its integration in western alliance and membership of many economic and regional organizations, it contributes to the security of Europe and its neighborhood.”³

The EU could draw on Turkey’s expertise and contacts and Turkey could become more active in the EU’s neighborhood, showing that its membership would be helpful indeed for the Union.

By opening negotiations the EU at the same time clearly said, that Turkey is “more than a neighbor”. Yet, being located where it is and having neighbors which it has, Turkey’s relevance for EU’s neighborhood policy should not be neglected, whether we speak about the southern dimension – towards Middle Eastern and North African partners – or the eastern dimension, given the fact that it is one of the two most relevant players in the *Black Sea Region*.⁴

This means two things: EU’s approach towards Turkey and towards its neighborhood are strongly related, for one can hardly expect EU’s success in its common neighborhood with Turkey without success in talks with Turkey. Secondly, if Turkey and EU share the same neighborhood and Turkey is expected to become a member, external policies of both actors should be coordinated.

The EU could draw on Turkey’s expertise and contacts and Turkey could become more active in the EU’s neighborhood, showing that its membership would be helpful indeed for the Union. While this statement seems a ‘matter

² “Turkey’s EU Membership Bid Stalls”, *BBC News* (December 11, 2006); <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6170749.stm>.

³ Commission of the European Communities *Issues Arising from Turkey’s Membership Perspective*. COM 2004/656, Brussels (October 6, 2004).

⁴ The Union has clear determination to be an actor in the Black Sea region – this however will not be possible without strong cooperation between the two most relevant actors – Turkey and Russia. *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Black Sea Synergy – A New Regional Cooperation Initiative*, COM 2007/160, Brussels (April 11, 2007). For analysis of EU’s potential in the Black Sea region see e. g. A. Duleba, L. Najšlová, T. Stražay, “ENP and the EU’s Eastern Policy – the Slovak Perspective”, (2007); <http://www.hiia.hu/projects/visegrad/doc/Szlovakia.pdf>.

of course’ there are a number of instances that have shown that such coordination is in fact not happening – this was evident in the case of operation Iraqi freedom when Turkey’s opinion went unnoticed by most member states. Other examples would be Commission’s 2007 *Black Sea Synergy* proposal that came without much consultation with Turkish representatives or the very fact that Turkey still is not part of ESDP as a consequence of veto of some member states. Moreover, Turkey itself is not always keen on coordinating its foreign policy with the EU:

The Union’s Fatigue

The European Union is struggling with enlargement fatigue – to put it briefly: even though there are more and more countries charmed by the EU dream willing to join the club, current members – beyond compulsory declarations – do not have much enthusiasm to put enlargement among their priorities and even less so are they willing to make any concessions in order to pursue strategic interest. In some of the previous enlargements the Union was able to neglect some of the unpreparedness of candidates – the best example would perhaps be Greece, where the Council decided to begin negotiations despite the not very positive opinion of the Commission.⁵ Moreover, in 1975, as Greece’s application process started to move on, the Secretary General of the European Commission suggested informally to Turkey that it should file an application, since some of the member states would not like to witness the consequences of Greece being in and Turkey out.⁶ Thus given the perceived different geopolitical interests of the era, the Turkish accession process could perhaps have been accomplished under much ‘lighter’ conditions than nowadays. The accession criteria have however grown stricter and it seems that current security threats are not considered as crucial by current member states as was the cold war environment.

Moreover, due to several factors such as growing currency of the xenophobic and protectionist card in domestic discourses of the member states the EU leaders (at the same time EU member states leaders) are not willing to sell their electorates the benefits of expanding the Union. It is often

⁵ D. Dinan *Europe Recast: A History of European Integration*. (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004).

⁶ In fear of dissolution of that time governing coalition where an anti-western party would object, Turkey turned down the offer. See more in: “Turkey and Europe: the Way Ahead”, *International Crisis Group, Europe Report No. 184* (August 17, 2007), p. 2.

suggested that the Union did not yet have time to digest the 2004 and 2007 enlargements and that other applicants should wait. It perhaps would not be an overgeneralization to suggest that the EC/EU always had certain dilemmas when contemplating enlargement – especially when it came to poorer states and states that had only recent experience with democracy.⁷ Also the public opinion has not always been in favor of the enlargements. Yet, all of them so far – with perhaps the exception of Romania and Bulgaria where we yet have to wait for evaluation – have been considered a success, beneficial both for old and new members.⁸

In spite of a long list of pro's of Turkish membership and the fact, that no matter how difficult or impossible the previous enlargements seemed they proved to be a success, the debate about Turkey's candidacy – whether political or public – remains polarizing and except for capacity to fulfill accession criteria the debate involves themes of cultural, religious or even civilizational compatibility. No matter how vague these concepts are, the fact remains that they do play a role in the EU's thinking and decision-making when it comes to Turkey. Moreover, the Union's leaders have (not for the first time) started using expressions such as 'absorption capacity' and 'enlargement fatigue'. Even though none of these concepts has an explanatory value in itself i.e. they should not be used as categories of analysis, as categories of practice they do have resonance and they need to be dealt with. In other words, once these terms are deconstructed into more concrete contents, it turns out that they are not acronyms for insurmountable obstacles on the side of candidates but rather point to EU leaders' reluctance on how exactly the future Union should look.⁹

The absorption capacity has not been mentioned for the first time with Turkey's membership – already the 1993 June summit in Copenhagen

⁷ Not to go far into history, let's mention the post-1989 hesitance (especially on the French side) about what to do with CEE states with collapsed economies and political systems. In the Spanish and Portuguese cases the decision to start and successfully accomplish accession negotiations as well was not an easy one. For more see e. g. T. Judt *Postwar*. (London: William Heinemann, 2005).

⁸ For the EU's self-evaluation see e.g. "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007 – 2008"; http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/strategy_per_en.pdf.

⁹ A very useful deconstruction of 'absorption capacity' can be found in M. Emerson, S. Aydin, J. De Clerck-Sachse, G. Noutcheva *Just What is This 'Absorption Capacity' of the European Union?* (Brussels: CEPS, 2006). For 'enlargement fatigue' see e. g. reports by *European Stability Initiative* on Austrian and Dutch debate on Turkish accession available at www.esiweb.org.

has concluded that "The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries".¹⁰ While some keep suggesting that 'absorption capacity' has already become a fourth *Copenhagen Criterion*, the real problem lies elsewhere

– absorption capacity has been here also previously but what hasn't been here is the 'criterion' of European identity.¹¹

At the same time, perceiving absorption capacity or enlargement fatigue as something eternally preventing further enlargement is a consequence of distorted optics, that the EU should first solve its domestic problems and then deal with issues beyond its borders. Dealing with 'things domestic' and 'things external' need to go hand in hand – the world out there will not stop moving only because the Union says it needs some time off. Moreover, the applicant countries would in such reasoning become hostages of the EU's incompetence to keep up to its own promises as well as its short and long-term goals. As put by Alexander Stubb, rapporteur to the *European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs*, the capacity to integrate new members "is the responsibility of the current member states, not the applicant states".¹²

Even though communication, consolidation and conditionality have become equal building blocks of the EU's enlargement strategy¹³, since the beginning of negotiations the 'Europeanness' of Turkey has constantly been

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¹⁰ European Council, Copenhagen, June 21 – 22, 1993.

¹¹ A. T. Esen, "Absorption Capacity of the EU and Turkish Accession: Definitions and Comments", *TEPAV Policy Brief* (May 9, 2007).

¹² Interview with A. Stubb, "The EU's Integration Capacity", *Euractiv* (October 20, 2006).

¹³ *Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006/2007 and 2007/2008*.

questioned and the negotiations itself were overshadowed by the Cyprus issue, which in the end became a cause for their suspension. Key figures in EU politics – French president and German Chancellor – representatives of (former?) engine of European integration have invested more effort into pointing to issues with which Turkey needs to deal than into issues with which the EU needs to deal. And even though the accession negotiations in fact are not negotiations – vast majority of conditions/issues in the accession process are not negotiable – the candidate just needs to conform to them¹⁴, in the case of Turkey there is quite a lot of tasks ahead of the EU.

Firstly, it is the way Turkish membership is communicated in domestic politics in member states. In the four years since the beginning of negotiations not much has been done to persuade the domestic electorates that Turkey's membership will be beneficial for the EU. Though one might be skeptical about the relevance of public opinion for foreign policy making, more than one member state is considering the option of referendum in case of Turkish accession. Secondly, it is the resonance of the already mentioned culture-religion-civilization discourse which perhaps has been here with such intensity for the first time. This again should not be considered as 'caused' by Turkey itself, for it might be more related with the gap existing between 'Brussels made' EU where religions, races or genders don't matter and 'nation states' politics, where these issues are relevant indeed.

Thirdly, it is the interference of the Cyprus issue and the Armenian issue. While it is hard to imagine how they could be 'dropped' from the negotiating table given the fact that they have already become an important card in hand of Turco-skeptic countries, unless there is more effort invested in diminishing or neutralizing their influence, not much will be achieved in the progress of negotiations.

Finally, there is the Union's own debate on its future and capacity to come to terms with its duties beyond its borders. The future of EU – Turkey relations and the Union's future as such are more intertwined than in the case of most other candidate and potential candidate states (Croatia and the Western Balkans for the time being). A good example of this would be how the Cyprus issue itself has complicated Turkey's involvement in ESDP.

¹⁴ See e. g. H. Grabbe, "When Negotiations Begin: the Next Phase in EU-Turkey Relations" In: *İnsiğit Turkey* Vol VI, No. 4/2004.

Turkey Today

The enthusiasm of the Turkish public for EU membership has fallen considerably. This can not only be seen on various public opinion polls¹⁵ but has been evident also in last year's election campaign, where EU membership has not been on top of any parliamentary parties program. Moreover, a brief glance over the headlines of major newspapers reveals that not only EU membership is not the main story, but if it is, what prevails is negative news and the spirit of commentaries and columns is much different from the optimism of times after opening the negotiations. There are various reasons for this.

Firstly, the EU is perceived to impose double standards, not treating Turkey as any other member.¹⁶ Whether this perception is correct or not would be a topic for another paper, what counts for the purposes of our topic is that once there is a perception that the Union is not acting fair, the credibility of its recommendations for improvement is questioned too.

Secondly, PKK attacks and perceived weak support of the EU and the US in the fight against terrorism help to boost resonance of nationalistic and militaristic 'Turkey first' rhetoric on the part of the country's elites. While it took the Union considerable time to put PKK on its list of terrorist organizations, the recent decision of ECJ about the procedure by which the Union decides about inclusion of such organizations is considered another step in the wrong direction. Moreover, in quite a few member states pro-PKK groups operate quite freely. This puts at stake the EU's efforts to push the Turkish government to guarantee Kurds more rights. If the Union wants Turkey to distinguish between legitimate demand for rights on part of population and terrorism, and to adopt measures to deal with these two phenomena differently, it perhaps should pursue the same strategy.

The enthusiasm of the Turkish public for EU membership has fallen considerably.

¹⁵ In last *Transatlantic Trends* (2007) Turks have displayed very low level of confidence in their own membership – only 26 % have confidence that Turkey will join the EU, which ranks them last out of 12 surveyed countries (even the French have bigger confidence – 31%).

¹⁶ S.A. Duzgit *Seeking Kant in the EU's Relations with Turkey*. (Istanbul: TESEV, 2006). pp. 1 – 28.

Thirdly, the membership itself is a distant carrot in the case of Turkey – benefits have to be preceded by a huge load of work. The upcoming seven, ten maybe even fifteen years will be a period in which reforms will have to be adopted and implemented but rights stemming from membership will not be felt. While this should mean constant improvement of living conditions and expansion of civil liberties, it is questionable whether impact in the pre-accession period will be felt immediately. Even if the Copenhagen criteria were renamed by the Erdogan government to ‘Ankara criteria’, previous enlargements have shown that the carrots and sticks of conditionality speed up the process indeed and the reform comes much faster if for example some of the unpopular measures can be ‘blamed’ on Brussels, as a trade-off for better living conditions.

Fourthly, rhetoric of some of the EU elites does not look very motivational – pronouncements about privileged partnership do not create a sense that the EU has good intentions when it comes to Turkey. It has even been suggested that until the EU makes it finally clear that there is room for Turkey in European ‘family’, the final and most important state-society transformation in Turkey cannot happen.¹⁷

Finally, the strict Schengen visa policy does not give the Turks and EU-peans many opportunities for people-to-people contacts that would enable getting rid of the stereotype about ‘the other’. Moreover, even though the Commission has launched its *EU – Turkey Civil Society Dialogue*, the application procedure is rigid and time-consuming and does not leave room for flexible organization of civil society joint events to discuss things happening ‘just now’.

The EU Commission’s 2006 and 2007 regular progress reports indicate that the pace of reform in Turkey has slowed down. Despite having passed a number of important reform packages, many implementation laws are still lacking. *Article 301* remains in place, the government is not able to provide shelters for the possible victims of domestic violence, honor killings etc. While EU membership remains a long term declared priority of the government, it is starting to be obvious that the process will be longer than originally envisaged. One thing is to pass the necessary norms, the other is to implement them – it will take years to create in the country a political culture compatible with the ‘average’ of the EU – to eliminate omnipresent personality cult, change the

¹⁷ L.A. Glyptis, “Which Side of the Fence? Turkey’s Uncertain Place in the EU”, *Alternatives – Turkish Journal of International Relations* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Fall 2005), pp. 108 – 139.

relationship between state and citizen from the one of lord vs. vassal into a service providing agency vs. client.

It goes without saying that the above mentioned reasons for the current disillusionment of Turkish society should not be used by the government as an excuse to be lenient on reforms. It is up to the Turkish government to create a communication strategy that will explain the electorate that modernization and EU-peization is in the country’s interest and that the Union is the best alternative for Turkey today. The reform spirit should not remain only on paper – more than a few Turkish civil society representatives have complained recently that when they come to EU fora to speak about the state of the affairs in Turkey, there are not many new government efforts that could be presented. Thus, the declared commitment does not suffice – what counts in the process of negotiations are deeds. The factors influencing diminishing excitement of Turkish society about the EU should however more closely be analyzed by EU policy makers for in part they are also consequences of their actions.

Thus given the malaise on both sides of the EU-Turkey equation it seems that more creativity should be called in the process. Whatever the state of negotiations is, what should not be dropped are civil society exchanges for they constitute the biggest opportunity for Turks and EU-peans to learn and understand each other. Mere informal networks however will not suffice to keep the momentum of Turkey-EU cooperation. Once it seems that the process of negotiations will be longer and more demanding than originally envisaged, something more intense is needed. The EU and Turkey, given the time necessary until Turkey will be eligible to become a member, should find a way for ‘responsibility-sharing’ in certain areas of policy and Turkey should get opportunity to co-shape the EU’s policy. This argument gains on currency with current re-shaping of the Union’s ENP that is just taking place, where neighborhood partners, in case they fulfill duties stemming from PCA’s, will have the opportunity to sign sectoral agreements and enter into community programs.

How to Keep the Momentum?

As we stated at the beginning of this article, the EU and Turkey share the same neighborhood and judging from declarations they also share goals and interests in this neighborhood. The Union aims to establish in the neighborhood ‘a ring of friends’. Especially in the southern dimension, where prospects of membership are more or less out of the question, friendship and cooperation would be the ultimate goals.

The success of the southern dimension of the ENP and Turkey's relations with the Union are maybe more interrelated than it can seem at first glance – rhetorical war where expressions such as 'Moslem East' and 'Christian West' serve as bullets are gaining on intensity and Western refusal of Turkey would be perceived as the West's negative contribution to this war.¹⁸ The Union however has one advantage – it is not as discredited in the Middle East and North Africa as the United States is and therefore it should invest some effort into a more creative professing of relations with the region.

The very idea of Turkey being assistant to EU's efforts in the southern neighborhood could perhaps be dismissed by traditional arguments stating that Turkey's relations with Arab and Persian neighbors have for a long time been troublesome. Turkey is a successor state of the *Ottoman Empire* that for a period too long to neglect ruled over these states. By many Turkey can be perceived as the 'infidel' who abolished the caliphate and denounced *sharia*. Another issue that might seem troublesome is that Turkey has signed a strategic agreement with Israel and has had more than positive relations with the USA which has not very good PR in the region, especially after the second *Gulf War*.¹⁹ Yet there are many hints that Turkey's position in the region has been changing – especially after the growing disillusionment of Turks with the US policy and after the coming to power of the AKP government in 2002, which has put great effort into having more cordial relations with Arab neighbors and Iran than its predecessors. It also needs to be emphasized that Turkey's path towards the EU has been closely followed in the Arab world.

Thus several questions should be raised: can the Union pursue enlargement policy and neighborhood policy so that they could be complementary? While it is clear that Turkey wants to be 'more than a neighbor', can it as a candidate

¹⁸ For relevance of Turkey-EU relations in the so called Moslim world see e.g. M. Altunisk, "The Turkish Model and Democratization in the Middle East", *Arab Studies Quarterly* Vol 27, No. 1&2 (Winter/Spring 2005); S. Laciner, "Turkey's EU membership and the Muslim World", *Turkish Weekly* (September 16, 2006).

¹⁹ S. Tatham *Losing Arab Hearts and Minds*. (London: Hurst and Company, 2006); O. Taspinar *Anatomy of Anti-Americanism in Turkey*. (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2005).

country, play a role in the Union's efforts to improve the democracy, economy and security standards in the neighborhood? And would such a mechanism tie the Union and Turkey more closely towards each other for the time period needed to overcome mutual enlargement fatigue? Once it is clear that the alternative to membership is not productive, but at the same time negotiations are in a muted phase, the question can be narrowed down into: should a candidate country be allowed to shape the Union's policy before its accession? As we will show later, the division of work in the EU is already being practiced – member states focusing on specific areas rather than on the whole EU agenda. The question posed in this article is whether the same should be done already with candidate states.

It might be argued that the candidate state and Turkey especially is too busy with its own problems and does not have enough energy or resources to be involved in other agenda. A counterargument to this could be that Turkey itself has many times complained that it is not being given enough word in shaping the future of the Union and that the EU-27 can't be serious with the pledge to carry out the negotiations which should lead to accession, if it does not give Turkey space to co-shape policies it will have to pursue this as a member state one day. The Union needs to have a successful southern dimension of its neighborhood policy and it needs to keep Turkey on track. Both Turkey and the Union should thus search for ways of fulfilling these two objectives, without any of the sides having the feeling that it is losing something. While many things remain unclear in the future of EU and Turkey, the following belong to the clearer ones: it is vital for the EU to have a successful policy towards neighbors; the policy towards Turkey in fact is part of this policy.

Opportunities, Duties and Limits of the Union

The bigger the Union has grown the more numerous have become so called avant-garde groups – groups of states that tend to be more active in certain policy areas than in the others. Member states mostly strive to be more active in areas where they have certain comparative advantages – e. g. Spain's efforts in Latin America, new member states' efforts in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighborhood. Division of labor of course does not bring only advantages, yet it is a trend that seems to gain rather than loose on intensity.²⁰ If the trend of specialization continues, it is legitimate to ask

²⁰ See e. g. C. Grant *Europe's Blurred Boundaries – Rethinking Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy*. (London: Centre for European Reform, 2006).

whether also candidate countries should contemplate about their concrete contribution to the Union and their comparative advantages and whether they should start working on it even before accession. Moreover, the fact that after long years of discussion whether there could be Europe of more speeds the very concept of 'variable geometry' was included in the official EU glossary as "differentiated integration which acknowledges that there are irreconcilable differences within the integration structure and therefore allows for a permanent separation between a group of Member States and a number of less developed integration units"²¹ suggests, that the trend towards division of labor is about to continue.

Until now not much has been achieved in the realm of aligning policies concerning a common neighborhood. Firstly, Turkey expressed interest a long time ago in being a part of the ESDP²² – once the European Union started developing its own security and defense policy, NATO itself was in favor of division of labor and close cooperation. Those NATO member states, which are at the same time EU member states, were however better positioned to decide about the nature of the future cooperation than those outside the EU.²³ Given the fact that Turkey has the second largest army in NATO and the largest army in Europe, also the EU should be interested in Turkey becoming part of ESDP. Yet the bid was blocked several times – now the biggest opposition towards Turkey's access to the EU's defense planning and related information comes from Greece and Cyprus and Turkish response is obstruction of ESDP / NATO cooperation. It should be in the interest of both players – EU and Turkey – to drop the obstructions and get into closer cooperation and data sharing.²⁴

After the inception of the Barcelona process Turkey was offered to become an EMP southern partner, yet given the fact that its hoped to get

²¹ "Europa Glossary"; http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/variable_geometry_europe_en.htm.

²² Until the adoption of the Ankara document (stating that EU will not interfere into conflicts between Turkey and Greece and Turkey will be consulted on operations where NATO resources are called in) Turkey opposed such cooperation. See e. g.: H. Bağcı, A. Yıldız, "Turkey and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): From Confrontation to Cooperative Relationship", A. L. Karaosmanoğlu, S. Taşhan (eds) *The Europeanization of Turkey's Security Policy: Prospects and Pitfalls*. (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 2004), pp. 79 – 100.

²³ R. Gözen *Turkey's Delicate Position Between NATO and the ESDP*. (Ankara: Center for Strategic Research, 2003).

²⁴ For brief analysis of NATO and EU defense cooperation see T. Valasek *France, NATO and European Defence*. (London: Centre for European Reform, 2008).

a status of a candidate, it didn't want to be relegated to a position of a mere neighbor.²⁵ While more excitement about being active in the region could have been created after the Helsinki 1999 summit and later after opening the negotiations, the EU missed its chance here, for it did not show interest in using Turkey's expertise and giving it a sort of special consultant status on newly born *European Neighborhood Policy* (2004) that should partly take over the failed Barcelona process. Instead, another not very attractive offer for Turkey came with the French proposal of the Union for the Mediterranean. Though the issue caused much controversy, as on a first sight clear attempt to remove Turkey from the list of candidates, the proposal itself is not very concrete and though news after the March 2007 Council meeting were full of member states giving green light to the proposal, it remains questionable when (if) it will come into practice and more than clear that Turkey will refuse to cooperate if this would mean undermining its membership prospects.

In the last years various proposals appeared on the table for a special relationship with neighborhood countries – CER's Charles Grant in his pamphlet *Europe's Blurred Boundaries* writes about a proposal for security partnerships, which entails the neighborhood countries be to a certain extent allowed to co-shape (at least by participation in the discussion and sharing their know-how) the EU's foreign policy in issues of their concern.²⁶ Grant has consulted the proposal with several experts and the criticism he got concerned mainly that: *Security Partnerships* (SC's) would – have a negative impact on CFSP efficiency, create problems in relations with Russia or create problems with candidate countries. Despite the criticism, the idea should be kept on the table and reflected upon not solely by the EU but also by Turkey which, though having candidate status is at the moment (due to several factors mentioned earlier in this essay) not too keen to align its foreign policy with CFSP. If negotiations are in a deadlock currently, it is not very productive for any of the parties involved to skip forum for exchange of views and know-how on issues of common interest.

Turkey has already been offered possibility to closer or earlier integration in the field of energy, it however turned the offer down out of suspicion that it was meant as alternative to membership itself. However, given the fact that under new plans for ENP countries they should be allowed to enter

²⁵ M. Emerson, N. Tocci *Turkey as a Bridgehead and Spearhead: Integrating EU and Turkish Foreign Policy*. (Centre for European Policy Studies: Brussels, 2004).

²⁶ C. Grant, *op. cit.* (2006), p. 69.

community programs²⁷ and thus in fact would achieve stronger integration than the candidate country, Turkey should reconsider its refusal to alternative forms of integration.

At the same time, the EU leaders should, with any other proposal for alternative integration, make clear that it is not alternative to membership but rather a confidence building measure or measure aimed to facilitate the membership process. A good starting point would be letting Turkey in ESDP (which would not only diminish perception of double standards but also ease NATO – EU cooperation in Kosovo).

Moreover, should another ENP/Euromed related proposals come on table, Turkey has to be approached in them as having special status and be given concrete responsibilities. A confidence building measure of considerable value would be inviting Turkey to share its views on CSFP decision-making. In the end, the Union as a project is built on the importance of networks of cooperation and mutual dependence as barriers to conflict. Enlargement is not a mathematical but a political process – it is more an art of persuasion than exact science of 100 percent fulfillment of criteria. At this time

At this time both players are locked in a position, that they need to persuade each other about the necessity of the partnership.

both players are locked in a position, that they need to persuade each other about the necessity of the partnership. In case they intend to stay loyal to the long-term interests, the process needs further investment. On the side of EU the investment entails making clear that the negotiations are a serious process with accession as a final goal, on the side of Turkey it should mean renewed reform spirit and acceptance of alternative proposals of earlier integration in certain fields.

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²⁷ L. Najšlová, A. Duleba: Interview with Andreas Herdina (ENP Head of Sector Coordination Unit), *Zahranická politika* Vol. XI, No. 3/2007, pp. 16 – 18.

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Slovensko 2007 – Súhrnná správa o stave spoločnosti (Slovakia 2007. A Global Report on the State of Society)

By Miroslav Kollár, Grigorij Mesežnikov, Martin Bútora (eds). Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs, 2008.

Cover 'Slovakia 2007' – Self-Fulfilling or Self-Liquidating Prophecy?

For aesthetic reasons I prefer the elegance of non-overcrowded covers of publications, therefore I confess that the folklore Jánošík motive of the *Global Report 2006* cover didn't inspire me that much. Although in the end it proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. When I saw the road roller filling the whole cover of the *Global Report 2007* during the presentation, to me as a person who is not really sensitive to marketing, it appeared too halfheartedly realistic. But whereas IPP is here to speak to the widest interested public and form a public discourse, I accepted it as a means of how to effectively attract attention.

The reaction of Prime Minister Fico – after experiencing in 1995 the grumpy reaction of the then PM Mečiar in the form of a complaint due to my essay illustrated with a small picture of a shaky cart – nevertheless shocked me. Not that it irritated him, but because his contra productive personal belligerence which in the case of the prime minister of a democratic state doesn't have an analogy. At the same time I acknowledge that the new publication couldn't wish for better PR.

Not only in terms of selling, I assume that the curiosity drawn from the caution of the boss of executive powers in Slovakia will also strengthen the readability of the Report in the era when although we publish and buy books we read them less and less. Eventually we read something, but in the faster tempo of work and living there isn't time for any feedback. We need to start from ourselves and therefore I will try for one.

For those who have not had this thick, but then again rich in information, publication in their hands at least a summary characteristic of this year's Report on the State of Society in Slovakia in the slightly adapted words of its editors M. Kollár, G. Mesežnikov and M. Bútora is needed. Their ambition, as well as that of the other 53 authors of the *Global Report*, was to diagnose in 23 chapters the current state of society. The *Report* is per standard divided into four thematic parts: *Internal Politics*, *Foreign Politics*, *Economy and Society*. The authors of the publication observe an evident deviation from the current prevailing trends and strategies, which came about in the year 2007 in

various spheres of public life. They especially warn about the *statism* trend of the current government politics, its excessive technocratic trend, the revision of approach to reform, strengthening of centralistic elements, the paternalistic reasoning for the realized socio-economical measures, the change in the tone of foreign policy and the *ethnization* of political and the wider public discourse. Paradoxically, the mentioned phenomena have been accompanied by the ongoing process of Slovakia's growth into the integration structures of the united Europe, embodied by the accession to the *Schengen Area* in 2007 and preparations to adopt the Euro that wouldn't be possible without the actual promising economical progress.

Like previously, this year's report is also the work of a wide collective of authors who are invited to cooperate predominantly on the basis of their expertise in their specific field regardless of their personal political orientations. In addition, the editors deserve the praise that they always give the opportunity to less known authors and therefore the cooperation on this report is a sort of initiation into the professional community, which thanks to this cooperation is showing promising growth and rejuvenation. It creates a fruitful informal connection of people from various working environments – from independent institutes, think tanks and also from the academic institutions – as a basis for cooperation also on different projects.

Personally lacking the ability to patiently collect information and monitor everyday politics I know that for formulating generalized evaluations about Slovakia and its position in comparison with other countries there isn't a more precious source of data in one thick publication, and soon to be available in a significantly thinner CD. What's left is just to sigh that a similar report isn't published in the other V4 countries.

A few ideas were inspired by reading selected chapters. I agree with the opinion of the editors that this report is a basis for creating a 'deeper and integral view' of political strategists, analysts and advisors. I particularly recommend to those analysts, who when approached by the media formulate at the speed of light the viewpoint on various questions about internal politics, to read with epistemic submission at least some of the chapters of the new *Report* to better understand the normative structure of the society or the layout of attitudes according to the socio-demographic characteristics, before they pass conclusions about current events or comment on the behavior (appearances) of the political actors (players).

Even though the holders of the executive and legislative powers have the largest responsibility for the outcome of the politics, the dominant topic in commentaries on the domestic politics in the media is the low voter support for the opposition parties, inefficiency of their functioning, defensiveness, passivity, etc.

Paradoxically, less attention is given to the question why the government coalition – to which the *Global Report* attributes a stronger root of 'partocratic-clientelistic practices' (p. 45) and reducing transparency in administering the public finances – is still highly trusted by the voters. Explaining this support for the ruling coalition parties and mainly the strongest, the passivity of the opposition or its so called disunited (non-uniform) activity is only an expression of personal impressions and not an empirically based explanation. I also recommend to the authors the cliché about 'decreasing preferences' of opposition parties, to look at the table about trends of preferences (p. 254), and then to talk about it. By now, traditionally in a professionally elaborated (qualitatively processed) chapter about public opinion (Bútorová – Gyrafášová) I also draw to attention the findings that mostly captures the interest of the voters – in 2007 it was mainly the "realized or advised changes in health care with impact on the wallet of a patient" (p.243). While that which is on the agenda of the opposition parties- clientelism and nepotism, abuse of authority by the public servant interested only 2% of respondents.

What can the opposition do in a situation, when the global report 2007 in the chapter about economic development we read that in spite of an attempt by the current government to dismantle certain reform measures

of the previous government in the sectors of taxes, health care or pension system, a more distinct disruption in the development of the economy didn't occur, rather the positive tendencies from the years 2005 – 2006 strengthened (p. 398) and achieved "not only a strong but also healthy growth along with an acceptable rate of stability (falling deficit of the current account of the balance of payments, falling deficit of public finances, a drop in the inflation rate, regression of unemployment)" (416). Taking into consideration the measures which are connected with the final phase of preparations for the Euro in 2008, "a further moderate drop in the inflation rate is being anticipated and also a continuance of a significant growth of a real wage". No other government, which Slovakia previously had, took over such a well launched (started) economy. In the time of creating auspicious conditions for economic development the persons involved in reforms became for most of the citizens untrustworthy and refused by the people who suffered from their social costs (directly bore the social weight). When social benefits (profits) came, again the majority cognitively or affectively cannot admit that it is the result of the so oft deprecated reforms and of those involved. It suggests a culturally propogated tendency not to forgive those who have caught us doing some unfair activity.

The overall growth of satisfaction with the direction that Slovakia is

going and its economical development in 2007 shows that in the end the public accepts the results of the mainly rejected socio-economical reforms introduced by the previous government. Exactly 1% more of respondents accredited the economical success to the current PM (25/24%), Fico. In contrast to the 'voice of the people', the experts accredited the record fast GDP growth in Slovakia to the results of work by both Dzurinda governments, the first one contributed 20%, but mainly the contribution of the second was evaluated as 42%. The most significant measure accepted by the previous government was the tax reform (21%) and reformation of the labor market (10%). According to this research the contribution of the Robert Fico government to the current growth is 2%. The current management of Slovak entry to the Euro zone has a positive influence (3%), on the other hand the government slowed down the growth of the economy by regulating the tax reform, canceling fees in the health service and has made businessmen unsure (-1%). So the merits of Fico are mostly in the fact that up till now he has not realized all the radical steps which he promised to his voters and which eventually won him the elections. I have to admit that not fulfilling the promises is, in this case, the better alternative for this country.

What can the opposition politicians really do in such a favorable economic situation? If they want to compete with the government parties in courting

voter preferences, it is worthwhile to look at neighboring Hungary where such a search for votes had led the country into economical stagnation and a high dissatisfaction among those voters who the politicians from both left and right had continuously courted. Again, the voters do not like to hear about any attempts to prevent damage to this favorable environment, pointing to harmful medium-term outcomes. However, this won't surprise specialists who do not share the myth of the rational Voter.

Certainly there are issues (topics) where points can be scored - lagging in law enforcement and the bad state of the judiciary or the still high level of corruption. Empirical findings also prove that the voters of the opposition parties are much more sensitive towards these issues than the voters of the coalition parties. But the problems with the judiciary and legally consistent state are considered the most serious by only 6% of respondents (p. 241). Although, the authors of this Report together with international rating institutions consider it as the most problematic issue in Slovakia.

What interested me after reading the chapter about the legal state was the more general problem of how to judge the condition of a legal state and the trends prevalent in its development. After the preliminary claims of the authors that the second year of the ruling coalition Smer-SD, SNS and LS - HZDS "has been noticeable for the obvious distancing from the principles

of a legal state" and the weakening of legal certainties and the populations confidence in the law; the analysis of the development in the field of the legal state is summarized by the words that "the foundations of the legal state, due to the consequences of the policies carried out by the governing coalition, began to shake" (p. 141) with respect to the attempt to enforce a 'suppressive press law' which after all predicts a 'stiffening up of the dispute about the essence and protection of a democratic legal state'. If we compare this evaluation with recent years - a problem arises of how to 'measure' the situation let's say, the last whole year of the Dzurinda's government in 2005, with this last year. The situation was then evaluated very critically - for example M. Kollár in reaction to Fico's affective attack stated as evidence (verification) of the same meter used by the *Global Report* authors on all executives.

"In power-political science the legal state becomes an annoying empty phrase, in law making the infirmities of improvisation have become deep rooted and the judiciary, in spite of all the effort, remains rather one of the challenges for further progress rather than a display cabinet for the country. A well known sentence says that after a battle scars are always decoration. A lot of the scars that will be left behind on the face of the public sector by the acts of the present garniture could possibly be viewed as decoration perhaps only by Machiavelli. This

power will surely not perish of beauty despite choosing whatever make-up in the last year of this electoral term."

I agree - it is evidence of criticism against all executive bodies, no matter of their left-right profile (coloration). But that 'same meter' remains questionable. What is concerned here is a broader problem about the phenomenon being scaleable, not easy to be quantified and by reading out of context 'apples and pears' are sometimes compared. Nevertheless I still think that a less metaphorical language would prosper for a more objective judgment of trends in the legal state field. A good example to follow in this case is the effort to move the corruption rate appraisal from measuring the index of corruption perception to the transparency index of public orders and index of political patronage, which are worked out on the basis of 'hard' data in the chapter *Transparency and Corruption*, (Sicáková-Beblavá). To conclude I want to underline that also other parts of the Report deserve attention, the reason why it did not happen is the necessity of selection. Its optics is given subjectively - by my scholarly interests. It doesn't have anything to do with the quality of anything not mentioned, notwithstanding for monitoring the development of society and politics of meaningful chapters.

Finally, coming back (returning by way of a curve) to the theme of the cover, I can imagine that a sound self-confident man in the seat of prime

minister could respond to the cover that made him angry and also respond creatively: "Just wait and see 'IPA guys', this time that 'roller' will only be a case of self-liquidating prediction and you will fill next year's cover with Slovak inhabitants happily waving Euros in their hands!" Unrealistic to expect something like this from the

mentioned politician? Why cannot also social scientists sometimes dream that a powerful political actor (player) will 'wittingly' defeat their prediction?

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The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan

By Robert D. Crews & Amin Tarzi (eds). Harvard University Press, 2008.

Afghanistan has been a topical notion in foreign policy and international relations for almost 30 years. The Soviet invasion followed by years of instability and warlord rule was ended by a short but well noted period of rule by the Taliban. The Taliban, a movement which emerged out of Pakistani madrasas with a rather distorted view of Islam, managed to set the Thames on fire and enter the terminological vocabulary of foreign policy experts with unpredictable speed. Today, almost seven years after ousting Mullah Omar from his seat, the Taliban is causing more and more headaches for the current Afghan government and NATO-led forces in the country. What is really needed in order to counter the dangers connected with the Taliban (and neo-Taliban as well) is proper understanding of the movement, its foundations and social basis.

The edited volume by Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi offers insight into the movement. Even though the literature on the Taliban is quite abundant, most of the literature focuses on the treatment of women, education or Taliban support of international terrorism. On the other hand, the Crews' and Tarzi's volume takes a different direction. In 10 chapters,

the authors who are indeed experts in Afghan history, politics and society, uncover step by step hidden mysteries of the movement. The most challenging one seems to be the one mentioned on the book's flap: how come a band of religious zealots managed to catch and retain power in the fight for Afghanistan?

A reader without deep knowledge of Afghan history and society will be very pleased to read the introduction by both editors. The longest chapter of the book offers insight into the topic. While not focusing strictly on the Taliban phenomenon, the introduction discusses Afghan history since its independence, the relations between ethnicities and religious groups and also its relations with other countries. Whereas during the British rule in India Afghanistan functioned as a buffer, during the Cold War it emerged as a direct battlefield for the two superpowers. The Taliban has been described in two ways: as a religious movement which reflected the aspirations of Muslim militants worldwide, and as a more complex movement which was formed thanks to support from the USA and Pakistan. The collapse of the movement in 2001 has, according to authors, confirmed the thesis that the movement was an indigenous movement which was up to

reestablish order based on rural Pashtun values. However, even this view is further challenged and editors accept the idea that the original basis is the rural life as interpreted by refugee camp dwellers that have only seldom lived in a real village. The Taliban is seen as a movement which tried to reestablish the institutions which collapsed due to the Soviet invasion. As acknowledged by both editors, this aspect of the Taliban is often overseen and deserves further attention. The governing task of any government in the country is complicated by the fact that society in Afghanistan is dominated by 'warlords' - local elites whose consent is crucial for exercising any centralized power in Afghanistan. Editors offer a roadmap to a maze of Afghan ethnic affiliations. As they point out, the cooperation even within the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan - the Pashtuns - has been more an exception than a rule (one thinks of Kurdistan as a similar example).

In further chapters, authors discuss not only the Taliban as a foreign creation but also as a product of Afghan history. The chapter by Abdulkader Sinno deals with the Taliban as a power and uniting force among the Pashtuns. The Taliban is shown as a skillful group which managed to use intra-Pashtun rivalries to gain power even though they were by far not the most privileged ones.

The Taliban was of course not an isolated movement, and the political and social environment from which it emerged shaped the movement. In

his contribution, Neamatollah Nojumi discusses different Afghan political groups and parties, their foreign backers and policies. As he argues, the Pakistani network overlooking the Afghan anti-Soviet resistance (and distributing American military support) silenced moderate and democratic groups, and the only groups which were given a chance to survive were the militants. The support in Iran was not roses all the way either - the moderates were seen as nationalists which was a serious shortcoming from Tehran's ideological standpoint. The author further deals with the results of the environment in Pakistan's refugee camps. It is there where the original roots of the Taliban can be found. The author also explains sources of the Taliban's funding (the road mafia and Afghanistan Transit Treaty Agreement violations). He discusses not only the lack of ideological backing, but also the connection to Al Qaeda.

Chapter 3 by Juan Cole talks about the point best known about the Taliban, the repressive gender policies. There are numerous accounts about the suppression of women in Afghanistan (Afghan women, once unveiled and with positions very similar to the position of Western women, were shortly confined to their houses and had to retreat from public life). The draconian policies of the movement are pictured with detailed analysis.

Next chapter by Nazif Shahrani shows a history of the Pashtun elites' dream to establish a state in Afghanistan which would be dominated

by Pashtuns. He asserts that Taliban policies towards the minorities are in fact deeply rooted in the historical past and their situation was only further complicated by a situation after the Cold War when the minorities emerged strengthened. Shahrani is skeptical about the possibility for reconciliation among the ethnic groups in Afghanistan in the future.

Lutz Rzehak in Chapter 5 founded the essay about the change of the world view on field research in southwestern Afghanistan. Since in Afghan society oral communication is much more important than the written one, she focuses her essay on the oral transmission of the stories from the Taliban era. She puts her story into an elaborate socio-political framework, describing in quite detail the political events that happened in the Nimroz region. She makes a difference between the storytelling of people with higher education compared to less literate persons. Whereas the former usually put their responses without any reference to themselves, the latter refer to their own experiences. The interesting point is that she was collecting stories in both Dari/Persian (language of local Pashtuns) and Baluchi, two languages widespread in southwestern Afghanistan. She also studied songs sung in the area, the essay is accompanied with some of them. In the end, she describes how electronic media have changed the way the songs are dispersed - by selling cassettes and CDs in bazaars, by means of radio and TV.

Chapter 6 by Robert L. Canfield deals with the identity issue of Muslims in Afghanistan. Canfield starts with a discussion of movements which emerged after the fall of the USSR, which emerged around the frontier of the dead empire. He tries to use the Benedict Anderson's framework of fraternity, power and time to analyze those movements. Canfield asserts that original fighters against the Soviets were ethnonationalist groups. He describes the Taliban as a body which arose in such circumstances and groups allied with the Taliban as bodies with distinctive features. Canfield claims that the "original Taliban" as he calls them, has an original purpose in establishing order in times of anarchy and was focused on local problems. The author claims that the wider Islamic agenda was brought in by fighters accompanying Osama Bin Laden and fostered by other Arab-Afghans and Pakistan. The Taliban then became more zealous. After the fall of the Taliban and establishment of a new government, the Taliban gradually changed into today's loose alliance with diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

Chapter 7 by one of the editors, Robert D. Crews, discusses how moderate the Taliban actually is in post-2001 Afghanistan. While this term is severely contested in Afghanistan itself, Crews acknowledges that the mere term moderate is very dubious. In a diverse patchwork of Taliban, moderation is both an entry ticket to

become a part in politics and a way to advocate more conventional political interests. Putting this into a wider perspective, the author argues that the Taliban tried to build a basic state structure. After the fall of the Taliban, the 'moderates' regrouped in Pakistan (not excluding former high figures). Crews asserts that 'moderate' Taliban is only a code name for integration of Pashtuns without resorting to ethnic ties.

The final chapter of the volume by another editor, Amin Tarzi, deals with the question of who the neo-Taliban are and how the political resistance emerged after the US invasion in 2001. While the Taliban is still a recognized mark in Afghanistan (with both positive and negative connotations), these new groups are not totally identical but rather share only some features. The general amnesty in 2003 offered a new chance to the insurgents. The author asserts that both domestic and international actors had a stake in stirring the situation in Afghanistan. The fall of the Taliban meant for Pashtuns the ever-enforced feeling of the loss of political influence they enjoyed long before. This, together with (un-)security factors contributed to the creation of resistance to the government. Tarzi identifies two strands in the movement – those who are preoccupied with Afghan problems and those who see their position in a wider international Islamist perspective. Various resistance groups have not even the same ideology. There are, however, commonalities with the pre-2001 Taliban self-legitimization

based on divine law. Tarzi divided neo-Taliban into two groups – those who identify themselves with Mullah Omar and those who went to deeper Pashtun roots and want to represent not only Pashtuns but also traditionalist Muslims. In the end, he asserts that the groups are no longer 'just a resurrection', but rather an uncontrolled alliance of forces.

The epilogue to the book by Atiq Sarwari and Robert D. Crews discusses post-Taliban Afghanistan and whether it created better life for the people. As the authors acknowledge, by removing the Taliban the US took over the yoke of reconstructing the country. Even though Washington seemed to offer the same medicine as for war-ridden countries before, it opted for a minimalist version, to the detriment of the population. Authors state that the result after six years is not positive. Opium-growing dominates the economy and militias are ruling large portions of the country. American preference for a strong central government instead of federative form reflects the distrust of non-Pashtun political forces in the country. The authors show a very sad picture, where warlord politics has entered the highest echelons, including ministers. The new government failed to offer security to citizens, police tasks were taken over by local commanders. In the end, authors assert that by depriving Karzai of 'a proper treasury' and by holding power through 'punitive expeditions', the post-Taliban government legitimacy has been undermined.

All in all, the volume deals with a topic greatly important for the understanding of the contemporary greater Middle East. Even though the Taliban has entered the mouth of politicians and the keyboards of analysts, many might pose numerous questions about the movement. For those curious as well as for those who need to fine-tune the details, the volume by Crews and Tarzi proposes rewarding

time well spent. The chapters, which are finely written and free of any academic writing' overburdening, are refreshingly lucid and (un)surprisingly insightful. This is a book well worth reading.

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Security Handbook 2008. Emerging Powers in East Asia: China, Russia and India: Local Conflicts and Regional Security Building in Asia's Northeast

By Hans J. Giessmann (ed). Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2008.

Security Handbook 2008 is the next in his as well as other texts, ends up in from the publication series of the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg dealing with regional security development and cooperation. The first of them, focused on the region of Central and Eastern Europe, was published in 1995 and was followed by the next triad in 1998, 2001 and 2004 respectively. For the present the last from the collection appeared in the beginning of 2008 and for the first time in this edition's relatively short history is oriented on part of the Asian continent.

The book's geographical determination itself is a bit confusing which also confirms its title. Simultaneously regions of East (main title) and Northeast (subtitle) Asia are stated there. Although the editor, Hans Joachim Giessmann, in the first study of the publication (East Asia's Emerging Powers. Conflict, Cooperation and the 'Asymmetric Pentagon' of Regional Security in Northeast Asia) – playing the role of an introduction to the topic – spends some time clarifying the geographical perception of the region of interest, using the assumption that Northeast Asia is a sub region of East Asia, blending different regional terms,

in his as well as other texts, ends up in an obfuscation.

Neither of these discordances would be such a big problem, if countries like India, Russia and even the United States (whereas the two former have become continental pillars) were not included in both regions. A partial explanation of this 'regional chaos' we get after a look the contents and a definite one after reading through the whole book. Then we find out in a matter of fact that it is a geostrategic treatise not only for the region of Northeast Asia, but also for other countries, conflicts and further various aspects of international relations with some impact and influence on the region of the primary interest (for instance Taiwan-Chinese relations, problems in Myanmar etc.). Nevertheless a reader can sometimes only suppose the reasons for inserting some sections of the publication.

No doubt it will not interfere with him after reversing the last page of the book as it offers a very valuable excursion into the key factors of the international policy of this part of Asia. Giessmann succeeded in putting the next seven authors acting all over the world together (from Hamburg, Delhi, Taipei, Shanghai, to Honolulu and

Washington) disposed not only of the distinguished manifold academic or non-governmental organizations, but predominantly offering their own (and sometimes antagonistic) views determined by their geographical and institutional backgrounds.

The publication is thematically divided into four chapters. The first (Northeast Asia: A Security Region in the Being) consists of Giessmann's freestanding study already mentioned above and approximating the region of (North)East Asia as one of the fastest developing areas of the world, either in the sphere of international politics, or economics and culture. The author comes to the conclusion, thanks to the enormous expansion of this part of the globe 21st century could be termed as 'Asian' (following British (19th) and American (20th) ones).

The second chapter (Emerging Powers in East Asia: China, Russia, India), which is as it were the core of the whole publication, clearly examines the region from the key powers' view, that are either its component (China), or their policy markedly influence what is happening in it, though geographically touch just its edge (Russia, India). The third part of the book (Local Conflicts in Northeast Asia) concentrates on a pair of local security focal points (DPRK and Taiwan), which currently perhaps most significantly form regional international policy and security policy discourse. Finally, in the framework of the fourth chapter (European Security Perspectives on East Asia)

the publication is concluded by Bernt Berger and Heather Gilmartin's study (The Quiet Europeans? Appraising Europe's Commitment to East Asian Security) looking for the reasons for slightly ambivalent European position towards Asia, and indicating the opportunities for its change.

Thus, the publication is a set of different views and perceptions that are leading to a certain absence of the regional complexity on one side, however relatively successfully striving for complexity of disciplines on the other. It means studies in addition to political factors influencing regional development touch also economic, societal, cultural or even religious factors (in this context very refreshing is the entry of Nicholas Eberstadt Economic Implications of a 'Bold Switchover' in DPRK Security Policy Potentialities for Economic Performance in a Still-Socialist North Korea, that enrich the book with economic analysis searching for an answer to the question of whether or not DPRK can raise its economic performance with keeping its socialist system of central planning). Concurrently presenting opinions cover the wide scope of positions, ranging from politically neutral to rather contrasting. Probably the biggest mutual discrepancy can be seen in comparing the work of Xia Liping, professor of the Shanghai Institute for International Studies (The Prospect of East Asian Security: Chinese Perspective) and Ceng-yi Lin, director of the Institute for Taiwan Defense and Strategic Studies (Taiwan's Security under the Rise of China).

Nevertheless, a unity can be traced in the basic idea of all contributors weaving throughout the book; that is the whole region is covered by a cloak of suspicions and mutual distrust. Individual states are afraid of the peril from the others, also in the case they are (at least on the paper) long term partners. It can be seen very well in the previously mentioned study of Xia Liping, who while describing a trilateral relationship among China, Japan and the United States refers not only to an American fear of the resolution of Chinese-Japanese tensions originating from the events of WWII which could negatively affect the geostrategic interests of the USA, but also to a traditional Chinese cautiousness while analyzing American-Japanese relations and a Japanese vigilance towards the development of the primarily economical linkages between Beijing and Washington. However, as Berger and Gilmartin point out in the final chapter, this "strategic uncertainty" creates the appropriate environment for innovations in the policy formulations from other state actors regardless of whether or not they are from within or outside of the region of (North)East Asia.

To sum up, *Security Handbook 2008* is not (as the title evokes) a typical handbook about an Asian continent, but rather a set of studies, where the authors combine informative sections (a complex of the valuable and actual information from the region and historical backgrounds of relevant issues), with its own

examinations, analytical insertions and recommendations for policy actors. Thus, the biggest benefit of the book is not bringing original ideas or information (although their value can not be denied, more to the contrary it is necessary to appreciate), but predominantly their well-arranged summarization with a high number of references and additional literature. Particularly the text of Alexandre Y. Mansourov (Russia's Advances and Setbacks in Northeast Asia under President Putin) examining a shift in so called Oriental (Eastern) policy of Russia, since Vladimir Putin took power as a president, is very beneficial with its enormous amount of detailed information and references.

This publication can be attractive for those deeper interested in the region of Asia who build a mosaic of opinions and views on its particular problems and themes. Likewise it can be also appealing for those interested in the questions of international politics in their wide range and aspire to widen their horizons as well as gain a closer understanding of the region. Especially for them some examining sections and historical excursions as well as final facts and figures about six countries (China, India, Russia, DPRK, South Korea and Taiwan) are dedicated.

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Fair Trade for All: How Trade Can Promote Development

By Joseph E. Stiglitz and Andrew Charlton. Oxford University Press (USA), 2006.

The idea of free trade is one of the basic foundations of our globalized economy. The advantages of free trade were proclaimed by the founding fathers of modern economics – Adam Smith and David Ricardo. The theory of comparative advantages is still one of the most important basic premises in international economics, and its wide acceptance played an important role in the negotiation of the *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade* (GATT) in 1947.

The 23 signatory countries believed that free trade is an important factor in economic development, and started a process which brought a number of positive results, and led to the creation of the *World Trade Organization* (WTO) in 1995.

Many view the last 50 years of trade liberalization under GATT and WTO as an unprecedented success story. The GATT rounds led to a significant overall fall in global tariff rates, and to the abolition of many discriminatory practices. The benefits of this process are not easy to measure, but estimates refer to gains in the order of billions of USD. But despite its undisputed success, not everyone is content with the GATT/WTO trade liberalization process. The global economy comprises, on the one hand, an elite club of developed

countries, and on the other hand, a large group of developing countries, with hundreds of millions living in conditions of extreme poverty. Many feel that the GATT/WTO negotiations promised equal positive effects for all, but very often the rewards of free trade were reaped by the developed countries, and the position of the least developed countries deteriorated after each round of GATT negotiations.

The authors of *Fair Trade for All: How Trade Can Promote Development* also belong in this category. The book was co-authored by Nobel-prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz and by Andrew Charlton, a talented young economist currently working at the *London School of Economics*.

Both authors believe that the current system of global trade liberalization is fundamentally flawed and urgently needs to be reshaped. In their view, the main problem with GATT/WTO negotiations is that they are dominated by the developed countries, and these countries naturally pursue their own interests – which often conflict with the interests of the least-developed countries. The developing countries began to realize this fact in recent years, and this development led mainly to the spectacular failure of the Doha Round

of WTO negotiations – the round which was supposed to be about the development impulses of free trade.

But before analyzing the flaws of the WTO system, the authors of the book present a very important – and equally provocative – question: Is free trade really helping the economic development of developing countries? The popular and accepted answer to this question is a resounding ‘yes’, but the authors explore several unsettling facts which suggest that a certain level of protectionism is highly desirable for the development of the least-developed countries. For example, the success of newly industrialized countries in Southeast Asia is often cited as a triumph of free trade, but many economists forget that these countries often used protectionist measures to help their developing industries (e.g. Japan, South Korea). Equally, the failure of import substitution development policy in Latin America is not a failure of protectionism. The crisis in this region in the ‘80s was clearly induced by external factors – especially by the rapid rise in interest rates in the USA. The authors argue that trade liberalization *can be* a positive force for economic development in poor countries – but the positive effects depend on other economic factors. Thus, there is no ‘one size fits all’ liberalization policy for the developing world, and WTO negotiations should take this into account. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of such behavior in the latest rounds of trade negotiations.

According to the authors, quite apart from the ‘blanket liberalization’ process the WTO negotiations have several other serious flaws. Firstly, negotiations are often directed exclusively by the most developed countries, and have often been untransparent and secretive (e.g. the ‘green room’ procedure). The agenda has also consistently been set by developed countries, with special emphasis on their interests. Stiglitz and Charlton argue that there is a need for institutional change, in order to give the developing countries more participation and negotiating power.

Secondly, the dominance of developed countries has led to the situation that they have been able to push the liberalization process in the field of processed goods and services – fields dominated by corporations from these countries. As a result, tariffs on simpler goods and agricultural products remain relatively high. These are exactly the fields in which the least-developed countries possess a comparative advantage. The situation is especially visible in the area of agricultural products, where developed countries not only subsidize their farmers, but often provide them with generous export subsidies. These agricultural products then often end up in developing countries where local farmers cannot compete with the subsidized products from the EU or USA.

Thirdly, the authors argue that the current tariff setup does not promote economic development in developing countries. The current tariff rates

target less-processed goods coming from developing countries, rather than processed goods. This is an unfair form of economic discrimination, as the developing countries are not encouraged to develop more advanced industries which would ensure a higher level of value added, technology and human resources utilization. All in all, the situation of the least-developed countries is not easy in global trade – on the one hand, WTO provisions limit their opportunities to protect their infant industries, and on the other, the current tariff system encourages the export of unprocessed goods and agricultural products. It is no surprise that the authors of the book argue for a change – a change that would turn the tides in favor of the developing countries. Frankly, it is very hard to argue against this change.

What kind of change do the authors of the book propose? Stiglitz and Charlton offer a set of proposals which could, in their opinion, be helpful for the development of the least-developed countries. The basic set of proposals can be summarized into three points:

- all WTO members should commit themselves to providing free market access, in all goods, to all developing countries poorer and smaller than themselves. So all developing countries could expect free access to all markets with a larger GDP or a larger GDP per capita;
- developed countries should commit themselves to the elimination of agricultural subsidies;

- the promise of market opening should not be undermined by technical provisions such as rules of origin.

Even a brief look at the main principles of these proposals tells us several things – they are fresh, provocative, extremely helpful for the developing countries – and mostly unrealizable. The first proposal poses the (relatively) smaller problem. The principle guiding free market access is simple and fair. The most-developed countries would give free market access to all developing countries, enabling them to use their comparative advantages and to build new ones in the future. It is fair that the least-developed countries would be the largest beneficiaries of such a system. Countries like Zaire, Chad or Malawi would gain free access to almost all markets, as most other countries have a larger GDP, or a higher GDP per capita. Moreover, Stiglitz and Charlton argue that these new rules would facilitate south-south trade, which is currently burdened by high tariff rates (in comparison with north-north and north-south trade).

One might ask, what about reciprocity, the guiding principle of GATT/WTO negotiations? The authors argue that the developed countries underwent a tremendous change in the last century – they moved from an agricultural economy to a more advanced industrial and later service economy. This is exactly the change many developing countries need to

undergo in order to leave behind the burden of poverty. The problem is that the developed countries block this transformation, by trying to protect exactly the same industries the developing countries are trying to develop. Currently, developing countries possess a comparative advantage in the field of labor-intensive industries and service sectors. As these sectors in developed countries begin to face competition from developing countries, so grows the pressure to protect these declining industries. This conflict between the developing countries and developed countries is one of the key conflicts blocking the Doha Round of WTO negotiations. The principle Stiglitz and Charlton propose would solve the problem elegantly and fairly, but the lobby groups of declining industries in the developed world (e.g. steel or textiles) would do anything to block any agreement bearing resemblance to these principles.

The total abolition of agricultural subsidies in developed countries is the most problematic of Stiglitz and Charlton's proposals. As already mentioned, this step would be extremely helpful for many of the least-developed countries, which cannot compete with subsidized goods despite their comparative advantage in many areas of agriculture. Unfortunately, this proposal is not likely to be adopted in the short or even medium term. The problem is that agricultural lobby groups are especially strong in the EU and in the USA, and they

have several faithful allies in the WTO from other countries with heavy agricultural subsidies (e.g. Japan, South Korea). The developed countries show only a very limited willingness to decrease their level of agricultural subsidies – and that is the central conflict of the failed 'development' round of WTO negotiations. The authors in the appendix clearly show empirical evidence in favor of the abolition of agricultural subsidies, but unfortunately, decisions in this field are often ruled by (unnecessary and harmful) emotions.

Besides the reform proposals, chapter 12 is one of the most interesting parts of the book. In this chapter the authors try to evaluate and quantify the costs for developing countries of complying with WTO rules. Stiglitz and Charlton gathered a substantial volume of empirical evidence from their own studies, and from the studies of other authors, and draw some very unsettling conclusions.

Available data show, for example, that the trade preferences enjoyed by the least-developed countries eroded in the last decade and are surprisingly small. This erosion is not large on the global scale, but the authors show that there are industries in the least-developed countries which were overly vulnerable to the erosion of trade preferences. Moreover, the least-developed countries bear several other types of costs when they try to implement WTO standards – the cost of fiscal changes (replacing missing tax revenues) and various implementation costs. Many of the least-

developed countries lack the means to bear these costs, and there are currently no WTO mechanisms to help them cope with these problems.

Exceptionally, the appendix of *Fair Trade for All* is a very important and useful part of the book. The authors gathered a great deal of data and empirical evidence, and apparently decided not to burden the main part of the book with it. The first appendix contains the empirical review of market access issues, from agriculture to manufacturing and services. The pages of this appendix contain a lot of useful information and dates, and are accompanied by a number of tables and graphs. The second appendix contains an empirical review of the so-called Singapore issues – a group of controversial trade negotiation issues pushed forward by developed countries (and opposed by developing countries). This gives information about important issues such as trade-related investments, competition policy and government procurement.

The book of Joseph Stiglitz and Andrew Charlton is a rewarding and thought-provoking book. The authors of the book shed light on many of the 'darker' issues of the GATT/WTO trade liberalization process. Many of the conclusions of the book are well researched and well documented, and even the most orthodox of economic liberals will find themselves forced to stop and give thought to the fairness of the WTO negotiation process, and to the equality of actors from developed and developing countries. Stiglitz and Charlton also present a set of simple and useful principles which could be the basis for a real development round of WTO negotiations. Unfortunately, it is more than likely that these principles, though potentially useful especially for the least-developed countries, will be never implemented.

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