Southeastern Europe at the Crossroads

Ioannis Armakolas*

In October 2010 Serbia marked the 10th anniversary of Milošević's fall from power.[1] Speaking in Belgrade on a special event organized for the occasion, President Boris Tadić outlined the accomplishments of Serbia, previously a pariah nation in the region, and especially the progress in the country's European Union (EU) accession process.[2] But it was more the indifference and the lack of any celebratory mood by the wider public that set the tone of the anniversary. The indifference about the anniversary of this turning point event in a way reflects the situation in post-Communist South East Europe. In Serbia, as in the rest of the region, disappointment and pessimism about the future abounds. Although elites and people are not of course nostalgic of the traumatic 1990s, the Western Balkans' current difficulties and future challenges do not allow over-optimistic views either.[3]

Surely the Western Balkans have made progress in recent years. In Serbia, after the dramatic event of Milošević's downfall, progress was made in the direction of dismantling his regime, democratization and development. But there were obstacles and backward steps such as the assassination of reformist Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003. The region passed through some potentially destabilizing events, such as the arrest and transfer to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) of Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, the assassination of Zoran Đinđić, or Kosovo's declaration of independence, with limited or no violent incidents. The record of the region's human and minority rights has significantly improved. Extensive and relatively successful return programmes have been implemented in the former Yugoslav countries. The Western Balkan countries' cooperation with the ICTY is generally satisfactory, with the notable exception of the two remaining fugitives Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić. Electoral

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* University of Macedonia. He is currently also the Director of Research of the US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans, a joint project of the Hellenic Centre for European Studies (Athens) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington DC).

cycles continue in all Western Balkan countries with very few problems. Party life is vibrant; the fierce political competition often creates problems of political instability, as was recently the case in Albania and Bosnia, but in general it very rarely does get completely out of control.[4] Generally, some progress was made in virtually all areas in which the region was facing serious problems in the past.

Above all, the region's countries have made significant progress in the direction of their integration in Western organizations. Albania and Croatia have joined NATO in 2009, few years after Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria entered both the European Union and NATO. Croatia in all certainty will soon be the first Western Balkan country to join the EU and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) is an official candidate country. The rest of the Western Balkan countries, currently 'potential candidates', aspire to attain the same status in the not-too-distant future.[5] The hopes of the Western Balkans' are based on the European vision and strategy of incorporating the region in the EU, a vision that was codified into the Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans of June 2003.[6]

But important challenges remain. Key among these challenges are some enduring political and minority problems in the region, which will be analysed briefly below. But it would be misleading to isolate political and minority issues as the only or even the main challenges. In recent years, international organizations and think tanks have highlighted the pervasiveness and persistence of problems inherited from the turbulent transition to democracy and market economy in today's South East Europe. For example, a recent policy report on unconventional threats by the *US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans* identified a series of important problems that hamper the region's European and Euro-Atlantic integration prospects.[7] Tackling threats like organized crime and corruption has become a priority in the West's strategy for reforming the Balkans and integrating them into Western institutions. This strategy was coupled with significant investment of political capital and funding channeled into economic support and technical guidance programmes as well as in the realization of regional and bilateral initiatives. But the report found that recovery from the ills of the last two decades "has been slow and the initiatives yielded varying results…while political commitment has been lagging in many countries".[8] Lingering threats can be found in problematic areas such as corruption, the legacy of the Communist Security Services, human trafficking, drug trade, illicit trade of legal and stolen goods, illicit arms trade, illegal immigration, Islamist

radicalism, and cyber warfare. In all these areas, despite progress, key problems and challenges for the future remain. The international community can assist the countries of the Western Balkans in combating these unconventional threats by building on the success of the EU integration process in the region and of regional initiatives for inter-state cooperation in the field.[9]

Important challenges also remain in issues pertaining to human security, which have the distinctive characteristic of having direct impact on ordinary peoples' lives much more than any issue of high politics or traditional security. For example, the displacement of thousands of people and their return to their former homes is a lasting legacy of the 1990s conflicts. Problems that need to be addressed by domestic policy makers and the international community remain despite the energetic efforts and the enormous investment in political capital and money in the past. Additional problems are the discrimination and human rights which persist in some areas of South East Europe despite the good progress that the countries of the region have made since the 1990s. Importantly, most of the efforts in the past were directed towards ethnic and minority issues that threatened the stability of states and the region or to the protection of vulnerable groups affected by the conflicts, such as refugees and displaced persons, returnees and others. But it has recently become more apparent that more attention has to be paid to groups that have faced discrimination but were not typically prioritized by the domestic elites and the international community. For example, the problem of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity became more evident in recent years as a result of anti-gay violence in Belgrade and Sarajevo.[10] Similarly, the extreme poverty and the discrimination laws and practices that Roma face in the Western Balkans is another area in which more resources and energy have to be invested. Likewise, the countries of the Western Balkans are lagging behind in the tackling of problems in human security areas, such as poverty reduction, health security, and environmental security.[11]

Finally, the region's growth, all areas of public policy as well as the general stability of the Western Balkans region can potentially be affected by a combination of the global recession and the contagion effects of the Greek crisis. Some analyses on the effects of the global crisis exist.[12] But more analysis will be required on the effects of the Greek crisis, which began in earnest only this year. The effects of this crisis will likely be felt much more in Western Balkan countries that are linked to the Greek economy through permanent and seasonal workers, reliance on remittances, trade and Greek investment.[13]

In all of these problems, and more political issues that will be dealt with

below, the role of the European and Euro-Atlantic prospect of the Western Balkan nations remains indispensable. The European Union has been systematically using the tool of conditionality for promoting the reform agenda and the adoption of the *acquis communitaire*.[14] All Western Balkan states and their elites, sometimes happily and sometimes grudgingly, adopted many key reforms. As a result, important changes necessary for undoing the catastrophic influence of the 1990s and for helping the Balkan polities to create modern states were implemented. And the Western Balkan states one way or another progressed along the EU accession path. But the enlargement fatigue evident among European elites and societies threatens to disappoint this process. For years, the main obstacles for fulfilling the 'Thessaloniki promise' were the big problems facing the Balkan states, the policies of domestic elites, and sometimes the attitudes of the Balkan societies. We are now entering a phase in which reluctance on the part of the Europeans themselves may become an obstacle as difficult to overcome as the Balkan problems. Much of the region's above-mentioned disillusionment is connected to the difficulties that the dream of European accession is encountering. It is also connected to the difficulties and slow progress in securing tangible mid-way benefits, such as the visa liberalization regime.[15]

Finally, the picture of the prospects and challenges for the stabilization of the region cannot be full without mentioning the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). NATO enlargement in the Western Balkans should be seen as complementary to the EU accession in the context of the wider Western strategy for the region. The (relatively) easier NATO accession process encourages Balkan elites and societies to continue the process of reforms. It is an important mid-way milestone for the long process of integration into the Western institutions. In addition, being a defensive alliance, NATO can provide the security comfort that is missing in several Western Balkan countries. For that reason some analysts argue that an expedited NATO enlargement can become the short-term remedy to instability and political crisis in some of the troubled Balkan countries for as long as EU accession remains a distant dream.[16] Nonetheless, NATO enlargement is not without its problems and serious challenges exist. Public and elite support for NATO accession are typically lower than those of EU enlargement. For example, in Montenegro the governing elites are in favour but the majority of the public is against accession. In Bosnia, most Serbs are against but most Croats and Bosniaks are in favour. The same applies to the elites, with Bosnian Serb politicians officially favouring NATO accession but in reality having a more

ambivalent stance. Then there is the problem of the thorny past and tricky present in the relations between NATO and Serbia. Other problems include the fate of defence and other necessary reforms and the debate about whether these should be sacrosanct or whether the Alliance should exhibit more flexibility than the EU in that matter. Furthermore, there are the problems of incorporating new disputes into the Alliance and accepting countries that are largely net consumers rather than net providers of security. All these provide a complex backdrop to the issue of NATO enlargement in the Western Balkans in a period of great transformation for the Alliance itself.[17]

Before briefly introducing the articles in this special issue, it is necessary to focus on a few of the political challenges, which not only remain serious, but even show signs of becoming greater. Kosovo and Bosnia remain high on the international agenda of Balkan problems. But, as we will see, a series of other issues of inter-ethnic relations and political competition threaten to become new Balkan hotspots.

Kosovo

For the long standing Kosovo dispute, the success of Lady Catherine Ashton, the EU foreign policy chief, to strike a deal for the start of negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina was welcome news.[18] However, one cannot be too optimistic about the problem of the Kosovo status which seems to be in a deadlock. More than two and a half years since the declaration of Kosovo's independence, the Kosovo Albanians are starting to lose their patience and their celebratory optimism and begin to question their leaders' strategy. The push that the Kosovo cause was expected to receive by the favourable ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) may prove to have lost steam very quickly. Only two states have recognized Kosovo since the ICJ ruling in July 2010.[19] The recognition process is effectively stalled, with the current number of states having recognised Kosovo at 71 and only 9 of them in the last 12 months. The majority of states that recognized Kosovo are Western states and they include the majority of the world's most powerful and prosperous countries. But this is only part of the story. Kosovo's nascent diplomacy has been unsuccessful at convincing states that are less susceptible to Western influence. The Western-backed Kosovo independence drive has failed to convince the emerging global powers of the so-called *BRIC*: Brazil, Russia, India and China. The recognition rate is also very low among Muslim countries, the Arab world as well as in the Global South. Non-Western

countries seem understandably disturbed by the Kosovo independence and the ICJ ruling which was welcomed by secessionist movements.[20] Generally, a quick look at the list of states that have recognized Kosovo easily proves that Kosovo independence is a project almost fully supported by Western states but with little appeal beyond them. As things stand now, Kosovo is likely to remain for several years in the 'twilight zone' of unclear status.

Particularly, important is the fact that the EU does not have a united position on the matter.[21] In the EU, 22 out of the 27 states have recognized Kosovo. The remaining countries – Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Cyprus – do not show signs of moving closer to a decision of recognition, despite pressure within the EU. Four out of these five EU member states have been vocal opponents of Kosovo independence with active participation in the legal proceedings at the ICJ.[22] The non-unity of the EU on the matter complicates European policy making in Kosovo. But even more important are the consequences for the Western strategy in the region. The Western strategy for the stabilization and normalization of the Western Balkans entailed Kosovo independence as the least problematic of a series of difficult scenarios. Whether recognition was the correct move or not is a long debate that cannot be elaborated here.[23] But since this strategy was followed it is impossible to go back to the pre-independence state of affairs. The status problem will have to follow its own slow process. But, without a closure of the Kosovo status issue it is difficult to conceive how the whole region may move on.[24]

At the same time though, the non-recognisers have strong arguments which cannot be disregarded. They can easily point, not only to the legal and geopolitical issues raised by the declaration of independence, but also by the anemic internal governance in Kosovo. Kosovo institutions remain particularly weak, the protection of human and minority rights is problematic, and the linkages between politics and informal business remain strong. For all these problems Kosovo elites, with the assistance of the international community, need to devise policies that will overcome the existing problems with creativity; for the difficult tasks, they have to come up with solutions that will reassure and allay the fears of the Serbian minority, that will not alienate the more impatient segments of the Kosovo Albanian majority, and at the same time convince non-recognisers that they deserve to be extended recognition. This would be a tall task for any political elite let alone for a politically immature Kosovo leadership. As probably expected Kosovar policy-making often hampers rather than facilitates the resolution of the problems and creation of a positive image abroad.[25]

Needless to say, a key policy riddle remains the problem of the Kosovo Serbs. The ICJ 'gamble' of Serbian diplomacy may have been unsuccessful, but the side effect was the raising of the stakes on the Kosovo problem in Serbian society and consequently the Serb pockets in Kosovo. The choice of strategy for fighting the Kosovo cause originally seemed wise. The Serbian governing elites under the leadership of President Boris Tadić vowed to confront the independence drive of Kosovars only through diplomatic means. But the Serbian government became a victim of its own strategy and partial success. It managed through shuttle diplomacy to prevent recognitions and to refer the problem to the ICJ. Furthermore, the Serbian foreign minister Vuk Jeremić and various Serbian officials discursively elevated the Kosovo issue to such an extent that it has become difficult for Serbia to back down. Despite the U-turn that some believe that President Tadić may be pursuing under the pressure of European diplomacy, it is highly unlikely that any Serbian government can in the short run admit defeat and opt to drop the Kosovo cause in exchange for a still unclear European prospect.

The situation within Kosovo itself is quite tricky. One has to be clear that the problem of Kosovo Serbs was never really a uni-dimensional issue. Three inter-locking but clearly separate problems can be identified: the Serb presence to the north of the river Ibar (North Kosovo), the Serb presence in the south, and the Serb religious and cultural heritage. For the Serbs in the south things are more clear-cut because it is more or less apparent to all players that they cannot possibly sustain the special links with Serbia for too long. Obviously, the main reason is the lack of geographic continuity with the Serbian mainland, which makes these enclaves dependent on the state structures of the new state. There has been gradual realization of this fact and some progress in the process of re-integrating these areas into Kosovo. Serb political representation from these areas is gradually becoming more confident in the fight for the rights of Serbs in the new state. Cooperation with the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is increasing. Moreover, civil society has been active in studying the problem of division and devising solutions for re-integration programmes.[26] To some extent also the security situation for non-Albanians has improved, which, according to the official explanation of the international community, made possible a reduction in the number of KFOR troops. What is clearly missing however is a more spirited policy-making on the part of authorities in Pristina. The latter often seem more preoccupied with the formal recognition of their sovereignty over the entire province rather than with

creating a secure environment for the re-integration of their divided society.[27] Therefore, problems of security and lack of necessary means for re-integration clearly remain almost three years after the formal declaration of independence and more than a decade since the departure of the Serbian army. Similar inability or unwillingness to create a safer environment for a smooth re-integration is exhibited towards the Serb cultural heritage. Albanian elites often behave in a manner that reveals the lack of tolerance and understanding towards the complex problem of the Serb heritage.

As expected, even more complicated is the problem of the north where radical elements of the local Serb population are active. This area functions *de facto* as an extension of Serbian territory and the local Serb population continues to partake fully in Serbian institutional structures. The Pristina government has no effective control over it, while even the presence of the international community's institutions is hardly tolerated by the local Serb structures. For example, EULEX is only gradually and not without resistance establishing its presence and role in the area. The situation in the north continues to be perceived from both Albanians and Serbs as a zero sum game: whatever one side wins or manages to hold on to is considered by the other side as an unacceptable loss. The international community also does not have a clear strategy. Several months ago many efforts were placed in the direction of an ill-conceived 'Strategy for the North'. After the strong resistance encountered by local Serbs, this plan seems to be in limbo now. Thus the situation is likely to remain in a deadlock without clear signs of improvement but also without a serious escalation of tensions. Such escalation, however, is conceivable if the EULEX attempts to forcefully extend the *de facto* reach of Kosovo state institutions to the north or if more radical Albanian elements, frustrated by the deadlock, gain significant ground in the country.

All of Kosovo's challenges are complicated by the lack of inspired leadership and by an immature political system which does not seem capable to confidently lead the new state. The latest of the policy blunders that complicate Kosovo's progress is the recent political crisis in Pristina. It all started when the Constitutional Court of Kosovo ruled that president Fatmir Sejdiu was in violation of the Constitution by holding at the same time both the office of the presidency and the chair of his party, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK).[28] Sejdiu, a professor of law, was found in the unfortunate position to violate, as President, the first Constitution after the country's declaration of independence; surely not an honor that many would aspire to. The case was brought to the court by members of the parliament led by the

politicians of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK), government coalition partner to LDK. Surely the move by the MPs was connected with the coming elections which would face LDK and PDK off as the two largest parties in the country. Sejdiu decided to respond to the challenge not by resigning from his party post but by resigning from the presidency. The resignation was likely to cause early elections that would be held in February 2011. The reasons for choosing the party presidency have to do with the ongoing battle for the control of LDK, a battle which Sejdiu is likely to lose due to the strengthening of internal opposition under Bujar Bukoshi. But in order to secure his re-election in the LDK presidency Sejdiu proceeded with yet another political 'gamble'. He decided that LDK should withdraw from the government, effectively forcing the country into snap elections in the wake of the compromise reached by Ashton for negotiations with Belgrade. As a result, the negotiations are now likely to be postponed, further delaying the recognition process and prolonging the agony of the Kosovar population.

Generally speaking, Kosovo has unfortunately lacked politicians as inspired as the father of the nation, Ibrahim Rugova, who died in 2006 having led Kosovars since the start of the Yugoslav crisis. LDK, Rugova's party, lost the political predominance to PDK, an offspring of the Kosovo Liberation Army. PDK and its leader Hashim Thaci enjoy the trust of the international community but they never proved successful in either inspiring the Kosovo Albanians or reassuring the Kosovo Serbs. In addition, PDK's governmental officials are prime targets of the EULEX corruption investigations proving that the link between politics and illegitimate business remain intact. The electoral chances and political appeal of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), another offspring of the Kosovo Liberation Army, are weakened by party leader Ramush Haradinaj's troubles at The Hague tribunal. The smaller parties that in the past advanced more liberal political platforms never managed to become popular enough to secure their electoral survival. There is finally, *Vetevendosje* (Self-determination), the only potentially influential newcomer in the party scene. The formerly anti-systemic nationalist youth movement led by Albin Kurti plays to the ethnic fears and anxieties of the Albanian population. Also, *Vetevendosje* since its inception has directed its message and energy to attract the support of Kosovo youth. The latter is, as a percentage of the total population, one of the largest in Europe. At the same time, it faces huge problems with unemployment, economic deprivation, lack of political representation, lack of prospects, difficulty in travelling to Europe and other issues.[29] If successful

in its entry into politics *Vetevendosje* is highly likely to further complicate internal policy-making and the necessary compromises that have to be reached for resolving Kosovo's problems.

Bosnia

Bosnia is of course the other Balkan hotspot. In recent years, the troubled Balkan country returned to the international agenda with a vengeance. Before that it was believed that Bosnia, under the tutelage of the international community, was placed on a secure avenue of stabilization. This proved to be only an impression sprung from the optimism brought by the tenure of over-active Paddy Ashdown as the international community's High Representative. Under Ashdown, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) achieved, either through imposition or consent, a series of reforms, especially in the direction of strengthening the state to the detriment of the largely ethnic sub-state entities. Ashdown also particularly targeted the local nationalist leaderships.[30] Due to the force and confidence that the international community employed to impose changes Ashdown was criticized for undemocratic methods and for producing a culture of local politicians' dependency to the internationals.[31] One thing is certain, the reforms proved to be of questionable sustainability and the international community paid little attention to the culture of consensus and cooperation that should be an irreplaceable feature on par with the design of new institutions.[32] It took less than two years, the mismanagement of the police reform, and an inactive successor to Ashdown to lead the Bosnian political system to a deadlock.[33] After the failed April 2006 constitutional reform drive, and under the negative influence of the Party of Independent Social-Democrats (SNSD), the leading Republika Srpska party, and secondarily of Haris Silajdžić, then Bosniak member of the state presidency, the situation in the country went downhill.

In the last five years, the escalating crisis brought about many disturbing developments. Policy-making is seriously delayed by irresponsible political elites. Some key reforms are blocked or threatened with reversal by Bosnian Serbs. The authority of the international community is ever weakening. The internationals have lost several political battles in the country and seem to develop a 'Bosnia fatigue' syndrome, which prevents them from pursuing energetic efforts. Virulent political competition continued and escalated making compromise difficult and poisoning the already thorny inter-ethnic relations. The elite consensus on the issue of the war crimes collapsed when

Milorad Dodik chose this field as a key area for raising his popularity among Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, Serbs continued to encounter hostility by the other groups when they tried to make the case for the war crimes committed against them. Generally, the legacy of the war and the issue of how deal to with it, remained the central obstacle in building trust.

To that complex picture, one has to add the challenge posed by the Bosnian Serbs. Milorad Dodik's idea for a referendum was originally believed to be just a political trick to attract voters. It was also seen as a pressure to Bosniak elites to quit their calls for the abolishment of Republika Srpska. Even as a trick the referendum talk broke a taboo, since for several years the official position of Bosnian Serb elites was not against Bosnian sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although the referendum talk was forgotten for a while it came back as Republika Srpska government clashed with the High Representative, and especially as the elections drew closer. The separatist discourse was also strengthened after the declaration of Kosovo independence and later the ICJ ruling.[34] After the latter, Dodik declared that "the ICJ decision can serve us as guidance for our continuing fight over our status and our future".[35] As things stand, the leaders of Republika Srpska appear ready to proceed with their move for independence when the timing is right. The motto adopted by SNSD in its pre-election campaign is telling: 'Republika Srpska for ever and Bosnia for as long as we have to'.[36] Since the international community has well in advance rejected any such move, the opportune moment may be distant. But this is not necessarily good news for Bosnia since the Bosnian Serb leadership may continue its strategy of raising tensions, exploiting the deep ethnic divisions and creating policy deadlocks.

The stronger aspects of the current political crisis in Bosnia are only the more recent and visible ones.[37] Republika Srpska separatism re-emerged after a period of several years during which the international community failed to effectively support the previous, relatively moderate Bosnian Serb leadership. The crisis of strategy for the international community came as a result of a sloppy transition to a less interventionist role as a result of changed international priorities. But both Republika Srpska separatism and the inability of the international community to play a more effective role hide the deeper and more enduring elements of the crisis. The Dayton constitution is one of the enduring elements hampering progress in Bosnia. The complex organization of the state is simply too burdensome for a weak country like Bosnia to bear. Furthermore, the Dayton compromise typically privileges ethnic over civic rights.[38] Still, despite its deficiencies, Dayton cannot be

blamed for all the ills of Bosnia. Equally problematic are the other enduring dimensions of the crisis, which are often overlooked. The fierce intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic competition, the lack of a culture of tolerance and collaboration, the failure of elites to reach consensus, the societal and electoral appeal of populist politicians, the structure of the political system are key factors that make up the complexity and durability of the Bosnian crisis.[39] Above all, the problematic political characteristics are founded on some troubling features of contemporary Bosnia: the societal and ethnic divisions, low inter-ethnic trust, weak legitimacy of the Bosnian state, and the lack of Bosnians' common vision for the future of the state. This social foundation constitutes the backdrop of all political failures in the country.[40]

The tool that was repeatedly tried for solving Bosnia's problems was extensive constitutional reform.[41] From the outset, the strong desire for extensive reform of the constitutional product of the 'unpopular' Dayton illustrates what domestic and international analysts and policy makers view as the core problem. As was rightly put by a Bosnia expert, in public discourse "the key word 'Dayton' is suggestive of everything that appears not to be well in Bosnia and Herzegovina: complicated institutions, high unemployment, dependency on external aid and intervention, and the predominance of ethnic politics".[42] It reveals also the extent to which debates on Bosnia have been dominated by the logic of institutional solutions and safeguards to the country's problems.[43] Three major reform drives took place in the last five years. Two of these were led by the international community – the so-called April 2006 package and Butmir process – and one by local elites, known as the 'Prud process'. The April 2006 package is the most well known of these attempts and was the one that was best organized and came closest to realization. It was the product of active American diplomacy and managed to bring on board almost all major players in Bosnia, including the Bosnian Serbs.[44] In parliament it failed by only two votes having encountered the opposition of Haris Silajdžić's Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) and a motley group of dissident MPs.

After the failure of the April 2006 package, the situation in the country started deteriorating. The heightened expectations were frustrated creating a negative political and social atmosphere in the country. Most parties tried to capitalize on their postures in the constitutional reform or attempted to invest on the rising tensions and nationalist discourse. Key among these attempts was the building of a strong profile of the defender of Serb interests by Milorad Dodik and his party. The Bosnian Serb assertiveness was mismanaged by the

international community, which saw its representatives effectively losing a series of political battles against Banja Luka. A vicious circle of blocking of reform, political games and nationalist discourse was generated. All parties and groups contributed to this negative process, although it's fair to say that Dodik and SNSD had the lion's share.

The Prud process was an attempt toward coordination of the main parties of the three Bosnian groups. It came in an unfavourable period after the deterioration of the situation. It also encountered opposition from Bosniaks who by that time have come to view Dodik as an extremist with a strongly nationalist agenda. It would be difficult for Bosniak leader Sulejman Tihić to convince Bosniaks of the necessary compromises. He was after all a relatively weak political figure and his image was further tarnished as a result of his attempts to build a consensus with Dodik. The Prud process quickly proved futile after encountering strong resistance by political forces that were excluded from the process and by the civil society. The failed attempt further contributed to the sense of disillusion and political crisis, undermining the anemic elite coordination as well as the delicate and ever weakening inter-ethnic trust. In such a difficult context, came the Butmir process. It was an evidently not well prepared international effort bringing back the forceful top-down attempts to compromise. It also seemed like a product of the pressure for an international response to the crisis and a reflection of the delicate balances within the international community. With these limitations, and with the next elections set for October 2010 fast approaching, the failure came as a logical consequence.

The October 2010 elections brought about interesting results. The Bosniaks elected SDA's Bakir Izetbegović, the son of Alija, as Bosniak member of the presidency. In that they punished Haris Silajdžić whose irresponsible policy led the April 2006 package to collapse and whose careless nationalist discourse played well in the hands of Bosnian Serb separatism. Silajdžić's party SBiH also had a serious setback and it is highly likely that for the first time in many years it will not be in government. Tihić's SDA managed to have a good showing but lost primacy to the Social Democratic Party (SDP). The latter had a successful campaign appealing mainly to Bosniaks and secondarily to pro-Bosnia Serbs and Croats. They stressed the problem of the weak Bosnian state, a standard complaint for Bosniaks, and they also tried to reconnect with their socialist era roots. Apart from becoming the strongest party, SDP managed also to re-elect Željko Komšić as the Croat member of the presidency. Komšić was voted in mainly by Bosniaks and he is effectively the most popular politician in the

country. But his election was detested by most Croats who saw for the second time the candidates from their own parties outvoted by Bosniaks in the race for the Croat member of the presidency. A very successful showing was that of the party of the Bosniak media magnate Fahrudin Radončić. His Party for a Better Future (SBB) became a considerable political force months from its formation.

Among Croats, the traditional political force Croat Democratic Community (HDZ) won over its splinter party HDZ 1990. HDZ is likely to be the Croat party to form government at the entity and state level and will have to cooperate with the main Bosniak and Serb parties. But the re-election of Željko Komšić and the ever weakening demographic and political power of the Croats will likely push them further towards demanding a third Croat entity. Things are clear cut in Republika Srpska. Milorad Dodik and his SNSD scored a great victory and will form a government with minor allies. The only open question is the election of the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, since the margin of SNSD's Nebojša Radmanović and the opposition's Mladen Ivanić is too small and will be finalized after the recount of thousands of invalid ballots.

Although not disastrous, the election results are a recipe for the continuation of the policy deadlock and of the politics of fear and ethnic competition. The political crisis in Bosnia is likely to continue. In that context, the question in everybody's mind is whether this tense situation can lead to conflict. For several years analysts were accustomed to viewing Bosnia as a weak state but with low potential for violence. The traumatic experience of the 1992-95 civil war and the heavy presence of the international community were believed to deter radicals. In addition, there was progress in sensitive issues, such as the reconstruction of destroyed religious heritage, property restitution, and the return of refugees. Despite some skirmishes, especially in Republika Srpska, there was no noteworthy violence or acts of revenge. Fortunately, this trend mostly continued despite some individual incidents, such as the death of a youngster in violent clashes between football fans and the police in the town of Siroki Brijeg and the death of a policeman in an Islamist terrorist attack in the town of Bugojno.[45] The international community reassures that the security assessments executed do not bring up the possibilities of serious threats.

But things are no longer as quiet as in the past. An international think tank was the first one to discuss the possibility of a return to violence.[46] Regular monitors of security risks have not identified marked increase in the violence potential.[47] But violence, even if not highly likely, is no longer inconceivable in Bosnia. What seems to have changed is the mood in the country. The failure

of elite consensus, the inter-ethnic hostility in public discourse, the aggressive discourse of separatism from Republika Srpska, and the growing influence of Muslim radicals and conservatives are only a few of the elements that alarm the population. In Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities, ordinary Bosniaks talk openly of a return to violence if Republika Srpska declares independence. Needless to say, the first to 'feel the heat' are minority returnees and stayees. Especially among returnees, a genuine feeling of security had never really consolidated in post-war Bosnia. But for the first time in years, issues of security have become the topic of discussion for ordinary Bosnians at home, in the workplace and among friends.

Importantly, ordinary Bosnians do not only fear inter-ethnic violence but are also concerned by the growing levels of criminality by marginalized and disenchanted youth. In the Bosnian cities, once among the safest places in Europe, violence is becoming more frequent.[48] The killing in Sarajevo of a teenager by young delinquents sent shockwaves to ordinary Sarajevans and mobilised civil society.[49] At the same time, the criminal networks that were created and consolidated during the war continue to operate unobstructed. The links between the political elites and organized crime are still in place. Bosnians seem accustomed to this reality and the frequent media stories about the phenomenon do not seem to affect the *status quo*.[50] Young Bosnians' prospects for a better life fall victims to a vicious circle of economic deprivation, failed politics, weak state institutions and inter-ethnic competition. For many, the attraction of the underworld is irresistible because it is based on rational, pragmatic grounds.

The coming months are crucial for the future of Bosnia. The governments that will be formed will have a great responsibility to find ways to collaborate, build consensus and work towards building inter-ethnic trust. The international community will have to strengthen its political commitment and security guarantees to Bosnia. It will also have to find creative ways to assist and advise the domestic elites in finding solutions to the country's problems, without returning to the unsustainable impositions of the High Representative.

New Balkan hotspots?

A number of other Balkan areas can potentially become new hotspots. In the Preševo Valley, a neighbouring to Kosovo area in South Serbia, the situation remains delicate. Typically Preševo Valley is considered to comprise three

municipalities, two with an Albanian majority and one with a Serbian majority and Albanian minority. A decade ago the area experienced the violent mini-insurgency of the Albanian Liberation Army of Preševo, Medveđa and Bujanovac (UCPMB), which ended with the Koncul agreement.[51] The local Albanian population is divided politically between the more moderate forces led by the respected local politician Riza Halimi and the more radical forces, some of which spring from the insurgent UCPMB, led by local heavyweights Ragmi Mustafa and Jonuz Musliu. In recent years, attempts were made by the Serbian state to de-escalate the tensions in the region, improve inter-ethnic relations and integrate Albanians into Serbian institutions. Riza Halimi attempted with some success to express politically this effort towards reconciliation and integration. The moves by the state were cautious and several of the local population's grievances, in areas such as education, culture, employment, and access to public institutions, were not truly addressed. Still, the moderate forces seem to be more powerful than the radicals, although not uncontested. In the recent elections for the minority councils the turnout was just above fifty percent. Only two initially, and then one of the eight local Albanian parties participated in the elections and the process of the formation of the minority council; all the more radical forces boycotted the process. Riza Halimi's Party of Democratic Action (PVD) secured 81.27 percent of the vote. Presently, Halimi appeals to the majority of Albanians in the Valley but a considerable percentage of the overall Albanian population is not particularly attracted by the more moderate voices.[52]

It also has to be kept in mind that Preševo Valley is strongly associated with Kosovo. The Albanians from both sides, and their political representatives, never hid their ambition to one day unify the two regions. For the time being though, the Kosovo political elites do not want to create problems in Preševo since their own statehood is anything but secured and Pristina still does not control large parts of the Kosovo territory. But one cannot preclude a future scenario of an attempt for unification of Kosovo with Preševo Valley. The likelihood of such a pessimistic scenario will increase if the prospect of European and Euro-Atlantic integration becomes distant and if the Serb problem in Kosovo does not find a peaceful solution. In that context, analysts have for some years now been toying with the idea of a possible exchange of territories between Serbia and Kosovo. The international community has always strongly refuted the possibility of such solution. But as the deadlock remains, and the European pull weakens, some influential analysts have started to give this scenario more consideration.[53]

Sandžak may become the newest of the Balkan hotspots. The border region of Serbia and Montenegro inhabited mainly by Bosniaks was for long considered an area to which potentially the fire of the Yugoslav wars could spread. In the turbulent 1990s, the military superiority of the Serbian state effectively prevented any active pursuit of separatist dreams. The latter were present among the political representatives of the Bosniaks, mainly in the Sandžak branch of the nationalist Party of Democratic Action (SDA). The page was turned after the fall of Milošević. Both the Bosniaks and the Serbian state managed to overcome some of their differences and build a level of trust. Compromising moves by both sides effectively incorporated Bosniaks into mainstream Serbian politics. The predominant parties of Bosniaks, Sulejman Ugljanin's SDA and Rasim Ljajić's Democratic Party of Sandžak (SDP) created cooperative relations with the mainstream political parties. For a while it seemed as if the political disputes and occasional violent acts in Sandžak would be a phenomenon involving only intra-Bosniak competition, mainly between supporters of the two parties or between the more radical and more traditional groups of Muslim faithful. In other words, the competition would not involve the Serbian state and its agents. The culmination of this integration of Bosniaks into the Serbian state was the participation of both parties in the Cvetković government, with Rasim Ljajić becoming the minister for human and minority rights and Sulejman Ugljanin serving as minister without portfolio. The participation of two Bosniak ministers in the Serbian government could have signaled the historical reconciliation of Serbs and Bosniaks.

But things did not develop in that way. The game-changer was rise of the political presence of Muamer Zukorlić, Mufti of Novi Pazar and head of the Serbian branch of the Islamic Community, the official institution of Islam with its seat in Sarajevo. Zukorlić's meteoric rise to prominence was to a large extent a result of the competition between the institutions of the Islamic faith in the country, namely the more mainstream, and linked to Bosnia, Islamic Community in Serbia and its opponent, the Islamic Community of Serbia with its seat in Belgrade. The latter attempted to spread its influence and especially to sever the ties with the Bosniaks of Bosnia and its religious institutions. A battle is being waged between the two conflicting institutions extending to incorporate expressions of identity and faith, organizational matters, and importantly material interests, since both groups are trying to claim rightful ownership and control of immovable property. The battle is also being waged in the backdrop of the growing influence of radical Islamist

circles. The latter, like in Bosnia, are in recent years making inroads in the larger segments of the Bosniak population potentially threatening the secular roots and moderate character of this society. Also, as in Bosnia, the official Islamic institutions' ambivalent attitude towards these groups potentially creates conditions for a growth in their influence.

A recent important development in Sandžak politics took place during the elections for the minority councils in Serbia in June 2010. Zukorlić's political formation, the Bosniak Cultural Community, stroke a victory securing 17 out of the 35 seats in the Bosniak minority council. Zukorlić managed to capitalize on the growing dissatisfaction of the Sandžak population. Bosniaks of Serbia see little improvement in their living conditions in recent years despite the fact that their representatives participate in the Belgrade government. Economic conditions may even be seen as deteriorating comparing to the previous turbulent decade.[54] Ordinary Bosniaks were also disturbed by the divisions within their community and were attracted by Zukorlić's radical patriotic message. The Serbian state also contributed to Sandžak's frustration by mismanaging several affairs involving the Bosniak community and by trying to undermine Zukorlić's authority.

In the aftermath of the elections, SDA and SDP declared their unwillingness to cooperate with Zukorlić. But the latter managed to attract defectors from the other parties and was ready to form the majority in the minority council when the Serbian government intervened to block Zukorlić from taking control of the council. This was a clumsy move that further contributed to the Bosniaks' discontent. With the elections for the Bosniak minority council and the escalation that followed we entered a new very sensitive period which, if mismanaged may lead to serious trouble. Only days after the minority council election confrontation between supporters of Zukorlić and local authorities (controlled by Bosniak parties) brought in intervention by the police. The Novi Pazar Mufti seems to be vying to provoke Bosniak outcry and attract international attention. He called for European monitors to be brought in Sandžak, a call which was rejected by the international community.[55] In a controversial move he declared that the goal of Bosniaks in Serbia is to acquire autonomy.[56]

Importantly, the Novi Pazar Mufti enjoys the full support of Reis Mustafa Cerić, the head of the Islamic Community in Bosnia. Cerić is one of the most influential individuals in Bosnia and, some would argue, the most influential Bosniak. In another controversial move, Cerić for the first time

spoke of Bosniaks as 'constituent nation' in Serbia. It remains to be seen what the strategy or strategies of Zukorlić and Cerić are. Whether they function fully in unison, whether they simply want to raise the influence and political role of Bosniaks in Bosnia, or whether they see Sandžak potentially as a new front that can counter-balance the growing separatism of Banja Luka. One thing is for sure, Sandžak requires more attention, diplomacy and compromise in order for not becoming the new Balkan hotspot.

The limited space of this introduction does allow us to analyse a number of other potential hotspots. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one. Despite hopes for the resolution of the long-standing name dispute with Greece, the government of Nikola Gruevski appears to pursue an uncompromising stance that makes a deal difficult. The Greek government on its part is also quite cautious; it knows that if it reaches an agreement in a period of serious financial crisis it will most certainly be severely criticized by the opposition. But internal pressures within FYROM are not minor either. The relations between the Skopje government and the political representatives of the Albanian population are in dire straits. Despite the fact that the Albanians continue to participate in the Gruevski government, their presence seems to hang from a thread. Serious divisions about international priorities, the significance of the dispute with Greece, and rights of the Albanian community remain. In the society itself, the ethnic divisions, which were never really minor, are deepening. The Slavic Macedonian majority and the Albanian community have extremely diverging views on a series of matter of key interest for the future of the state. These include the European and Euro-Atlantic prospect of the country: for Albanians this prospect is of absolute priority above all issues, while for the Slavic majority this prospect cannot be allowed to confound the national cause of the name issue and the Macedonian identity and culture.[57] Above all, the preoccupation of the Skopje government with identity issues has important negative side-effects. For example, the governmental programme for imprinting the majority's history and culture on the urban landscape clearly undermines the delicate balance of inter-ethnic relations.[58]

This special issue of *Études helléniques/ Hellenic Studies* aims to contribute to academic and policy debates on the problems and challenges that the region is encountering. The diverse contributions to the special issue range from issues of foreign policy and strategic objectives of great powers in the region, to issues of democratization and parliamentarism, constitutional reform in Bosnia, transport integration and infrastructure, and finally regionalism and regional cooperation.

Janusz Bugajski's paper offers insights into the international context of the debates on South East Europe. Bugajski's analysis focuses on the status of the Trans-Atlantic relations since US President Barack Obama came to power. With President Obama in power, the expectations were raised for a new era in the US-Europe relationship. Bugajski argues that these hopes and expectations were quickly frustrated. Both sides continue to hold diverging opinions on a series of global issues, while the two sides failed to live up to each others' expectations with regards to policy adjustments seen as necessary by each side. The matters in which the two sides fail to reach consensus and fully coordinate range from Europe's engagement in the Afghanistan war, to Europe's 'hard power' capabilities and its capacity to effectively address global problems, NATO's enlargement and future role, and relations with Russia. In the same context of American Diplomacy's global considerations, Bugajski considers also the case of the Western Balkans. The region does not feature at the centre of the US administration's attention and the region's problems are considered to be primarily a European responsibility, with the US maintaining a supporting role. Still, there are voices that warn about the dangers of not paying adequate attention to Balkan problems and some remedial high-level diplomatic activity has been undertaken in response to these potential threats. The main responsibility, however, remains with the Europeans and US diplomacy supports the integration of all Western Balkan states into the EU. Finally, Bugajski considers the question of whether an American envoy should be deployed in the Balkans. Bugajski believes there is little likelihood of an envoy being appointed and he further questions the necessity and adequacy of such a diplomatic initiative in the context of today's Balkan problems.

Ilia Roubanis and Marilena Koppa provide another piece of the wider context for the Balkan political environment. This time, however, the focus is on two players developing autonomous roles in the region: Russia and Turkey. These roles are considered by Roubanis and Koppa against the background of the Western strategy and vision for the region but also in relation to the growing EU enlargement fatigue. The authors track the origins and the evolution of Western vision for the Western Balkans before they explicate the recent historical developments that created the backdrop for the autonomous roles of Russia and Turkey. They also briefly review the particular policies that the two countries are pursuing in the Balkans. Roubanis and Koppa argue that, while for now Western, Russian and Turkish visions for the region are not mutually exclusive, the autonomous roles of Russia and Turkey have the potential to become a stand-alone alternative to the Western plans. In such a

case, the Balkan states will be presented with the choice of diplomatic paradigms other than the standard Euro-Atlantic one offered by American and European diplomacy.

The special issue then moves to consider particular Western Balkan themes. Fotini Bellou focuses on the Bosnian political deadlock. Her article provides a useful overview of the developments that led to the current deadlock. Bellou outlines the main features of the Dayton institutional set up as well as the dilemmas that surrounded its original formulation. She presents the reforms that were implemented by the international community or under its influence. She then briefly reviews the two failed attempts to a constitutional reform that came after the major, and also failed, April 2006 constitutional reform package. To better illustrate the elements of the deadlock Bellou presents the three constituent peoples' divergent positions on the issues as well as the divergent perspectives of the key international players. The above 'mapping' of the complex picture of Bosnia's political structure and actors leads Bellou to her main argument. Despite the presence of a strong incentive in the form of the EU accession and the existence of the necessary mechanisms for Bosnia's accession trip, key features are still absent: a common vision for the future of the country and its European prospects and a cohesion in action for pursuing EU accession on the part of the Bosnian elites.

Dia Anagnostou and Dina Karydi focus on the quality of democracy in South East Europe, and more specifically on the issue of transparency and accountability in parliament. The paper is based on a comparison between Greece and the post-communist countries of South East Europe. The starting point of the two authors is the evident serious crisis of legitimacy of the parliaments in the region, which register low levels of trust and loss of public confidence. The two authors investigate the degree of openness and transparency both at the level of the legal provisions and at their actual implementation. Anagnostou and Kayrdi find that the countries of the region have robust relevant legal and constitutional provisions. These provisions include all the necessary tools for ensuring accountability and control over parliamentarians; in fact, it is interesting to note that the post-communist states of the region, have a better panoply of legal provisions than Greece, no doubt due to the external influences on their transition process. However, this is only part of the story. Despite the presence of these legal provisions the actual picture of accountability and transparency remains problematic. Anagnostou and Karydi argue that this is due to an awkward implementation of the legal provisions, the strong influence of partisanship on parliamentary

processes, and the overpowering influence of the executive over the legislature. In addition, the process of Europeanization seems to have the side effect of further empowering the executive over the parliament. All in all, Anagnostou and Karydi argue, these factors contribute to a widening gap between the relevant laws and their application as well as to an ever decreasing power and legitimacy of the national legislatures in South East Europe.

With the paper by Gerasimos Tsourapas this special issue enters the issues of regional cooperation. Tsourapas utilizes a single case-study, that of transport integration in the Western Balkans, to discuss the intricate interplay between local, state and international actors in their efforts to promote regional cooperation. Placing transport integration into its appropriate historical context, Tsourapas's case study underlines the incomplete nature of the Western Balkan countries' overall transition process. Despite the significant potential spillovers of transport integration, economic or otherwise, Tsourapas suggests that countries prefer to perpetuate a variety of market distortions than to proceed with the resolution of outstanding historical, political or social hindrances to regional cooperation. More importantly, Tsourapas also criticizes the role of international actors. The later exhibit inability to coordinate their numerous, oftentimes conflicting, regional projects and overall goals. They also maintain a complex web of bilateral and multilateral agreements that impede, rather than promote, efforts towards regionalism. For Tsourapas, the dilapidated nature of transport networks after the Yugoslav wars pointed to significant opportunities for reconstruction and subsequent development of an integrated transport network. Ten years on, the improbability of establishing such a network provides valuable insight to the trials and tribulations of promoting regionalism in the Western Balkans.

Finally, Dimitar Bechev focuses on regionalism in South-East Europe. In an effort to provide an accurate account of the origins, development and future of regional cooperation, Bechev analyzes how regionalism has affected three vital sectors: energy, trade and justice and home affairs. Bechev's choice of focusing on issue areas rather individual institutions allows him to better account for the apparent pervasiveness of regionalism across the peninsula. Developments in the aforementioned key areas are analyzed through the prism of three broader, overarching factors which Bechev believes affect regional cooperation: the degree of interdependence between the countries themselves, the impact of outside actors, and the formation of a regional identity. Bechev argues that regional cooperation appears strongest in areas that directly feature inside the EU's action framework. Therefore, it is the European Union as a

normative power, rather than its individual member-states or other international actors, that constitutes the single most important factor in promoting regional cooperation. Local actors, consequently, play a secondary, albeit important, role in the process of regional cooperation. For Bechev, regionalism throughout South-East Europe constitutes a complex phenomenon, one which might not constitute a panacea for the region's problems, but a piece of the puzzle that merits greater analysis nonetheless.

NOTES

1. The author would like to thank Gerasimos Tsourapas, George Mesthos, and Bledar Feta for editorial comments and suggestions.

2. Voice of America, "Serbia marks 10th anniversary of Milošević ouster", 5 October 2010, available at: http://www. voanews. com/english/news/europe/Serbia-Marks-10th-Anniversary-of-Milošević-Ouster-104347024. html [accessed in October 2010].

3. The Western Balkan region comprises Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia, effectively all the post-Communist countries of the region that have not yet joined the European Union.

4. For Albania's political problems see Bledar Feta "The vicious circle of the Albanian political crisis", Hellenic Centre for European Studies, 25 April 2010, available at: http://www. ekemprogram. org/csis/index. php?option=com_content&view= article&id=87:the-vicious-circle-of-the-albanian-political-crisis-&catid= 3:articles&Itemid=69 [accessed in October 2010]

5. On EU enlargement and the Western Balkans see the website of the European Commission: http://ec. europa. eu/enlargement/index_en. htm [accessed in October 2010].

6. See the text and more details in http://ec. europa. eu/enlargement/enlargement _process/accession_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_a genda_en. htm [accessed in October 2010]. For a series of reports monitoring the progress of this vision and analysing the obstacles to its realisation see the work of the European Stability Initiative, available at: http://www. esiweb. org/ [accessed in October 2010].

7. US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans, "Confronting unconventional threats in Southeast Europe", Policy Report 2, Center for Strategic and International Studies & Hellenic Centre for European Studies, April 2010.

8. *Ibid.* p. 2.

9. See *ibid* for an analysis of the problems in the different areas of focus, for the positive developments and successes, and for recommendations for Western policy makers.

10. See for example, The Economist, "Hate in Belgrade", 10 October 2010, available at: http://www. economist. com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/10/belgrades_gay _pride_riots [accessed in October 2010]; BBC, "Clashes at Bosnia's gay festival", 25 September 2008, available at: http://news. bbc. co. uk/2/hi/7635197. stm [accessed in October 2010]; Radio Sarajevo "Homofobija i rodni stereotipi u srednoškolskim udžbenicima", 21 October 2010, available at: http://www. radiosarajevo. ba/content/view/35794/32/ [accessed in October 2010]

11. For a review of the human security problems in the Western Balkans as well as for recommendations for Western policy makers see the report of the US-Greece Task Force: Transforming the Balkans "Assessing human security in the Western Balkans", which is forthcoming in November 2010.

12. See for example Jens Bastian, "Falling behind again? Southeast Europe and the global crisis", *ELIAMEP Thesis* No. 2, March 2009.

13. See for example, Apostolos Fotiades, "Greek crisis impacts the Balkans", *IPS*, 20 March 2010, available at: http://ipsnews. net/news. asp?idnews=50734 [accessed in October 2010]

14. For details see Othon Anastasakis, "The EU's political conditionality in the Western Balkans: towards a more pragmatic approach", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2008; Frank Schimmelfennig, "EU political accession conditionality after the 2004 enlargement: consistency and effectiveness", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 6, 2008.

15. See more in the relevant reports of the European Stability Initiative, available at: http://www. esiweb. org/ [accessed in October 2010].

16. See for example the case of Bosnia in Department for International Development, "Assessment and analysis of EU accession risk factors for Bosnia and Herzegovina", DFID, United Kingdom, 2009.

17. For brief analyses of these problems see the contributions to the special issue on NATO and the Western Balkans of the magazine *The Bridge*, No. 12, February 2009.

18. For more information on the Belgrade-Pristina negotiations see the consensus resolution adopted by the United Nation General Assembly, available at: http://www. un. org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10980. doc. htm [accessed in October 2010].

19. The ICJ's advisory opinion is available at: http://www. icj-cij. org/docket/files/141/16010. pdf [accessed in October 2010].

20. For that issue see Richard Caplan, "The ICJ's advisory opinion on Kosovo", Peace Brief No. 55, United States Institute of Peace, 2010.

21. EurActive, "EU Remain Divided over Kosovo", 19 February 2008, available at: http://www. euractiv. com/en/enlargement/eu-nations-remain-divided-kosovo/ article-170383 [accessed in October 2010].

22. Oxford Analytica, "Kosovo/EU: Pressure eases on anti-independence five", 4 January 2010.

23. For examples of the opposing viewpoints on the issue, see: Janusz Bugajski, "Kosovo independence and the future of the new state", paper presented at the conference *The return of the Balkans? Threats and challenges in the contemporary South-East Europe. Devising institutional responses for a peaceful and prosperous future*, Delphi, Greece, 12-14 September 2008, Hellenic Centre for European Studies; Laza Kekic, "From Pristina to Tskhinvali and back", *The Bridge*, No. 11, 2009.

24. Importantly, the region itself is divided over the Kosovo independence. But on the plus side for the Western and the Kosovo diplomacy, most Western Balkan states, with the exception of Serbia and Bosnia, have recognised Kosovo. Of particular importance for the stability of the region were the recognitions by Montenegro and FYROM.

25. For further information, see Oxford Analytica, "Kosovo: Policy failings complicate insecure statehood", 16 July 2009; Oxford Analytica, "Kosovo: Resignation's ripples rock ship of state", 10 October 2010.

26. See the interesting work of the local think-tank KIPRED and, more specifically, the reports: "Kosovo at a crossroad: Decentralization and the creation of new municipalities", July 2009; "Decentralization in Kosovo I: Municipal elections and Serb participation", December 2009; "Decentralization in Kosovo II: Challenges of Serb majority municipalities", December 2009; "Review of decentralization: Functioning of Serb majority municipalities", July 2010, available at: http://www. kipred. net/web/eng. php?cid=2, 3 [accessed in October 2010].

27. See, for example, the recent case of the Serbian mobile transmitters and Pristina's anxiety to dismantle them despite the obvious humanitarian problems that this would create to Kosovo Serbs. See Euractiv, "Kosovo shuts down ethnic Serbs' mobile phones", 27 September 2010, available at: http://www. euractiv. com/en/enlargement/kosovo-shuts-down-ethnic-serbs-mobile-phones-news-498153 [accessed in October 2010].

28. For more information on the Court's arguments see the decision, available at: http://www. gjk-ks. org/repository/docs/judgment_%20case_ko_80_10. pdf [accessed in October 2010].

29. For an analysis see Kosovar Stability Initiative, "Unleashing change: Voices of Kosovo's youth 2010", Pristina, 20 October 2010.

30. International Crisis Group, "Bosnia's nationalist governments: Paddy Ashdown and the paradoxes of state building", Balkans Report No. 146, Sarajevo / Brussels, 22 July 2003.

31. Gerald Knaus and Martin Felix, "Lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina: Travails of the European Raj", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 2003; European Stability Initiative, "Post–industrial society and the authoritarian temptation", Policy Report, Berlin 2004; European Stability Initiative, "The worst in class: How the international protectorate hurts the European future of Bosnia and Herzegovina", Policy Report, Berlin, 8 November 2007.

32. Department for International Development, "Assessment and analysis of EU accession risk factors for Bosnia and Herzegovina" *op.cit.*; Ioannis Armakolas, "Re-reading the Bosnian crisis", Policy Brief, Working Group on the Western Balkans: Transatlantic Cooperation on European Integration, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, October 2010.

33. On police reform see Daniel Lindvall, "The limits of the European vision in Bosnia and Herzegovina: An analysis of the police reform negotiations", *Stockholm Studies in Sociology, New Series*, No. 40, Stocholm, 2009.

34. Oxford Analytica, "Bosnia: Kosovo sparks Serb demand for independence", 26 February 2008.

35. Quoted in Caplan, "The ICJ's advisory opinion on Kosovo", *op.cit.*

36. See, for example, SNSD's pre-election rallies, available at: http://www. snsd. org/dnn/ and http://www. youtube. com/user/predsjednikdodik [accessed in October 2010].

37. Ioannis Armakolas, "Re-reading the Bosnian crisis", *op.cit.*

38. For good analyses of the limitations of the Dayton compromise, see: Foreign Policy Initiative BH (VPI BH), "Study on 'Governance structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina' ", Sarajevo; Nida Gelazis, "Rebuilding a mutinous ship at sea: Constitution building in pre-accession Bosnia and Herzgovina", Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; see also, Florian Bieber, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace", *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 15–31, March 2006; Department for International Development, "Assessment and analysis of EU accession risk factors for Bosnia and Herzegovina", DFID, United Kingdom, 2009. For the opinion of the Venice Commission see Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law), "Opinion on the Constitutional Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative", CDL-AD 004, 11 March 2005, available at: http://www. venice. coe. int/docs/2005/CDL-AD(2005)004-e. pdf [accessed in October 2010].

39. Ioannis Armakolas, "Re-reading the Bosnian crisis", *op.cit.*

40. See more in Department for International Development, "Assessment and analysis

of EU accession risk factors for Bosnia and Herzegovina", *op.cit.*, also Berit Bliesemann de Guevara, "States of Conflict: A case study on peace-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina", IPPR, November 2009. On the issues of trust in Bosnia, see Michael D. Ward, John O'Loughlin, Kristin M. Bakke, and Xun Cao, "Cooperation without trust in conflict-ridden societies. Survey results from Bosnia and the North Caucasus", Paper prepared for presentation at the 2006 Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association 31 August – 3 September 2006, Philadelphia, PA; Peter Håkansson and Fredrik Sjöholm, "Who Do You Trust? Ethnicity and Trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 6, 2007, pp. 961-976.

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42. Florian Bieber, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace", *op.cit.* , p. 16.

43. Ioannis Armakolas, "Re-reading the Bosnian crisis", *op.cit.*

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50. See, for example, frequent such reporting by the main Sarajevo print media *Dnevni*

Avaz, Oslobođenje, and *Dani*.

51. See Beata Huzska, "The Presevo Valley of Southern Serbia alongside Kosovo", CEPS, January 2007, available at: http://aei. pitt. edu/11714/01/1428. pdf [accessed in October 2010]

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56. Faruk Vele, "Zukorlić: Nema razlike između Milošević evog i sadašnjeg režima Srbije", Dnevni Avaz, 21 August 2010.

57. For an analysis, see the forthcoming report on NATO and the Western Balkans by the *Transforming the Balkans* project, Hellenic Centre for European Studies.

58. See for example, Sinisa Jakov Marusic, "Skopje: Controversy Over Albanian Monuments Continues", *BalkanInsight*, 6 October 2010, available at: http://www. balkaninsight. com/en/article/albanian-monuments-to-complement-skopje-2-aa4-project [accessed in October 2010]. The video of the project Skopje 2014 can be watched at http://www. digitalurban. org/2010/02/skopje-2014-visualisation. html.