

THE WESTERN BALKANS: ASSESSING THE EU'S STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION PROCESS

Zoltán Szenes

National University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary

<p>Article history:</p> <p><i>Received:</i> 16 December 2017</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 21 April 2018</p>	<p>Abstract: The Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) launched by the EU in the aftermath of Kosovo war in 1999 has created a new policy environment for the Western Balkans countries. In exchange for EU assistance, prospect of EU accession, and continuation of preferential access to EU markets, these countries have to upgrade their institutions and governance to European standards and engage in mutual regional cooperation including other Stability Pact member – countries. The 2003 European Council in Thessaloniki reaffirmed that all SAP countries were potential candidates for EU membership. In July 2017 the EU Trieste Balkans Summit discussed the status of the SAP and unanimously reaffirmed the importance of providing the European perspective of the Western Balkans. The essay examines of the current status of SAP in the Western Balkans countries (WB6) based on the Copenhagen political, economic and legislature criteria using the international data bases. It argues that among the criteria, the political requirements are the most important as they lay down the framework and administrative and institutional capacity to develop stable democracy and market economy. It concludes that EU SAP has remained consistently linked to compliance with the Copenhagen criteria but the Regional Cooperation Council countries have to create a positive environment for the WB6 to fulfill these European standards.</p>
<p>About the author: Professor, PhD, Department of International Security Studies, Faculty of International and European Studies, National University of Public Service, Hungary</p> <p>e-mail: szenes.zoltan@uni-nke.hu</p>	
<p>Key words: Western Balkans; EU; stabilization and association process; Triest Western Balkans Summit; conditionality</p>	

Introduction

On 12 July, 2017 the European Union (EU) organized a summit for the Western-Balkan countries in Trieste.¹ The main subject of the 4th meeting of the Berlin initiative² was

¹ The 2017 Trieste Western Balkans Summit included the Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers and the Ministers of Economy of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Austria, Croatia, France, Germany, Slovenia, United Kingdom and representatives of the European Union and the International Financial Institutions. Western Balkans Ministers of Transport also met together with Italian and EU Institutions. Mode of access: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1938_en.htm

² The Berlin Initiative was launched in August 2014 as a top-level forum for Western Balkans Governments, chambers of commerce and civil society. The Berlin Process involves six EU member states and six Western Balkan Countries

to discuss the possible opportunities for making the joining of the Western-Balkan countries to the EU faster. According to the EU, for the growth of the region, the growth of economy is essential, as this can ensure political stability and development. The Balkans Summit suggested to implement the new infrastructural, transport and energy industrial projects. For the explanation is used the EU principle of conditionality which is widely discussed in the literature.³ The principle

³ Anastasicas, Othon. The EU's Political Conditionality in the Western Balkans: Towards a more Pragmatic Approach // *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 2008, Vol. 8, Iss. 4, pp. 365-367; Pippan, Christian. The Rocky Road to Europe: the EU's Stabilization and Association Process for the Western Balkans and the Principle of Conditionality // *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 2004, no. 9, pp. 219-245; Schimmelfennig, Frank. EU Political Accession Conditionality after 2004 Enlargement: Consistency and Effectiveness //

of conditionality formulates the ability of the EU to influence aspiring member states to make the necessary reforms in order to meet the membership requirements. The paper is examining how has the Stabilization and Association Process been going on in the Western Balkans and what is the chance to accelerate this process by the decisions of the Trieste Summit. It is also the intention to assess whether this principle is the really key tool at the disposal of the EU to encourage and ensure compliance regarding the enlargement programme. The analysis focuses only on those six countries of the Western-Balkan (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia or WB6) that took part in the Trieste summit.

The status of the Euro-Atlantic integration in the Western Balkans

Since the end of the Balkans War (1991-1999) the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region has achieved significant outcome: Slovenia and Croatia have become NATO (2004, 2009) and EU (2004,2013) members, Kosovo was declared an independent country in 2012 and all Western-Balkan countries have been nominated as potential member states of the European Union (See Table 1) From the point of view of military security, the situation is also favorable: all countries, except Kosovo, where NATO KFOR (Kosovo Force)⁴ is operating, cooperate officially with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in a form of Partnership for Peace (PfP).⁵ Montenegro became the 29 member of NATO in 2017, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina both enjoy a Membership Action Plan (MAP)⁶

Journal of Public Policy, 2008, Vol. 15, Iss. 6, pp. 918-937; Wakelin, Elise. EU Conditionality: An Effective Means for Policy Reform? /E-International Relations, Nov 12, 2013. Mode of access: <http://www.e-ir.info/2013/11/01/eu-conditionality-an-effective-means-for-policy-reform/>

⁴ The Kosovo Force (KFOR) has been a NATO peace support operation in Kosovo since 1999 based on the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Mode of access: <http://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor>

⁵ The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic Partner countries and NATO. Mode of access: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50349.htm

⁶ The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a NATO programme of advice, assistance and practical

status and want to join NATO. Despite the good results, however, the atmosphere is still often explosive, the revival of nationalism and ethnic tensions make the situation tough and the traditional backwardness in fields of democracy, economy and security in the region is a quite serious problem.

Table 1

The Integration Results of the six Western-Balkan Countries (2017)

Country / IO	EU			NATO	
	Application	Candidate	SAA	Membership	Partnership
Albania	2009	2014		2009	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2016	Potential 2008	2015		PfP 2006 MAP 2010
Kosovo	2014	Potential 2009	2016		
Macedonia	2004	2005			PfP 1995 MAP 1999
Montenegro	2008	2010	2010-	2017	
Serbia	2009	2012	2013-		PfP 2006 IPAP 2016

Sources: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/check-current-status_en#pc & <http://www.natolibguides.info/Balkans>

The crimes and actions committed in the Yugoslavian war in 1990, the close past and its impact on society all make the situation grave. The stabilization and growth are hindered by the enormous geopolitical importance of the Balkan region, as the area makes up a major part of a Macro region that includes the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and the northern parts of the Middle East. These regions all belong to different regional security complex, the European, the Post-Soviet and the Middle East,⁷ thus creating a zone of the great power race. In the power race West and East compete, on one side the EU, the NATO and the USA are involved, whereas on the other side Russia, Turkey, certain Islamic countries and as an economic power China are the members

support tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join NATO. Mode of access: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm

⁷ Buzan, Barry; Weaver, Ole. *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security.* Cambridge University Press, 2003.

participating. For the EU / NATO the Balkan region means opportunities and hazards alike. The geographical closeness is favorable for the extension of European stability to the East, it increases the number of alliances and their power and it promotes the influence of them. The Balkan is of key importance for the EU in respect of energy as it can provide supply directions which can diversify the energy supply opportunities of the continent. That is the reason why both the EU and the NATO would like to improve their influence in the region. From the Balkan countries, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania have become NATO and EU members, while Albania and Montenegro are NATO members. The politics of Serbia is quite controversial as it would like to become an EU member, but also it signed a free trade agreement with Moscow in 2013. Belgrad is not planning to become a NATO member although it joined the so-called Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP, 2016)⁸ agreement. However, it also became an observer member of The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO),⁹ lead by Russia in 2013.

The great power states with interest in the region of course do not want to lose their traditional influence or their language, cultural and religious bounds. Thus Russia supports Serbia directly and the Serbian minorities, but it also does its best to decrease the Western influence. Turkey would also like to keep their influence in the Western Balkans, because of

historical reasons and its muslim population. As 23% of Balkan population is muslim (sunni islam) by religion,¹⁰ Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also active countries in the region. Although the United States of America is not as active in the region as it used to be in the 1990s, their political and military presence is still an important stabilizing factor.¹¹ The geopolitical interest of the EU is supported by security reasons too as the Balkan is the main direction for the refugees and migration from the Middle East. Among the Bosnian, Albanian and Kosovo population the terrorist organization, called the Islamic State, has also got an influence. That is why the EU is interested in further stabilization and associations as they can promote the peace in the Western Balkans, its stability and economic growth and they can also lead it to the full membership. As the Trieste summit has shown, the Western-Balkan countries want to join the European Union but they are not satisfied with the speed of the process, its dimension and with the amount of help. According to a poll conducted in 2016, called the Balkan Barometer, 39% of population and 54% of enterprises support EU membership, but only 26% of people believe this will never happen.¹²

Although the discontent of these countries may be understandable, the candidates for the EU membership need to meet the Copenhagen accession criteria.¹³ It took 10 years to take Albania to the list of potential future member states, whereas in case of Montenegro this was 9

⁸ Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) is open to countries that have political will and ability to deepen their relationship with NATO. Mode of access: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49290.htm

⁹ The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), formed under the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States, serves as a mutual defense alliance among Russia, Belarus, Armenia and the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan. The Eurasian Economic Community comprises a similar grouping of states but focuses on economics, including the creation of a common market, border security standards, a customs union, standardized currency exchange and joint programs on social and economic development. Both of these organizations are strongly supported by Russia and capitalize on residual political, economic, and bureaucratic linkages among the members. http://www.odkb.gov.ru/start/index_aengl.htm

¹⁰ Kovács, Mária. Erősödő radikalizmus a Balkánon (Increasing Radicalism in Balkans). *Magyar Nemzet Online* (Hungarian Nation Online), 2015. május 8. Mode of access: <https://mno.hu/kulfold/erosodo-radikalizmus-a-balkanon-1285309>

¹¹ Bugajski, Janusz. Frontline Vulnerability. The Strategic Case for the Western Balkans. Centre for European Policy Analysis. Transition Brief No.4. January 2017.

¹² Balkan Barometer 2016. Infographics, Pocket edition. Survey, 10 Nov 2016. Mode of access: <http://www.rcc.int/pubs/39/balkan-barometer-2016-infographics-pocket-edition>

¹³ The accession criteria, or Copenhagen criteria (1993) are the essential conditions all candidate must satisfy to become a member state. Mode of access: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/accession-criteria_en

years, for Serbia 6 years. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo both got the title of the potential member after 9 years. These criteria include (1) the specification of political conditions, such as stable democratic institutions, law and order and the protection of human and minority rights, (2) economic conditions (market economy based on competition), (3) the introduction and adoption of membership changes and undertaking of political, economic and financial objectives. As the countries of Balkan are each in different situation from this respect, they consequently get entitled for the membership in different times. Since the integration process strongly depends on the individual growth of each country, it is impossible to standardize it or to decide common deadline for all.

The candidate countries must adopt and carry out all the EU regulations (these are regarded as community achievements), they must identify with the goals of the EU, its programs and its plans. The European Commission regularly gives reports about the progress in the region, however, all important decisions are made by the European Council unanimously from the beginning of negotiations to their end. Finally the Accession Treaty must be approved by the European Parliament and the Council before the ratification of all contracting states. On the other hand, the EU provides different support to the candidates and potential candidate countries, including financial support, in form of different programmes, which are accepted by the six Balkan countries, so that they can carry out the necessary reforms.

The hard political requirements

The accession political criteria include stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. The completion of the Copenhagen political criteria is a slow process in the region. According to a report by Freedom House in 2017, it is only Serbia where democracy has been achieved and practiced, although the freedom of the media is limited there too. In the rest of the countries (See Table 2), the situation of human rights and political democracy is middle-sized (although in Bosnia and Herzegovina it has decreased compared with the situation in 2016), nonetheless, these index numbers play

important roles when the political conditions are assessed. Kosovo is somewhere between democracy and autocracy (52), so are Bosnia and Herzegovina (55) and Macedonia (57), while the situation in Albania (68) and Montenegro (69) is improving. All in all, however, the reports of Freedom House have recorded a decrease in democracy in the past six years, which holds the process of stabilization and association back.

Table 2

Freedom Status of the Six Balkan Countries (2017)

Country / Ratings	Numerical*			Descriptive	
	PR	CL	Aggregate score	Freedom status	Freedom of the Press
Albania	3	3	68	partly free	partly free
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4	4	55	partly free	partly free
Kosovo	3	4	52	partly free	partly free
Macedonia	4	3	57	partly free	partly free
Montenegro	4	3	69	partly free	partly free
Serbia	3	2	76	free	partly free

* PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively. In the numerical assessment 1 represents the most free, and 7 the least free rating. A larger aggregate score indicates a greater level of freedom

Source: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/fiw-2017-table-country-scores>

The decrease in the status of democracy is proved by other index numbers too. According to the Transparency International report on perception index made in 2016, the six Balkan countries belong to the most corrupt states in Europe. Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina were rated 83, Macedonia 90, whereas Kosovo 95 in the list.¹⁴ The international evaluation is supported by regional polls (Balkan Barometer 2016) too: 54% of population believe that the political institutional network and politicians are the most corrupt there, 78% said that the administration of justice is not independent from political influence, 71% do not trust the public prosecutor and law court and 82% think that law and regulations are not put into practise fairly and equally. The problems

¹⁴ Transparency. Mode of access: https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016

of regional democracy are a regularly returning topic of the international media.¹⁵ Demonstrations against the government that sometimes last for several months in Macedonia, as well as increased tensions and conflicts between Macedonian and Albanian nationalities show the image of a disintegrated country to the world. In the past two years the crowd of demonstrating and rebelling people attacked the buildings of government is Sarajevo and Skopje. Journalists complain in Serbia that the media enjoyed more freedom in Milosevic's age than today.¹⁶ A regular practice has been in Kosovo parliament to explode tear granades during the meetings of the parliament. Although the EU together with international non-governmental organizations (NGO), like for example Transparency International, have launched numerous democracy improving and corruption reducing programmes in Balkan since 2014, the results are unsatisfactory. Achieving the necessary political criteria is still pending and require more political efforts from the governments of the Western Balkans countries.

Improving economy

It is not exclusively the completion of political requirements that seems to be tough to the six Balkan countries. It is also a hard work indeed to meet the economic requirements, which include a function market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces. Although the „Connectivity Programme” for the aspiring countries is supported by 71% of population and 51% of businesses, the rate of trade in the region has just increased by 17% since 2010.¹⁷ The economic growth has improved

in the past years, the six country is still fighting with the consequences of the recession of the 2008 economic crisis. The economic growth increased in 2016 and the improved economic performance boosted the macroeconomic index numbers about inflation, deficit and investments, the situation of sovereign debt became stable (except in Montenegro) (See Table 3)

Table 3

Economic development of the six-country region (2016)

Indicators/ Country	ALB	BiH	KOS	MKD	MNE	SRB
GDP growth (%)	3.2	2.8	3.6	2.4	2.1	2.8
Inflation rate (%)	1.3	-1.4	0.3	-0.2	-0.2	1.2
Fiscal balance (percent of GDP)	-2.2	-0.6	-1.3	-2.6	-3.7	-1.4
External Debt (percent of GDP)	75.5	76.2	33.7	74.1	161.1	77.4
FDI inflows (percent of GDP)	7.1	-1.2	4.0	3.6	10.0	5.5
Trade and services balance (percent of GDP)	-18.2	-17.4	-30.3	-14.7	-23.9	-7.6
Unemployment (%)	15.2	25.4	32.9	23.7	17.8	15.3
Youth unemployment (%)	28.9	54.3	57.7	48.3	37.4	37.2
Remittance inflows (percent of GDP)	7.2	8.2	11.6	2.1	3.1	5.5
GDP per capita, PPP	11276	11034	3646	13583	16195	14047
Poverty rate at US\$ 5/day, PPP (% of population)	45.5	n.a.	n.a.	30.7	12.8	13.6

Source: *Western Balkans, Regular Economic Report No.11. Faster Growth, More Jobs. World Bank Group, Spring 2017. Mode of access: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/western-balkans-regular-economic-report>; <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/310431491458109659/WBRER-11-v6.pdf>*

The projects of infrastructure, increasing investments, low raw material prices and increasing profits have supported a small decrease in the situation of unemployment, increase of wages and social expenses. However, neither external nor internal lack of balance have disappeared, the lack of structural reforms, poverty and unemployment, the management of the future and improvement of public services all require a well-functioning government. 68% of population in the region expects from the governments to manage unemployment, 55% expect a growth in economy, whereas 89% of the people expect their own government and international communities to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.

¹⁵ Balkans Struggling on Human Rights: Amnesty Report. Balkan Transnational Justice, 24 Feb 2016. Mode of access: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/balkan-still-lags-behind-human-right-protection-02-24-2016>

¹⁶ Ördögh, Tibor. Szerbia mint konszolidált demokrácia?(SerbiaasaConsolidatedDemocracy?)/ *Mediterrán és Balkáni Fórum* (Mediterran and Balkan Forum), X. évf. (Volume X), 2016, 1-2. szám (Iss. 1.2), p. 35. Mode of access: http://www.mbforum.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/41_Mediterr%C3%A1n-%C3%A9s-Balk%C3%A1n-F%C3%B3rum_X_1_2_1.pdf

¹⁷ Regional Cooperation Council SEE2020. Connectivity Paper. P. 2. Mode of access: <http://www.rcc.int/flagships/1/connectivity>

An unchanged problem is the constant poor balance of the trade and service traffic (only 37% of companies in Balkan produce for export), which is between 15-30% in the countries. The walls of protectionism are knocked down only very slowly, though the population is in favour of international competition. The mismanagement of unemployment among young people is a hot issue as it is double of average and is between 29-55% in the countries. There is a slow decrease in proportion of those who live in poverty (between 13-45%), and 43% of population plan to leave the country to work abroad because of the unpromising future. Within these conditions populist and nationalist ideas can easily emerge as well as national and religious tensions.

As a consequence the governments of the region have a big responsibility if they want to see the public support in domestic and international policy as a privilege, to join the current national tasks to the reforms of the EU and to carry out the necessary structural changes. The positive prospects of the countries in the region on mid-term need to be joined by the theory and practise of good governing. The political problems between the countries of the region (war crime, border conflicts, refugees, ethnical differences, organised crime etc.) can all disturb the completion of the most important governmental tasks, weaken the cooperation and destroy the political trust needed for capital investments. The Trieste summit make decisions about new goals, it wants to improve regional cooperation and launches programmes between the countries. The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which operates in Sarajevo, is in charge of supporting the integration efforts of those countries in the region, which are not EU or NATO members. RCC controls the improvement of relationships within the region, the innovations of energy sector and infrastructure, the cooperation between the institutions of justice and domestic affairs and the creation of human resource. The Sarajevo Center has developed the plan of a regional economic area, which was approved by the Trieste summit. The general structure of WB6 and CEFTA will be applied for the implementation of the Regional Economic Area Plan, as well as their methods and solutions, which will be monitored by RCC.

Slow negotiations about the *acquis communautaire*

The third package of the Copenhagen Criteria system represents the *acquis* which is the body of common rights and obligations that is binding on all the EU member states. It is constantly evolving and comprises political objectives, legislation, the Common Foreign and Security Policy and international agreements. The situation of the countries in this area is different depending on how suitable they are for joining the EU or the NATO. Montenegro is in the best position in the association process as it joined NATO in 2017 and became a candidate for the EU membership after four years in 2010.¹⁸ Podgorica started the economic and trade relationship with the EU in 2008 and begun the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) negotiations in 2012. Although the EU has opened 27 chapters in 2016,¹⁹ only two: science and research, education and culture have been completed so far, whereas the hardest ones, like products and services, free flow of human workforce, competition policy, economic and fiscal policy, regional policy, environment protection, structure of institutions, domestic affairs are all to be tackled with. The situation of this country however is quite controversial: as for the economic achievement it belongs to weaker countries and negotiations about the most important issues of the constitutional state, like freedom and security, law enforcement etc. are making a very slow progress. The status of Montenegro justifies the idea that for the Balkan countries the stabilization and association agreements process mean a rocky road.

Maybe Serbia could become an EU member first, however the Serbian divided talks and policy, such as parallel EU ambitions and stronger relationship with Russia, as well as the Serbian policy about Kosovo have a significant impact on the progress. Serbia applied for

¹⁸ Montenegro and the EU. European External Action Service, 06/06/2017. Mode of access: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/27529/montenegro-and-eu_en

¹⁹ European Union. Mode of access: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20170328-negotiations-status-montenegro.pdf>

the EU membership in December 2009 and got a candidate status in March 2012. Due to the Belgrade-Pristina negotiations by the EU, Serbia could achieve a significant progress, and Belgrad got the SAA status in 2013. During the negotiations that started in 2014, 14 chapters have been opened, two of which, science and education have been closed.²⁰ In the 35th specific chapter of normalizing the Kosovo relationships interim benchmarks were achieved in 2015.

The EU maturity of the other countries is varied and it needs many more years before they can achieve real success. Albania and Macedonia are already candidate countries, however both countries deal with serious political problems. Tirana got the candidate status in 2014, but SAA negotiations can only start after a progress in five essential fields defined by the EU, which are human rights, democracy, justice reform issues.²¹ The situation of Macedonia is even more complicated. Skopje has been a candidate since 2005 and the EU Committee suggested to launch SAA negotiations as early as 2009. Initially debates with Greece about the name issue, later the political instability of the country made the progress harder. In the summer of 2015 an agreement was created between the EU and Skopje (the Przino Four-Party agreement) about the necessity of introducing political reforms. These reforms however have failed to become implemented.²² Possibilities for further negotiations will only occur after solving the political crisis. Macedonia now is optimistic that the new government will reignite the reform process, though much work remains to be done. One issue to be overcome is the name dispute with neighbouring Greece. The discussion now is going with UN mediation and it is believed the dispute could be solved within the next six

month.²³ If the talks ends successfully it would then clear the way for the country to join NATO in 2018-2019 as well as finally start accession talks with the EU.

The two potential candidate countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are facing similar problems. Sarajevo signed the stabilization and association agreement in 2008 but it became applicable only in 2015 because of the political and justice problems. The EU addressed the insufficient governing practise which resulted in poverty rebellions in 2014. Brussels also criticized Sarajevo about the ignorance of human rights. The country did not respect the decision of the European Committee about Human Rights 2009 in the so-called Sejnic-Finci case and guided the state authorities not to discriminate national minorities in the constitution about elections. The country applied for a NATO membership in 2016, but the broken country is supposed to produce a significant improvement in the field of government before the beginning of further negotiations.²⁴ New reform plans are needed, the structure of constitution should be changed entirely so that they could meet the requirements of the union. The EU keeps supporting the efforts of Sarajevo by providing support through the EU Mission (275 people) and EUFOR/ALTHEA Operation (600 soldiers).

Like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo is also a country with European perspectives, as it declared its independence in 2008. The situation of Pristina is even more complicated than the one of Bosnia, as its independence has not been admitted by five EU countries: Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. From WB6 Bosnia and Herzegovina also did not recognise the country. The SSA was signed in 2016 which

²⁰ European Union. Mode of access: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20160301-serbia-state-of-play.pdf>

²¹ Joint Statement following the 13th meeting of the Stabilization and Association Council between the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the EU. European Council, Press Release, 18/07/2017. Mode of access: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/07/18-eu-fyrom/>

²² European Union. Mode of access: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/bosnia-herzegovina_en

²³ UN Envoy Hopeful on Macedonia „Name” Agreements. BalkanInsight, 18 Jan. 2018. Mode of access: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/un-envoy-hopeful-on-macedonia-name-agreement-01-17-2018>

²⁴ Kemenszky, Ágnes. Bosznia- Hercegovina, a mozaikosra töredezett állam (Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Mosaic Country). *Mediterrán és Balkáni Fórum*, X. évfolyam (Vol. X), 2016. 1-2. szám (Iss.1-2) Mode of access: http://www.mbforum.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/41_Mediterr%C3%A1n-%C3%A9s-Balk%C3%A1n-F%C3%B3rum_X_1_2_1.pdf

is widely supported by EULEX mission (800 people).²⁵ The EU assist the former Yugoslavian member country to adopt and implement the acquire and cooperates in this work with the UN (UNMIK) and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) missions. For the military security of the country NATO KFOR with 4,300 members is responsible. Political changes have a huge impact on the stabilization and association process in Kosovo too, like the respect of the results of political elections, the results of the negotiations with Belgrade and the restructuring of security forces in Kosovo.

Conclusions

It is evident that the European and Transatlantic integration of the Western-Balkan is a long and hard struggle, which does not just depend on the intention of the EU and international communities. On the contrary, the progress of SAP depends on the commitment of the countries involved, on good governing conditions, economic growth and appropriate democratic atmosphere. With the Trieste Balkan Summit the EU confirmed its alignment to support the European integration of the Western-Balkan again, as it did 15 years ago during the Thessaloniki Summit in Greece, and provide further assistance to the countries of the region with their efforts about economic growth, stronger democracy and security. It wishes to be a „bridge” which brings the opponent parties closer and create an area for shared cooperation as this is the only opportunity for future security. The EU would like to create a regional economic area similar to the one of Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), which can increase the regional trade and investments between the countries involved as well as help creating the Western-Balkan customs union. However, according to Brussels, creating political stability, the solution of conflicts, the discussion of disputed problems as well as the maintenance of peace in society are all necessary conditions. As a consequence, developing plans and measurements for increased security and trust and the acceleration

of a Stability and Association Agreement (SAA) are all major parts of understanding. To implement these plans, Brussels also urges the issues of improved democracy, appropriate governing, strong law and order and fight against corruption. Securing territorial integrity is also a vital factor for regional cooperation, as this creates the condition for mass-migration management, fight against terrorism, extremism and radicalism and can support coordinated actions against international crime. We cannot overestimate the transformation power of the EU and NATO but both power – in light of principle of Conditionality – balancing on the rope. However, the recent drawbacks in negotiations of the EU with the WB6 shows that the EU policy has remained consistently linked to compliance with the Copenhagen criteria in the target countries. And the same time, is is also clear that EU should create a positive international environment for futher enlargement. EU Commission President Juncker in his „State of Union” address²⁶ on September 13,2017, that the EU is maintaining the credible enlargement perspectives for the Western Balkans and set the year of 2025 as the deadline for the next EU anlagement round.

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ЗАПАДНЫЕ БАЛКАНЫ: АНАЛИЗ ПРОЦЕССА СТАБИЛИЗАЦИИ И АССОЦИИИ ЕС

Золтан Зенеш

Национальный университет государственной службы, Будапешт, Венгрия

<p>Информация о статье: <i>Поступила в редакцию:</i> 16 декабря 2017 <i>Принята к печати:</i> 21 апреля 2018</p>	<p>Аннотация: Процесс стабилизации и ассоциации (SAP), запущенный ЕС после войны в Косово в 1999 году, сформировал систему политических условий для стран Западных Балкан. В обмен на помощь, перспективы вступления в ЕС и продление преференциального доступа на рынки ЕС эти страны должны модернизировать свои институты и систему госуправления в соответствии с европейскими стандартами и участвовать в региональном сотрудничестве, в том числе с другими странами-участницами Пакта стабильности. В 2003 году в Салониках Европейский Совет подтвердил, что все страны, участвующие в Процессе стабилизации и ассоциации, являются потенциальными кандидатами на членство в ЕС. В июле 2017 года на саммите ЕС в Триесте обсуждался статус Процесса (SAP) для Западных Балкан, который был единогласно поддержан. В принятом документе рассматривается текущий статус SAP в этих странах (WB6), основанный на политических, экономических и законодательных Копенгагенских. В нем утверждается, что среди критериев наиболее важны политические требования, поскольку они устанавливают общие направления реформирования, расширяют административный и институциональный потенциал для развития стабильной демократии и рыночной экономики. В нем делается вывод о том, что SAP и впредь будет основан на системе копенгагенских критериев, и странам регионального сотрудничества необходимо создать благоприятные условия для того, чтобы реализовать у себя эти европейские стандарты.</p>
<p>Об авторе: Профессор, PhD, Кафедра исследований проблем международной безопасности, Факультет международных отношений и европейских исследований, Национальный университет государственной службы Венгрии e-mail: szenes.zoltan@uni-nke.hu</p>	
<p>Ключевые слова: Западные Балканы; ЕС; процесс стабилизации и ассоциации; саммит в Триесте; политическая обусловленность</p>	

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