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February 2018

THE BALKANS, TURKEY, UKRAINE, AND THE CHALLENGE OF ENLARGING THE EU

The United Kingdom will leave the European Union in March 2019. The micro states of Liechtenstein, Andorra, the Vatican, San Marino and Monaco have never expressed any intentions of joining the bloc. In 1972 and 1994, the people of Norway rejected referendums called by their governments to join the EU and given the high levels of prosperity and quality of life, a change in the country's attitude is not on the horizon. In 2015, Iceland withdrew its application out of concern over the ongoing sovereign debt crises in the Eurozone. Belarus under President Aleksander Lukashenko is Europe's last dictatorship and as such automatically ineligible for closer economic or political ties. But apart from these cases, all other European countries outside the EU have applied, or at least have expressed their intention to apply for membership. European integration as practised by the European Union is therefore far from over and could conceivably reach 35 members (see Table 2.1). At a summit in 2003 in Thessaloniki, EU leaders drew up a list of potential candidates which omitted Russia, but included former Soviet republics such as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.¹

Joining the EU is a time-consuming process of adapting a country's political system, its economy and its administrative structures to EU standards. The key requirement is the EU's insistence on accepting the full *EU acquis*. Formerly known as the *acquis communautaire*, it consists of all EU laws, regulations and treaty provisions ever since European integration started with the signing of the European Coal and Steel

Community in 1950. This means that candidates are not granted any opt-outs from EU policies (such as the single currency for instance), thus making them more integrated than some existing members.² The *acquis* currently totals some 170,000 pages and continues to grow by about 10,000 pages every year.³ This means that the accession process to the EU could easily last ten years, but could be significantly longer if a candidate struggles to establish a pluralist democratic system, finds it difficult to have a functioning market economy or cannot make sufficient inroads in the fight against corruption and nepotism that might undermine its administrative sector.

Table 2.1. EU Status by country, 2018

Status	Year of Status	Country	Membership Count
Member	1957	France, Italy, West Germany, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium	6
	1973	Denmark, Ireland, UK	9
	1981	Greece	10
	1986	Portugal, Spain	12
	1990	Unification of West and East Germany	n/a
	1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden	15
	2004	Malta, Cyprus, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	25
	2007	Bulgaria, Romania	27
	2013	Croatia	28
Former Member	2019	UK	27
Candidate	2005	Macedonia, Turkey	29
	2010	Montenegro	30
	2012	Serbia	31
	2014	Albania	32
Former Candidate	2015	Iceland	n/a
Association Agreement	2014	Ukraine	33
	2016	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo	35

It is also noteworthy, that the term enlargement negotiation is misleading. It is not the EU that negotiates with the candidate on how integration might best be achieved. Instead, it is foremost the member states who negotiate amongst themselves on the specific reforms that a prospective member ought to undertake. Within this process, the European Commission screens the candidate along 35 thematic lines (the so-called chapters)⁴ in such areas as the environment, human rights, transport or the single market. The Commission then suggests two sets of reforms per chapter (referred to as opening and closing benchmarks) to which all member states must agree to. Once a candidate has implemented what is in effect a ‘to-do list’, all member states have to agree that the reforms were completed in a satisfactory manner. Hence, on 70 occasions – 35 chapters, each with opening and closing benchmarks – all member states must give their expressive consent that the candidate has made sufficient progress. The eventual admission into the EU is granted in a final accession treaty which must be approved by all member states, as well as the European Parliament. And should throughout this long process, a candidate’s democratic development suffers a setback, the EU can at any moment suspend negotiations; this time not by unanimous consent, but by qualified majority, i.e. by at least 55% of member states (which at the moment equates 16) representing at least 65% of the EU population. Short of war or revolution, it could arguably be stated that EU integration represents the most radical transformation that a county could be subjected to.

Table 2.2. State of EU Enlargement Negotiations, January 2018

Country	Candidate Status since	Chapters
Albania	2014	None opened None closed
Macedonia	2005	None opened None closed
Montenegro	2010	23 opened 2 closed
Serbia	2012	6 opened 2 closed
Turkey	2005	15 opened 1 closed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU decision in 2016 not to open any new chapters because of ‘prevailing circumstances’ • 8 chapters will not be opened unless Turkey recognises Republic of Cyprus

The Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)

All Applicants, whether current candidates that are undergoing the 35-chapter negotiation process, or future candidates which so far have not reach a sufficient level of economic and political stability are part of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). These include the current candidates of Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, but also Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo as well as Ukraine. The SAP consists of four key elements. On the one hand, the EU unilaterally opens its markets and removes trade barriers, thus granting applicant economies free access to 500 million consumers with the aim of boosting economic growth in the region. Regional co-operation is a further focus designed to establish free trade relations between the applicant countries. For those countries subjected to the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, collaboration with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague was also a prerequisite before the court ceased operations in December 2017. The basis for the SAP however, are individual Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA) which address country-specific development challenges of the applicants. As such, every SAA focuses on the areas of public and administrative reform, rule of law, sustainable economy (including energy, transport, environment, climate change), agriculture and rural development, as well as people (including gender equality, inclusion, education, or skills). In order to fund these programmes, the EU established the so-called Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) and between 2007 and 2013, a total of 11.5 billion Euro was spent in the region. For the current financial perspective (2014-2020), the funds were marginally increased to 11.7 billion.⁵ Hence, prior to the start of the 35-chapter negotiations, the EU imposes a wide-ranging reform package on every applicant that is backed up by a significant amount of money. While the proper and far-reaching transformation does not start until official candidate status is granted, the SAP's aim is to achieve economic, political and institutional stability, without which the accession negotiations would not stand much chance to succeed.

The Current Candidates

Albania

As seen in Table 2.3, Albania is by some margin the poorest of the current candidate states. Burdened by a long history of brutal Stalinism, the integration of the country into the family of European market democracies represents a formidable challenge. Until the demise of the communist dictator Enver Hoxha in 1990, the country existed virtually in isolation and very much cut off from its neighbours. The 1992 elections finally marked the end of 47 years of oppression culminating in the country's integration into NATO in 2009. The Socialist Party of prime minister Edi Rama who came to power in 2013 started to implement much needed reforms with its fight against corruption and organised crime whose widespread prevalence saw the electorate turn against his predecessor, the conservative Sali Berisha.

But the path to democracy is long and winding. In its annual report of November 2016,⁶ the Commission criticised a lack of judicial independence, while also highlighting the continued existence of money laundering and organised crime based on a far-reaching 'informal' (i.e. black market) economy. The Commission urged the government to achieve fiscal consolidation, and to raise professional standards that would ultimately improve the country's administrative capacity. The gloomy assessment by the EU authorities was mirrored in a report by the Washington-based Freedom House⁷. Assessing Albania's state of democracy, the think tank argued that the democratic progress had actually worsened between 2007 (when the score was 3.82, with 1 representing the highest level and 7 the lowest) and 2017 (with the score at 4.14). The report paid specific reference to the re-emergence of vote buying, and the application of pressure on voters in two regional by-elections in 2016.

But the government's reforms started to have an impact. The local elections of 2015 were largely free from the customary violence and aggression. A judicial reform in 2015 finally banned previously convicted criminals from holding public office. A further reform package that was passed the following year, aimed at curbing corruption, organised crime and the meddling of politicians in the judicial process. But signing off reforms is one thing. Making sure those measures are implemented on the ground is another matter altogether. The spread of marijuana plantations serves as a telling example. In an impoverished society that is blighted by widespread youth

unemployment, ruthless financiers and operators continue to take advantage of poor farmers and a corrupt police bureaucracy, thus turning this ‘industry’ into a questionable pillar of the Albanian economy. What is required for Albania to take the final and ambitious steps towards a European-style democracy is an utter and complete change in its political culture. For decades, the state was regarded as either an oppressor or as a vehicle that was exploited to fortify privileges. But a state cannot thrive if it is abused as a potentially lucrative means in a society where notions of a common good are only weakly developed. It is for these reasons, that negotiations still have not started, as these are conditional to tangible progress in the country’s effort to establish a law-abiding state structure buttressed by an independent judiciary.

For the EU, integrating Albania, a predominantly Muslim country with a truly horrible post-war history, scarred by poverty, corruption and organised crime would certainly represent a notable achievement that could lend considerable moral clout to an organisation that after all aims to spread stability and prosperity across the continent. But with Albania the EU has taken on a mighty challenge, and it is by no means assured that the country without outside guidance and financial support would be able to make such a far and wide-reaching transition

Macedonia

The small, landlocked Balkan country of Macedonia got off to a very promising start in its attempt to join the EU. After gaining independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the country signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in 2001. Together with Croatia and Turkey, candidate status was granted in 2005. But progress came to a shuddering halt, in large part caused by the premiership of Nikola Gruevski who governed the country from 2006 to 2016. During his time in office his ruling VMRO-DPMNE, ‘short’ for Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Democratic Party, oversaw a gradual transition from a tender, but improving democracy to an autocratic and deeply corrupt regime. Although the Commission since 2009 recommended the start of negotiations, member state reservations, mainly from Bulgaria and Greece meant that so far, no chapters have been opened.

Internal stability was severely tested in the spring of 2015 when a wire-tapping scandal caught senior politicians discussing the cover-up of killings and the rigging of elections. Further investigations revealed widespread government manipulation of

electoral lists, the media and the judiciary. Despite public protests, Gruevski was able to hold on to power, although his interior and transport ministers, as well as the head of security were forced to resign. In July 2015, the EU and the U.S. tried to mediate with the Pržino agreement which foresaw the involvement of opposition parties in government, an early resignation of Gruevski by January 2016, the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate government activities, as well as a care taker government that should lead the country to new elections by June 2016. These elections did take place, albeit with a six-month delay when to the consternation of the international community, Gruevski party secured the highest number of votes, though not enough seats in parliament to form a government. Under such circumstances, the Macedonian constitution hands such a right to the main opposition party, which President Gjorge Ivanov hesitated to do. In April 2017, an angry nationalist mob descended onto parliament injuring the opposition leader Zoran Zaev. This was the last straw for Gruevski and Ivanov called elections for June 2017 which Zaev promptly won, forming a different government for the first time in 11 years.

In its annual progress report of 2016,⁸ the Commission's assessment of Macedonia provided grim reading. It refers to 'clientilistic' politics with all parties, whether those in government or in opposition, being guilty of. This is a deeply divided and polarised country whose political discourse is increasingly organised along antagonistic ethnic lines between Macedonians on one side, and Albanians, Turks and Roma on the other. EU demands for urgent democratic reforms were left unanswered. Freedom of expression was in steady decline with ruling economic and political elites unwilling to relinquish any influence. Prime minister Zaev and his ruling centre-left Social Democrats are facing an epic challenge. Democracy and the rule of law are constantly undermined. Economic progress is still painfully slow, and as illustrated in Table 2.3. the country continues to be one of the poorest in Europe.⁹ Relations with its EU neighbours are also frosty. Bulgaria does not recognise Macedonians as an ethnic group, while Greece persistently challenges the official name of 'Republic of Macedonia' because of its semantic proximity to a province in northern Greece, also called Macedonia. As such, the EU continues to refer to the country as FYROM - the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - which in the history of diplomacy, must go down as one of the more ridiculous names. It is therefore safe to assume, that EU membership is many years, if not decades away.

Montenegro

Unlike Macedonia, the tiny Mediterranean country of Montenegro made rapid strides towards EU integration. After leaving the union with Serbia of what was left of Yugoslavia in 2006, the country quickly applied for EU membership and negotiations commenced in 2012. By 2018, steady progress had been made with two chapters being closed and a further 23 chapters being opened. This makes Montenegro the most advanced of all the candidate countries; a development recognised by the Commission who mentioned an accession target of 2025

But the thorny issue of NATO membership exposed severe rifts in Montenegro's political landscape. NATO welcomed its 29th member in June 2017, thus closing the last gap in an alliance-controlled coastline that now stretches from Gibraltar to Syria. But NATO membership came merely 18 years after 500 Montenegrins perished in the bombing campaign against Milosević's Yugoslavia. The country was therefore evenly divided over the merit of joining the alliance.¹⁰ Montenegro enjoys strong cultural, religious and economic connections with Russia and many people argued that NATO membership might severely compromise those ties. What was to follow however was straight out of an old-fashioned spy thriller. Parliamentary elections, and therefore the last chance to stop integration into the alliance were scheduled for October 2016. One day before polling, the country's chief prosecutor alleged that a group of 12 Serbian nationalists supported by two Russian intelligence officers had plotted a coup to seize control of parliament and to kill the leader of Montenegro's most popular party Duško Marković. The Russian spies however were conveniently sent back to Russia before a trial could commence, and the opposition claimed that this was a fake coup planned by Marković to increase his electoral chances. Russia's head of security later apologised for the incident, stating that it was a rogue operation not sanctioned by the Kremlin. What precisely happened however continues to be a mystery.

But the episode revealed the key role of Moscow in Montenegrin politics. Russia is by far the biggest foreign investor¹¹ and the financial ties become only too apparent when visiting the country's coastal resorts, which are full of Russian tourists and Russian-owned real estate. Montenegro under Russian influence would also give Moscow a highly strategic access point to the Mediterranean Sea while the country's

NATO integration represented a severe blow to Russia’s strategic ambitions. Relations were further soured when Montenegro joined western sanctions with started in March 2014; one day after a referendum brought the Crimea under Moscow’s control. In retaliation, Russia has warned its citizens not to travel to Montenegro, thereby greatly diminishing revenues in the tourist sector, while also banning the import of Montenegrin wine; one of the country’s major trade assets.

The coup – fake or real – also shed light on the tender state of democracy. The Commission in a report in 2016 highlighted a judicial and administrative capacity that was ‘moderate’; ¹² EU speak for the prevalence of corruption. The country is led by Marković and his Democratic Party of Socialists backed by several smaller parties representing ethnic minorities. But the government only has a very narrow margin of support and when Marković was about to be voted into power in parliament, opposition parties boycotted the procedure on grounds of electoral irregularities. Montenegro’s path towards European integration is therefore far from assured. Much will depend on the outcome of the coup investigations, which will continue to split the country: either a nationalist coup will be revealed, or the government’s fraudulent activities will be laid bare. In any case, for lack of a political alternative, western integration depends on Marković and his party, which could turn out to be a rather shaky bet.

Table 2.3 GDP Per Capita (Purchasing Power) in EU and Candidate States, 2017

EU 15	EU 13 (joined after 2004)	EU Candidates
258 Luxembourg	96 Malta	64 Turkey
183 Ireland	88 Czech Republic	45 Montenegro
128 Austria, Netherlands	83 Cyprus, Slovenia	37 Macedonia, Serbia
124 Denmark	77 Slovakia	29 Albania
123 Germany, Sweden	75 Estonia, Lithuania	
118 Belgium	68 Poland	
109 Finland	67 Hungary	
107 UK	65 Latvia	
104 France	60 Croatia	
97 Italy	58 Romania	
92 Spain	49 Bulgaria	
77 Portugal		
68 Greece		

EU 28 is at index 100
Source: Eurostat, December 2017

Serbia

The biggest constituent republic of the former Yugoslavia, Serbia was for a long time regarded as Europe's pariah state. The country's former leader Slobodan Milosević had much to contribute to this questionable reputation. In the violent civil war in Bosnia & Herzegovina between 1991 and 1995, Serbia gave very significant military assistance to Bosnian Serbs under their political leader Radovan Karadžić and his military commander General Ratko Mladić. In Kosovo in 1999 Milosevic's brutal response to an uprising by Kosovo Albanians triggered a military response by NATO. Once Milosević was ousted in 2000, the persistent refusal to hand Mladić and Karadžić to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague prevented the start of closer relations with the EU. Not that the country was necessarily in favour of European Integration prompted by the prevalence of a strong nationalist political culture, that regards itself as the supreme power in the region and supported by a prominent ally in Russia that shares the same Christian-orthodox faith. But the situation dramatically changed once Boris Tadić became president in 2004. Aided by a remarkable change in appearance Karadžić continued to live in Serbia but was eventually captured in 2008. Mladić, who for a long time was sheltered by loyal nationalist followers and family members, followed in 2011. The EU quickly granted the country candidate status in 2012.

Progress in the negotiations has been steady, yet slow. Under prime minister Aleksandar Vučić, crucial chapters were opened, most notably judiciary and fundamental rights (chapter 23) justice, freedom and security (chapter 24), as well as relations with its former province and now independent neighbour Kosovo (chapter 35). But internal democratic reforms failed to materialise on a noteworthy scale. In fact, Freedom House noted that Serbia's democratic score in 2016 was the lowest since 2005,¹³ and observers of the Balkan regions cited the by now all-too familiar systemic deficiencies of corruption, election irregularities, media intrusion, and lack of judicial independence. One incident illustrated the state of democracy in Serbia in a remarkable fashion. Referred to as the *Savamala* case, in April 2014, masked men closed off a street in the centre of the Serbian capital Belgrade and proceeded to bulldoze homes to make way for a private real estate development called the 'Belgrade Waterfront', which was championed and backed by the government. Investigations later revealed that the police

failed to respond to calls for help by affected home owners, pointing to a collusion of police officials with the highest levels of government. Rule of law works differently.

On a positive note though, the public is now much more critical and willing to express any dissatisfaction with the political authorities, whether through media channels or through demonstrations. The case of Ana Brnabić also stands out. In June 2017, Vučić won the presidential elections and appointed the U.S. and UK educated novice politician as his new prime minister, which in the Serbian constitution is regarded as the most powerful office in the country. Brnabić is not only the first female head of any government in the Balkans, she is also openly gay, which in a country known for its often-rampant homophobia¹⁴ is an extraordinary development. Her appointment will do much to improve the GLBT agenda but in the process, might also improve notions of tolerance and respect in what is still a very traditional, conservative and male-dominated country. Then again, Brnabić is an independent politician without a power base, while Vučić stills remains as the head of the ruling Serbian Progressive Party which over the years exercised a powerful grip on state institutions and the media. Accusations of window dressing were therefore widespread. Still, credit where credit is due. Democratic progress might be slow, but with seven million people, Serbia is by far the most populous candidate in the region, and the economic potential, should the political, financial and cultural elites be able to unleash it, is tremendous.

Turkey

As seen in Table 2.3. Turkey is no longer an economic backwater. Its prosperity levels are the highest of the current candidates and are in line with those of Greece, Latvia, Hungary or Poland. In fact, the country recently enjoyed one of the highest GDP growth rates in the world with an average 5.4% annual increase between 2003 and 2013.¹⁵ In addition, the country has a very young population¹⁶ with an average age of just 30 – a strong bonus for a market economy where consumer spending is very much driven by people under the age of 45. Add to this the size of the economy (Turkey has a population of 80 million citizens which is expected to rise to 90 million within one generation), and the economic advantages of the country joining the EU's Single Market become a no-brainer. In fact, Turkey could even represent the panacea for an economically stricken Eurozone, offering a growth boost of huge potential, that EMU reforms so far have struggled to deliver. In addition, Turkey – from an economic perspective – is

already well integrated as it shares a custom union with the EU, giving both sides access to each other's markets.¹⁷ The country is a very significant trade partner, ranking fourth for EU exports (behind the U.S., China and Switzerland) and fifth for EU imports (behind China, the U.S., Switzerland and Russia).¹⁸ Wages are low, and the government has set up multiple free trade zones which offer international manufacturers the chance to produce at greatly reduced tax rates. Add to this the closer proximity to European markets than for instance China or India, and it is little wonder that Turkey has started to develop into Europe's manufacturing sweat shop.

But such an economic prize must be balanced against several challenges in the political domain. Under former prime minister and now president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the country implemented large scale democratic reforms (most notably the abolition of the death penalty) which encouraged the EU to grant candidate status in 2005. But as of 2018, only 15 chapters have been opened, and only one closed: the rather short chapter on science and research. Erdogan's style of government over the past years had also increasingly been autocratic. Backed by large support amongst conservative, low income socio-economic groups most notably outside the main cities, human rights violations and media intrusions became ever more prevalent.

The image of Erdogan as a strong man was encapsulated by the Taksim Square riots in July 2013. A small group of mainly young people were demonstrating against the development of the inner-city Gezi Park to make way for apartments. Encouraged by Erdogan, the Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbaş, sent in the riot police, including unemployed people hired on one-day contracts to squash what had been a mild and harmless demonstration and thus showing an excessive force of strength that left demonstrators shocked and running for their lives. EU institutions and member state governments were alarmed and disconcerted. Erdogan further displayed this non-sense attitude in his response to a coup in the summer of 2015 when a group of opposition politicians, backed by senior figures in the military, the media and academia orchestrated a failed coup. Erdogan ordered widespread purges and over 50,000 people were either fired or suspended from their positions. It remains doubtful whether that many people were involved in, or even supported the coup, and many commenters concluded that Erdogan had used this opportunity to incapacitate dissenting voices, often without the application of appropriate judicial means. For the EU member state governments, this was one democratic derogation too many and in December 2016

decided to keep any remaining chapters unopened as long as ‘the prevailing circumstances’ remain unchanged. Not that this bothered Erdogan too much, and a referendum in April 2017 on constitutional changes massively increased his status. As such, Turkey’s parliamentary democracy was replaced by a presidential system which gave Erdogan significant powers in the appointment of judges and prosecutors. It cemented the government’s strong position against the opposition during a potentially highly unstable time, but it was also a major democratic setback and an autocratic power grab.

The contentious issue of Cyprus – currently the longest running conflict in international relations - also greatly undermines the country’s relationship with the EU. In 1974, Turkish military forces invaded the former British colony as a response to persistent harassment of Turkish Cypriots by nationalist-minded Greek Cypriots. The invasion divided the island into a Greek-Cypriot southern part, and a Turkish-Cypriot north. Turkey claimed that the intervention came to the rescue of an embattled people, but nonetheless, the military operation was a breach of international law. Subsequently, Turkey encouraged the establishment of a government in the self-styled Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC); a state that is only recognised by Ankara. In return, Turkey refuses to recognise the Republic of Cyprus in the South, and once more, it is the only government in the world to do so. Numerous attempts, often brokered by the United Nations, failed to reunify the island, most notably in 2004 when a referendum was approved in the north, but failed to win enough support in the south. Without solving the reunification issue, the Republic was allowed to join the EU just weeks after the referendum was held. This means that the EU now has a divided country as one of its members, with Turkey as an EU candidate being the sole protector and sponsor of an entity that is not internationally recognised, but which the EU claims to represent a legitimate part of the territory of one of its members a formidable mess indeed. It would have been more conducive to both Turkey and the EU, if the accession of Cyprus had been conditional to the Cyprus problem being solved. A breakthrough in negotiations was on the horizon in 2016, but a deal fell apart at the last moment, when agreement over the presence of approximately 25,000 Turkish soldiers could not be reached. The EU and the Republic argued that Erdogan ought to remove the troops before a settlement can be reached, but Turkey insisted on a transition period.¹⁹ The stalemate continues. Turkey does not recognise one of the members of an international

organisation, which it intends to join, while in return recognising a state that the EU claims to be on the territory of one of its member states. For the enlargement process, this means that eight chapters which would be directly affected the Cyprus division (including fundamental rights, energy, as well as education and culture) cannot be opened until the island's recognition and unification issues are resolved.

Beyond Cyprus, Turkey's geo-political location also represents grounds for concern. The country shares land borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria, and many commentators fear that such a vast area would be practically impossible to police and thus the EU would find itself prone to terrorist and Muslim-fundamentalist attacks. While such concerns cannot easily be disregarded, and a policing of the Turkish borders would require a great degree of EU financial support, one also has to recognise that Turkey – at least until Erdogan's autocratic tendencies started to become apparent in the aftermath of the Taksim Square riots - functioned as a role model in a region that ever since the 2011 Arab spring continues to struggle to unify cultural forces that are drifting ever further apart. A successful integration of Turkey could therefore undoubtedly increase the EU's diplomatic influence in one of the most contentious regions in the world.

If Turkey, led by Erdogan or by a successor, manages to overcome the Cyprus problem, and pursues widespread reforms to meet the requirements of the 35 chapters, it is by no means guaranteed that EU integration would be forthcoming. Public opinion across Europe is deeply divided on the issue²⁰, and calls for a referendum on Turkish membership have been voiced in France and Austria, while German chancellor Angela Merkel continues to argue that Ankara should have a special relationship with the EU that would fall just short of full membership. Such a development could be catastrophic to EU-Turkey relations. Imagine a candidate that is undergoing an occasionally painstaking process of meeting EU norms, only to be told after a decades-long reform process, that there still is no place for it in the EU. This would be truly ridiculous,

But it could also be argued that the EU is not ready for Turkey. By the time of accession, the country might have a population close to 90 million, thus making it by far the biggest member state. According to current voting rules in the Council of Ministers, 55 per cent of states representing 65 per cent of the EU population would be required to pass legislative acts. An EU by then might have mastered Brexit but could also have integrated Serbia and Montenegro thus bringing the number of EU citizens to

approximately 540 million. The share of Turkish citizens would be around 16% of the overall EU population which would give the country very significant voting powers. In fact, Turkey plus one other larger member state (such as France or Germany), plus two more mid-sized states (such as the Netherlands and Belgium) could potentially block EU legislation. As such four states could scupper the legislative intentions of 26 fellow members. No wonder analysts refer to a potential institutional deadlock.

Policies too, might have to be revamped to a considerable extent. The Turkish agricultural sector is huge and while it continues to shrink, just under 30 per cent of its labour force still works on the land. If unchanged, the budget for the Common Agricultural Policy would not be able to cope with the integration of such large numbers. The same scenario also applies to the Cohesion policy. As it stands now, Turkish regions would be eligible to apply for 85 per cent of the cohesion budget earmarked for poorer regions having less than 90 % of EU's average GDP.²¹ Based on current population figures around 175 million people are living in these regions. With Turkey's accession, the EU average GDP could be reduced by as much as 10% which would subsequently exclude the likes of Malta, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia but also potentially Spain and regions in southern Italy from these funds as their average GDP would be above 90%. This would bring the number of people to around 110 million EU citizens who then must share the funds with Turkish regions housing 80 million people. Even if these figures are just estimates, they nonetheless highlight that cohesion, just like agriculture, would need to be subject to considerable reforms. Consequently, a potential institutional deadlock could very conceivably be complemented by a policy breakdown. To conclude, Turkey, after many decades of reform might find itself knocking on the door of an EU that is not only unwilling, but also unfit to integrate such a large candidate. It is for these reasons that an integration of Turkey under the current circumstances has next to no chance of succeeding.

Future Candidates

Beyond the current five candidates, there are a further three countries with whom the EU has established firm bi-lateral relations with a view of eventual accession. These include Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, as well as Ukraine.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

One of its constituent republics of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina was heralded as a shining light of multiculturalism with three distinctively different ethnicities, all following different faiths, living alongside one another. The country's main ethnicities are Bosniaks (who followed the Muslim faith), Bosnian Croats (who were Roman Catholics), as well as Bosnian Serbs (who were Orthodox Christians). But with the demise of communism, which forbade and thus held in check any cultural or political expressions of nationalism, old ethnic tensions resurfaced in the most ugly and disastrous fashion. The country's leadership under Bosniak Alija Izetbegović declared independence from Yugoslavia in April 1992. Fearing a Muslim dominance in a newly independent state, Radovan Karadžić, leader of the minority Bosnian Serbs had warned from the outset that such a move would not be acceptable to his people. During the subsequent civil war between 1992 and 1995 an estimated 100,000 people were killed, 80% of whom Bosniaks²². Backed by military support from neighbouring Serbia, Karadžić embarked on a military strategy of ethnic cleansing, the most notorious of which happened in Srebrenica in July 1995 where Bosnian Serb forces under the command of Ratko Mladić massacred 8,000 Bosniak men and boys; the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust. Throughout this conflict, the EU stood helplessly on the side lines, imposing a half-hearted weapons embargo on the country, which only helped to establish Karadžić's military supremacy as he continued to receive support from Serbia. In the end, U.S. intervention under President Bill Clinton put an end to the bloodshed with the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995. It split the country into three distinct entities: The centre of the country is now governed by the so-called Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, largely occupied by Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks and split further into ten cantons along ethnic lines. The north and east of the country is controlled by the Republika Srpska²³, consisting overwhelmingly of Bosnian Serbs. In addition, the Brčko district - little more than a small town - is wedged

between the northern and eastern parts of the Republika Srpska, designed to avoid a geographical coherence of that entity. Hence, what used to be a lively example of multiculturalism with ethnically mixed towns and villages is now by and large a country with ethnically homogenous administrative units. Overall, according to the 2013 national census²⁴, Bosniaks represent 50% of the country's population. Bosnian Serbs make up 30%, and Bosnian Croats 15%.²⁵

Dayton brought peace, but it also gave the country a highly complex constitution that failed to establish a political settlement required for an integration into the EU. Although an SAA entered into force in June 2015, politics at the state level continues to be undermined by Bosnian Serb separatist notions. Its president Milorad Dodik has argued persistently that he much rather has political independence for his statelet than pursue a path of collaboration with his Bosniak and Bosnian-Croat counterparts. There is also the acrimonious legal case of Seidić - Finci. Both parties took the government of BiH to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) at the Council of Europe, claiming that Dayton violated their human rights as it requires voters to declare themselves as either Serb, Bosniak or Croat in order to participate in presidential or parliamentary elections. Finci (of Jewish faith) and Seidić (a Roma) successfully convinced the court. Alas, the ruling so far has not resulted in constitutional changes.

Economic, political and bureaucratic structures also have not reached sufficient levels for negotiations to start. The Commission stated in 2016²⁶, that BiH is still at an early stage in the development towards a functioning market economy. As far as democratic standards are concerned, there are still threats to the judiciary from the political establishment. Corruption is prevalent, journalists are frequently intimidated, and collaboration with civil society is lacking. As to the *EU acquis*, a great range of issues require deep reforms, with the Commission highlighting justice, freedom and security, competition, agriculture, the environment, as well as energy. As it stands now, Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the bottom end of the EU's candidates list, and it remains highly doubtful whether the country is able to make any strides unless a fundamental constitutional reform and a departure from Dayton can be agreed upon. Only then would it be possible, to tackle the widespread shortcomings, that the Commission criticised in such a vocal manner. However, without outside help these monumental changes have little chance at succeeding. Much depends on the position of Serbia, which has the capacity to take the wind out of Dodik's nationalistic agenda. The ground

is still not fertile for a democratic, economic and bureaucratic transformation. Yet the EU is demanding that seeds of change out to be sown now.

Ukraine.

EU relations with the former Soviet republic rest on three pillars. Since 2004, Ukraine has been part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which extends to 16 non-EU entities and focuses on democratic institutional development in return for financial aid.²⁷ In addition, an Association Agreement was signed in November 2014 that covered standard areas that are also instrumental in the accession process of western Balkan countries, including human rights, corruption, financial services or agriculture supported by a financial package of 12.8 billion Euro.²⁸ The Agreement entered into force in September 2017. In the same month, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) also started which gave Ukrainian producers preferential access to EU markets, whilst also commencing with the long process of harmonising product standards and regulations. One month later, in October 2017 additional trade measures increased the number and volume of agricultural products that could enter the EU without tariffs or other trade barriers. The measures had an instant effect as trade between the two partners increased by 23% during the first half of 2017.²⁹

But the mentioning of trade and other bi-lateral relations cannot even begin to paint a coherent picture. Including Ukraine in the 2003 list of potential EU candidates took many observers by surprise as it potentially represents a deep eastern expansion of the EU right to the border with Russia. Ukraine is a vast country with 45 million people, geographically the largest of all countries whose boundaries are solely within Europe. Only Turkey, with most of the country located in the Middle East is a bigger EU applicant. But despite its Soviet past, parts of Ukraine have a strong central European tradition and at some stage belonged to Poland or to the Austro-Hungarian empire. After two brief spells of independence after World Wars I and II, political sovereignty was finally achieved with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. The ethnic division of the country however, continues to be a large source of instability. During Soviet rule, Moscow had moved sizeable numbers of ethnic Russians to the eastern part of Ukraine to accelerate industrialisation and still today, the majority of people in the eastern area surrounding the cities of Donetsk and Lugansk are of Russian origin and speak Russian instead of Ukrainian. In April 2014, an armed

conflict between Ukrainian troops and a Russian-backed separatist movement resulted in the de-facto annexation of this area by anti-government forces. Movement of troops and military equipment between Russia and the region was widely reported throughout 2014 resulting in a widespread international condemnation.

Equally explosive was the political escalation in the Crimea. The peninsula had been a part of Russia ever since the end of the 18th century. In 1954, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev placed the region under the domain of the Soviet Republic of Ukraine, where it remained until independence in 1991. Vladimir Putin though annexed the Crimea in March 2014, arguing that the area had for centuries been a part of Russia and was inhabited by a large majority of Russians. The international community once again condemned this act of aggression.

Not surprisingly, domestic politics suffered from the Ukrainian - Russian antagonism. The 2004 Presidential elections provided an illustrating example. The election was won by incumbent prime minister and Moscow-leaning Victor Yanukovich. His opponent Victor Yushchenko had campaigned for a western integration with EU accession as the eventual benchmark. Yanukovich won by a small margin, but Yushchenko claimed that election rigging, and voter intimidation had cost him the victory. Widespread street protest assumed, and the Supreme Court declared the elections void. Yushchenko won the re-run and became president appointing his ally in the so-called Orange revolution Yulia Tymoshenko as his prime minister. By the next presidential elections in 2010, the two however had become bitter enemies. Tymoshenko decided to run for office turning the elections into a three-horse race between her, Yushchenko and the re-emerging Yanukovich. The latter won the second round of the contest against Tymoshenko and imprisoned her over corruption charges a year later. In 2013, Yanukovich refused to sign the EU Association Agreement which once again brought pro-western Ukrainians out onto the streets of major cities in the second Ukrainian revolution in ten years. Yanukovich saw his fate sealed when the parliament removed him from office in February 2014, replacing him with the Tymoshenko ally Oleksandr Turchynov. In June 2014 Presidential elections were held once again, with the wealthy oligarch Petro Poroshenko assuming office. He remains very popular amongst pro-western Ukrainians who can be found predominantly in the western part of the country; but the government's legitimacy is still questioned in the more pro-Russian, eastern area of the country.

Given these internal political tensions and Russian aggression in its eastern parts and the Crimea, Ukraine is far from settled and stable, which does not bode well for the massive reform processes that precede any potential EU membership.

Kosovo

With a population of just under two million, the small land-locked country of Kosovo is the second poorest in Europe after Moldova. Around one third of its population is without a job, and youth unemployment is a staggeringly high 66%.³⁰ Most of its population lives in rural areas hampered by an inefficient agricultural sector based on small-plot farming and limited mechanisation. Corruption, unreliable contract and law enforcement and patchy energy supply continue to undermine the economy. Financial contributions from the international community, as well as from the Kosovar diaspora mainly in Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavian countries account for 10 per cent of GDP. Here is a country that desperately needs European integration.

But many serious obstacles remain in the way. Kosovo is populated by a large majority of Muslim ethnic Albanians complemented by a minority of ethnic Serbs. As a part of Yugoslavia, it was not a constituent republic like Croatia or Slovenia but organised as a province within Serbia. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Yugoslav government granted significant powers of autonomy which eased the previous dominance of Serbs in the regional government, army or the state-run economy. As such, police forces were now mainly recruited amongst the ethnic Albanian population. An Albanian speaking university was established in the capital Priština, and the province was given a self-governing assembly, administration and judiciary. Resentment against the 'host' republic Serbia persisted however, partially caused by the high levels of poverty, low degree of public investment and a general lack of economic opportunities, but also by the fact that the province still only had a minority status within federal Yugoslavia. Peaceful calls for more independence and for giving Kosovo the status of a republic gradually descended into an armed conflict with the arrival of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1996. Under the presidency of Slobodan Milošević, Yugoslavia – by now merely consisting of Serbia and Montenegro – launched a military campaign against Kosovo in 1998, which prompted over one million Kosovo Albanians to escape across the border into Albania. It resulted in a NATO intervention and the bombing of Yugoslav cities between March and June 1999.

Milosević eventually gave in and withdrew Yugoslav forces from Kosovar territory. Subsequently over half of Kosovo Serbs were expelled. During the conflict, an estimated 13,000 people died, around 12,000 of them ethnic Albanians with 1,700 people still reported missing twenty years after the conflict. Kosovo's ethnic configuration is now 90% Kosovo Albanian and 8% Serb who mostly live in a handful of enclaves scattered around the country, the biggest of which in the northern part of the town of Mitrovica right on the border with Serbia. For an EU integration to succeed inter-ethnic relations, which on occasion are still combustible need to be more harmonious and a productive collaboration with its northern neighbour Serbia is paramount to quell any ethnic tensions. Many Serbs however, continue to regard Kosovo as a cultural part of Serbia and the issue of recognition is controversial, to say the least.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Belgrade however, never recognised Kosovo's new-found status, and so did five EU countries including Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia and Romania, who felt that a Lex Kosovo could set a dangerous legal precedent for the independence movements of their own ethnic minorities in for instance Catalonia or northern Cyprus. For the EU, this makes a bi-lateral relationship with Kosovo a diplomatically awkward undertaking.

The EU has been actively involved in the country since 2008 with the establishment of the scary-sounding EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), which succeeded a UN sponsored mission. EULEX focuses mainly on administrative support that is designed to improve capacity in such areas as the police, customs, or the judiciary.

In addition, a Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force in 2016, concentrating on areas that are typical of the bi-lateral relationships that the EU had established with other western Balkan countries, such as justice, economic matters, anti-corruption, or agriculture.³¹ In return, trade barriers to EU markets - but not visa restrictions - were lifted. Ever since the end of the war in 1999, the EU had invested around 2.3 billion Euro in the country with a further one billion Euro coming from other international donors. While the initial focus was on relief action and reconstruction, efforts are now channelled towards institution building and a much-needed sustainable economic development. Still, in its 2016 report³², the Commission described the fight

against corruption and organised crime as being ‘at an early stage’, while the economy continues to be in a desperate state.

The biggest challenges however, continues to be the ethnic tensions with the Serbian minority and in particular the attempt to come to terms with the atrocities committed during the war. Any former Yugoslav country intending to join the EU had to collaborate with international courts over alleged war crimes. The EU was instrumental in the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. The court dealt with war crimes committed in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia, and ceased to operate in December 2017. For Kosovo though, a new court was set up, referred to as the Kosovo Relocated Specialist Judicial Institution (KRSJI). A gruesome case came to light in 2010, where senior members of the KLA were alleged to have been involved in the harvesting and selling of organs of Serbian prisoners of war. In December 2017, newly elected prime minister Ramush Haradinaj threatened to walk away from KRSJI proceedings arguing that any Serbian-committed atrocities were not handled by the court (as this fell under the jurisdiction of the ICTY) and thus, only Kosovar Albanians would be indicted. A further reason might be the prime minister’s brother Daut Haradinaj, who as a former KLA commander might be in line to appear before the court. Given that collaboration with an international court is a pre-requisite for advancing EU relations, the warnings given by EU leaders, but also by the U.S. were unequivocal, reminding the country that such a move would severely jeopardise relations with Europe and with NATO.

Kosovo represents a special case. Its poverty levels are more extreme than those of its Balkan neighbours. Its economy sees little sign of improvement and its status as an independent, sovereign state is questioned by some EU states, but also by other countries which means that the United Nations have so far refused to grant membership. The Commission is attempting to revitalise the enlargement process to the Western Balkan states – the so-called WB6 of Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina – by calling for more bi-lateral efforts starting with a summit in Bulgaria in May 2018. Alas, the diplomatically sensitive nature of relations with Kosovo was exemplified by the Spanish government in January 2018 which called for the country to be excluded from the WB6 process. Kosovo’s only chance for closer EU ties might rest with Serbia, which was promised a potential

accession by 2025, but only on the condition that neighbourly relations with Kosovo stabilise. Serbia might therefore find itself in an acrimonious conundrum where its EU ambitions are tied to that of Kosovo.

Iceland: The Former Candidate

Together with the United Kingdom, the Scandinavian island in the middle of the North Atlantic has recently turned its back on further European integration. Iceland is a signatory state to the EU's Schengen agreement which provides for passport-free travel. For years, the country, together with Norway and Liechtenstein was quite content at being a member of the European Economic Area (EEA). This meant that it accepted any rules emanating from the regulation of the EU's Single Market without having a say in the making of those rules. In return though, the country enjoyed unfettered access to 500 million EU consumers; albeit for a fee. Although it did not benefit from the EU's redistributive policies for regions, fisheries or farmers, Icelandic territorial waters and thus a lucrative fishing industry remained under national control without any interference from Brussels. The country was also able to negotiate trade deals with other countries, as it stayed outside the EU's custom union.

All this changed with the U.S. sub-prime mortgage crisis and the subsequent collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Previously, Iceland's heavily de-regulated banking sector accumulated almost laughable balance sheets without much collateral capital, and the U.S. financial crisis brought the country to the verge of bankruptcy with its finance industry collapsing like a house of cards. With the currency in free fall and the economy contracting, the country submitted a desperate application to join the EU in July 2009. Both sides viewed integration as a straightforward and speedy affair, supported by the fact that the Single Market and thus large sways of the *EU acquis* were already part of Icelandic law. What was to follow however, was a farce worthy of a slapstick movie. Before the credit crunch, *Landsbanki*, one of the country's biggest banks had offered savings accounts but also bonds to European customers, predominantly from the UK and the Netherlands. Severely affected by the sub-prime crisis, the bank went under in 2008. The UK and Dutch governments stepped in to

secure outstanding debts of 3.7 billion Euro and demanded that the Icelandic government ought to foot the bill. Alas, two referendums in Iceland in 2010 and 2011 rejected legislation intended to comply with an EU-imposed financial settlement. Eventually less harsh terms were negotiated between Iceland, the Netherlands and the UK, and the country fulfilled its debt obligations with the last tranche reaching British and Dutch accounts in January 2016. In the meantime, though, and boosted by export revenues and a tourist boom, the Icelandic economy made an impressive recovery, just as the EU struggled for growth caused by the sovereign debt crises in the Eurozone. The acrimonious nature of negotiations over debt repayment and a subsequent anti-EU public discourse prompted a government rethink and Iceland suspended its application in May 2013, with 27 chapters opened and 11 closed. The application was formerly withdrawn in March 2015. With the economy booming and the financial sector now firmly regulated, the country sees no reason to depart from the EEA deal that had served it so well until 2008. It would require another massive crisis for this attitude to change and thus, EU integration is currently not regarded by Iceland as a necessity.

Outlook

When analysing democratic, economic and governance standards amongst potential future EU states, it becomes quite apparent that the EU is negotiating with a vastly different set of candidate and accession states. The geo-political status of Ukraine is far from being settled. Kosovo has not been unilaterally recognised by the EU. BiH's constitution does not offer a coherent working basis for the country to advance. Turkey's economy continues to advance at impressive speed; a progress that the WB6 countries have little hope of achieving any time soon. Serbia and Montenegro are going through the motions of the 35-chapter negotiation process and are tentatively judged by the EU to be in line for accession by 2025, yet Albania and Macedonia have yet to start this process. Discussions with Turkey are suspended, and candidate status has not even been granted to Ukraine, Kosovo or BiH. Such different development stages mean that another 'big bang enlargement' along the lines of the EU's extension into central and

eastern Europe in 2004/2007 is highly unlikely. Instead, a tailor-made approach that alludes to country-specific developments would be more conducive.

In all countries of the WB6, progress has been undermined by a political culture that is markedly different from those in western European states and falls short of the standards expected from Brussels. Political interference in the judiciary, corruption, nepotism and a general sense that the powers exuded by the state are there for the taking for one's personal benefits continue to cast a depressing shadow. But it is the EU's duty to act as the promoter of democracy; a process that it delivered successfully to former fascist states including Portugal, Spain, Greece, Italy or Germany, as well as to the former communist states in central and eastern Europe. Not only is it the EU's moral duty, but in return, much legitimacy will be bestowed on the European project. Alas, who else but the EU could fulfil this role?

The 35-chapter process has proven to be a highly suitable vehicle. If completed successfully, it represents an in-depth transformation towards a stable and functioning market democracy with the chapters acting as manuals on how to achieve this target. For this, the EU deserves credit as no other organisation, or indeed no other process than enlargement could achieve such an outcome. But there are several categories of countries within the WB6. Notwithstanding further reform, Montenegro and Serbia are currently top of the pile and are well ahead of their neighbours. In most likely circumstances, these countries will represent member state number 28 and 29 in a post-Brexit EU. But it is too early to set a target for the other four countries. In Albania and Macedonia, all the key areas of reform – democracy, economy, governance – show significant shortcomings. This is also the case in Kosovo and in BiH, however, their progress is further complicated by constitutional and diplomatic issues that require considerable efforts to be settled before any chapter negotiations can even begin. The often-disappointing lack of progress in those countries do not question the logic of the process. But it does cast serious doubts on the intensity of the EU effort. In recent years, the Eurozone meltdown in the aftermath of Lehman, the migration crisis, and Brexit have consumed much time and energy in Brussels and in the capitals of the member states. Yet, an integration of the WB6 cannot be successful if the onus on meeting reform targets is placed on the candidates alone. More effort, money and pro-active political dialogue is required, and established member states such as Spain or Germany would be well advised to look at their recent history to remind themselves of the

powerfully stabilising effect that European integration can have on a young democracy: a boost that the WB6 countries have every moral right to benefit from as well.

The relationship with Turkey is of a different nature altogether. Currently, the country's accession is not supported by all member states or indeed their electorates. Turkey's integration would naturally necessitate that outstanding chapters would be completed, but also that the EU would embark on widespread institutional and policy reforms. There is a considerable uncertainty over both processes. Hence, an entirely different relationship seems highly feasible. Stronger economic ties (such as a further integration into the EU's Single Market) would be very beneficial to both sides. Collaboration in the fields of security, anti-terrorism, migration, environmental protection, as well as climate change are also desirable. But unless EU attitudes toward Turkey change, and unless the EU revises its money policies and reorganises its institutions, a comprehensive integration remains a pipe dream. Just as with Brexit, Turkey offers a scenario where the EU's one-size-fits-all approach to European integration cannot provide coherent answers. The UK wants European integration but not as exercised by the EU. Turkey too wants European integration but this time several EU member states do not want to extent the EU's understanding of European integration to that country. Consequently, both the UK and Turkey give ample nourishment to the idea of variable geometry: a European project that functions along different levels of integration in line with the political culture and aspirations of a country (in this case the UK) or in line with prevailing attitudes of member states (as is the case with Turkish accession). Once a new-found geometry is established, Ukraine too might be able to take advantage of a more conducive vehicle for advancing relations with your European neighbours. A vehicle, which in the present shape of the EU was highly combustible and has resulted in a de-facto division of the country.

Notes

¹ In 1987, Morocco applied to join the EU, but were told that the union does not extend to African countries. This geographic prerogative was later formalised at a summit meeting in Denmark in 1993 under the so-called Copenhagen criteria.

² Every country that joins the EU is automatically obliged to adopt the single currency, although the EU used to grant new members a transition of around five years to align their economic and monetary policies with those of the Eurozone. As such, countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary or Poland, which joined the EU in 2004 ought to have issued the Euro in or around 2009. Alas, considering the financial downturn in the aftermath of the US subprime mortgage crisis of 2008, the Commission decided to cast aside any road maps and to leave the timing to the respective member states.

³ See: <http://www.aalep.eu/just-how-big-acquis-communautaire>

⁴ The 35 chapters of enlargement negotiations are (1) free movement of goods, (2) free movement of workers, (3) right of establishment and freedom to provide services, (4) free movement of capital, (5) public procurement, (6) company law, (7) intellectual property law, (8) competition policy, (9) financial services, (10) information society and media, (11) agriculture and rural development, (12) food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, (13) fisheries, (14) transport policy, (15) energy, (16) taxation, (17) economic and monetary policy, (18) statistics, (19) social policy and employment, (20) enterprise and industrial policy, (21) trans-European networks, (22) regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, (23) judiciary and fundamental rights, (24) justice, freedom and security, (25) science and research, (26) education and culture, (27) environment, (28) consumer and health protection, (29) customs union, (30) external relations, (31) foreign, security and defence policy (32) financial control, (33) financial and budgetary provisions, (34) institutions, (35) other issues.

⁵ IPA focuses of five key areas: transition assistance and institution building, cross-border co-operation with non-EU neighbours, regional development, human resource development, as well as rural development.

⁶ See: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_albania.pdf

⁷ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/albania>

⁸ See: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_the_former_yugoslav_republic_of_macedonia.pdf

⁹ In 2014, GDP per capita was an estimated 4,100 Euro which is a fraction of the EU average of 27,600 Euro. Amongst EU candidates, only Albania has a lower figure with 3,500 Euro. Source: Eurostat, January 2018.

¹⁰ In a poll in December 2016, 39.5% of respondents were in favour of NATO integration, but 39.7% were against it.

See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/25/montenegro-tensions-russia-joins-nato-member>

¹¹ The Guardian claims that around one third of foreign investment in Montenegro originates in Russia. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/25/montenegro-tensions-russia-joins-nato-member>

¹² See: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_montenegro.pdf

¹³ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2017/serbia>

¹⁴ In a poll in Serbia, 65% of respondents believed that homosexuality was an illness. See: www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/15/serbia-gains-its-first-female-and-gay-prime-minister-ana-brnabic

¹⁵ See: oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/turkey-records-strong-economic-growth-last-decade

¹⁶ See: www.indexmundi.com/turkey/demographics_profile.html

¹⁷ Agriculture (but not processed agricultural products), services and public procurement are excluded from the customs union.

¹⁸ In 2016, the EU exported goods worth 78 billion Euro to Turkey. In return, 66 billion Euro worth of Turkish goods entered the EU.

See: Eurostat, February 2017.

¹⁹ If this logic had been applied during the unification process of Germany, the eastern part might not have been able to integrate so smoothly into the EU. Unification was in October 1990, but the last Russian troops only left Germany in August 1994.

²⁰ In a YouGov poll in July 2016, respondents across Europe were asked about the support for Turkish integration into the EU. The figures were staggeringly negative: People in Germany (81%), Finland (78%), Denmark (76%), as well as Sweden and France (66%) were overwhelmingly against accession.

See: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/08/03/turkey-less-popular-choice-join-eu-even-russia/>

²¹ For the financial perspective 2014 – 2020, 51% of funds are earmarked for regions that have less than 75% of the average EU GDP. This money is distributed through the European Regional Development Fund (which mainly supports infrastructure), and the Social Fund (which supports HR development). As part of the Cohesion Fund which specifically targets transport and the environment, a further 21% is given to regions with less than 90% of EU average GDP.

²² See: www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/bosnia-herzegovina

²³ Translated into English, the term Republika Srpska simply means Serbian republic. In order to avoid confusion with the state of Serbia, the term is used in international relations to refer to the Bosnian Serb entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

²⁴ The census was carried out by the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Republika Srpska did not acknowledge its outcome although the EU's official statistics agency Eurostat confirmed that the census followed international guidelines.

²⁵ 2.7% of respondents did not belong to any of the three ethnicities, while the remainder choose not to declare their ethnicity altogether.

²⁶ See: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf

²⁷ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia. Because of the questionable state of democracy, agreements with Belarus, Libya and Syria are currently suspended in those countries.

²⁸ The issues covered in the agreement are human rights, rule of law, political dialogue and reforms, movement of persons, as well as co-operation in energy, the environment, climate actions, transport, financial services, public finances, anti-fraud measures, agriculture and rural developments, consumer protection and civil society.

²⁹ See: eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/1937/ukraine-and-eu_en

³⁰ See: www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html

³¹ The specific areas are justice, freedom and security; innovation, information society and social policy; agriculture, fisheries, forestry and food safety; internal market, competition and consumer/health protection; trade, industry, customs and taxation; transport, energy, environment and regional development; economic and fiscal matters.

³² See: ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_kosovo.pdf