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INTERNATIONAL BALKAN
SUMMER SCHOOL

BALKANS AND GLOBAL POLITICS

15-19 JULY 2024 | SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA

PROGRAM / ABSTRACTS



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PROGRAM / BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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IBSS

INTERNATIONAL BALKAN
SUMMER SCHOOL

The International Balkan Summer School, “Balkans and Global Politics,” aims to foster a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics between the Balkan region and global political players such as the EU, Russia, China, Türkiye, and the USA. Through engaging panel discussions, the project seeks to unravel the multifaceted relationships, historical contexts, and contemporary challenges that define the geopolitical landscape of the Balkans, as well as the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. By bringing together scholars, lecturers, and experts, the school aims to facilitate insightful conversations that transcend traditional narratives and strategic relationships, providing a nuanced perspective on how the Balkans navigate their interactions with major world powers.

The International Balkan Summer School is specifically designed for an academically inclined target audience, namely postgraduate students engaged in the second and third cycles of their academic pursuits, who are conducting or have completed postgraduate studies related to the Balkans. The envisaged participation includes a select cohort of 25-30 researchers who have demonstrated scholarly excellence. The eligibility criteria for participation include the acceptance of submitted articles and successful scrutiny by the scientific and academic board, emphasizing a rigorous selection process.

The International Balkan Summer School employs a blind peer review system; submitted abstracts and full texts will be accepted after evaluation by experts in their field. The papers selected at the end of the Summer School will be published by the Balkan Studies Foundation to share the presentations presented at the Summer School with the scientific community.



Balkan Studies Foundation

The Balkan Studies Foundation is the continuation of the Fettah Efendi Education and Thought Association, which was founded in September 2016 by young academicians, students, and young businessmen based in Skopje. It has been reorganized under a different institutional framework due to the expansion of activities carried out under the association's umbrella and the necessity of including all of the Balkans. Between 2016 and 2022, it conducted thousands of educational activities and undertook significant research and publication endeavors. Since September 2022, it has continued its activities through research centers, training centers, and publishing houses under the name of the Balkan Studies Foundation.



About South East European University (SEEU)

South East European University (SEEU) is a private, non-profit higher education institution consisting of faculties, centers, and institutes as integral parts, specializing in socio-economic sciences. The mission of the University is defined in its Statute. SEEU seeks excellence in teaching and research within the higher education system of the Republic of North Macedonia, offering equal opportunities to all based on impartiality and merit. One of the key elements of the University's mission includes active cooperation with universities in the Republic of North Macedonia as well as internationally. The main aim under which the university is governed and managed is to contribute to higher education in the Albanian language, promoting mutual interethnic understanding. SEEU aims to provide a multilingual and multicultural approach to teaching and research, developing study programs according to broad European and international standards.



About Oranje Instituut

Oranje Instituut was established in 2018, aiming to elevate theological education with expert teachers and accumulated knowledge. The Oranje Instituut values transparency, openness to feedback, collaboration, ethics, productivity, and innovation. It promotes independent theological education, prioritizing consultation and building on past successes. The objectives of the Oranje Instituut are to educate productive, original-minded students who respect differences; unite experienced scholars to advance research, scientific knowledge, and innovation while adhering to ethical values; collaborate with educational institutions to enhance staff training, develop methodologies, and address issues in non-formal education; and publish academic journals and host activities to foster academic and student development.



About ADAM (Ankara Center for Thought and Research)

The primary goal of the ADAM is to build the necessary infrastructure to cultivate the ideal individual for our time across all fields, with a focus on solidarity and cooperation to achieve this aim. ADAM seeks to enhance the quality of human resources by supporting their academic, social, and cultural development. The institution prioritizes educational, research, and project activities within a framework of human consciousness and conscience, aiming to transform the collective wisdom and historical richness of our region into a synergistic force, fostering a “community of intellectuals” dedicated to advancing beauty and excellence in every domain.

Lecturers



Orhan Murtezani

Orhan Murtezani was born on June 7, 1984. He completed his undergraduate studies at the “St. Cyril and Methodius” University in Skopje, where he majored in Management at the Faculty of Economics. He pursued his postgraduate studies in Turkey at “Marmara” University, specializing in Management and Organization.

During a period when the European continent faced an energy crisis, Mr. Murtezani successfully managed Sh.A. Mepso as General Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors. He also served as the General Director of the Railways of North Macedonia - Transport.

Currently, Orhan Murtezani serves as the Minister for European Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia.



Prof. Dr. Admir Mulaosmanović

Admir Mulaosmanović, born in Sarajevo on July 1, 1973, played an active role in the Bosnian War, initially joining the Territorial Defense and later the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He holds a degree in History from the University of Sarajevo and completed his postgraduate studies at the University of Zagreb, specializing in the political and economic history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. His doctoral research at the University of Zagreb focused on the political trajectory of Alija Izetbegović. He has held positions at the Institute for History, University of Sarajevo, and served as a lecturer and dean at the International University of Sarajevo from January 2020 until January 2023. He also served as an advisor to the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is an accomplished author, having published several books and numerous scholarly articles. Currently, he is an associate professor at the Department of Political Sciences and Public Administration at Balkesir University.



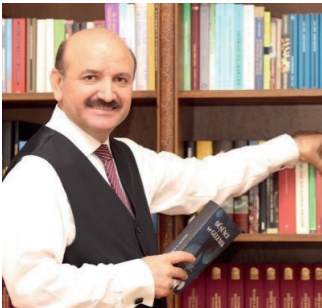
Prof. Dr. Rizvan Sulejmani

Prof. Dr. Rizvan Sulejmani served on the Board of Directors of Macedonian Telecom until 1996. In 2002, Sulejmani became Deputy Minister of Defense and later, from 2004 to 2006, Minister of Local Self-Government, implementing significant reforms. He also served two terms as a member of parliament. His professional career includes earning a master's degree in 2002 and a Ph.D. in 2006. He founded and directed the Institute for Political and Intercultural Studies and has been an associate professor at the State University of Tetovo and the International Balkan University since 2009. At Mother Teresa University in Skopje, he has served as Dean, Vice-Rector for Finance, and Vice-Rector for International Cooperation, becoming a Full Professor in 2021.



Prof. Dr. Bekim Nuhija

Prof. Dr. Bekim Nuhija is a professor of International Law and a Full Professor at the Faculty of Law, South East European University (SEEU) in North Macedonia. He earned his Doctor of Science in Law from Maastricht University, focusing on the expropriation and restoration of real property rights in the Federal Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Prior to this, he completed a Master's degree at the University of St Cyril and Methody, Skopje, with a thesis on humanitarian intervention. He is the author and co-author of several scientific publications on various aspects of international law.



Prof. Dr. Mehmet Bulut

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Bulut earned his doctoral degree from Utrecht University in the Netherlands in 2000, following studies in Ankara and Istanbul. Since 2001, he has held roles progressing from Assistant Professor to Professor by 2008. Dr. BULUT has served as Founding Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences, Vice President, and a member of the Turkish Higher Education Council (YÖK). He is fluent in Bulgarian, Arabic, Dutch, and English, and serves as General Editor of the ADAM AKADEMİ Social Sciences Journal. Appointed Rector of İstanbul Sabahattin Zaim University in November 2013, he is known for his impactful leadership in academic and administrative realms, nationally and internationally.



Dr. Besnik Emmini

Besnik Emmini, born in 1977 in Čellopek, Tetovo, completed his undergraduate studies in the History Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje in 2002. In 2009, he successfully defended his master's thesis titled "Albanians during the Eastern Crisis and Macedonia (1875-1881)." Subsequently, in 2015, he earned his doctoral degree by defending his dissertation on the subject of the "Albanian Movement (1878-1900)" within the Department of the History of the Balkan Peoples. Mr. Emmini embarked on his career as an educator, serving as a history teacher. Since 2008, he has held the position of a scholarly researcher at the Institute of Spiritual and Cultural Heritage of Albanians, located in Skopje. His professional contributions extend to active participation in both local and international seminars, conferences, presentations, and research initiatives. Furthermore, Mr. Emmini has undertaken the organization of workshops and training sessions tailored to history educators across diverse nations. Notably, he holds membership in the European Association of History Teachers (EUROCLIO) and serves as an ambassador for the organization. Besnik Emmini's scholarly pursuits predominantly revolve around the history of the Balkan peoples during the 19th and 20th centuries. He has played an integral role as a member of the editorial board for multiple esteemed publications, including "Albanological Studies," "Historical Research," and the "Albanian Historical Magazine," which he co-founded and currently leads as the Editor-in-Chief.

Researchers

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INTERNATIONAL
BALKAN SUMMER SCHOOL
BALKANS AND GLOBAL POLITICS

SCHEDULE

15 July 2024 - Monday, Skopje Campus of South East European University

- 14:00 - 14:30 **Opening Remarks**
- 14:30 - 15:00 **Keynote Speaker: Charting New Realities: The Balkans and Global Political Dynamics** - Orhan Murtezani
- 15:00 - 15:45 **Coctail**
- 15:45 - 17:00 **Lecture01: Global Trajectories: The World in Change** - Prof. Dr. Admir Mulaosmanovic
- 17:15 - 19:00 **Exploring Skopje's Heritage: The Old Bazaar Experience** - Dr.Besnik Emini

16 July 2024 - Tuesday, Balkan Studies Foundation Venue

10:00-11:15 **Lecture02: Reshaping Western Balkans: Great Powers and Regional Hegemons** - Prof. Dr. Admir Mulaosmanović

11:30-12:45 **Lecture03: Western Balkans States in the Times of Trouble** - Prof. Dr. Admir Mulaosmanović

14:00-15:30 **Workshop01: EU Policies and Balkans**

The Problems of Balkan Countries' Accession to the European Union - Aizhan Aitbaeva (Kyrgyzstan)

Regional Cooperation and Trade Liberalization in South Eastern Europe - Blerim Morina (Kosovo)

Balkan's role in European and Turkish policy - Shamsa Hassanpour (Iran)

16:00-17:30 **Workshop02: Balkans Stability and Relations**

The name crisis and resolution processes of the Republic of North Macedonia - Isa Kasum (North Macedonia)

Unravelling Instability: Identity Politics and Third-Actors' Influence in the Western Balkans - Elira Luli (Albania)

Unraveling the Knot: Exploring the Role of International Power Politics in the Serbo-Albanian Rivalry Over Kosovo - Georgios Antonopoulos (Greece)

17 July 2024 - Wednesday, Balkan Studies Foundation Venue

10:00 - 11:15 **Lecture04: The Challenges Faced by The Balkans During Globalization and the Breakdown of the World Order** - Prof. Dr. Rizvan Sulejmani

11:30 - 13:00 **Lecture05: Endogenous Risks for the Balkan States as Recurrent Consequences of the Breakdown of the Bipolar World** - Prof. Dr. Rizvan Sulejmani

14:00 - 18:00 Matka Trip / Skopje

18 July 2024 - Thursday, Balkan Studies Foundation Venue

- 10:00 -11:15 **Lecture06: The Role and Strength of Balkan Countries in Maintaining the World Peace and Order -**
Prof. Dr. Bekim Nuhija
- 11:30-13:00 **Lecture07: International Law and the Role of the Great Powers within Security Council of the United Nations -**
Prof. Dr. Bekim Nuhija
- 14:00-15:15 **Workshop03: Great Powers and Balkans**
China's Belt and Road Initiative - Arta Haxhixhemajli (Kosovo)
How Does Russian Influence Impact the Western Balkans' Security? - Harun Nuhanović (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
The Balkans as a test for the Militarization of Türkiye's foreign policy Hypothesis - Dr. Marian Karagyozov (Bulgaria)
- 15:30-17:00 **Workshop04: Identity, History and Balkans**
Navigating the Crossroads: Constitutional Reform and the Rule of Law in the Balkans on the Path to EU Integration -
Lorenca Bejko (Albania)
Austria-Hungary's Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Humor Magazines - Hakan Şendilmen (Türkiye)
The "Neutrality" of Austria during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 through Greek-language Newspapers of the Ottoman State - Maria Ntisi (Greece)
The role of foreign policy in soft power politics: a case study of Türkiye's Yunus Emre Institute Language Policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina-Yunus Dilber (Türkiye)
- 17:30-18:30 **Closing Keynote Speech: The Role and Strength of Balkan Countries in Maintaining the World Peace and Order -** Prof. Dr. Mehmet Bulut
- 18:30-19:00 **Closing Session**

19 July 2024 - Friday

- 09:00-21:00 Trip to Ohrid / North Macedonia

ABSTRACTS



CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

Arta HAXHIXHEMAJLI

University of Pavia, International Relations and World Politics

Abstract: The Western Balkans play a crucial role in China's Belt and Road Initiative by fostering infrastructural growth. China's Belt and Road Initiative is reaching its goal to expand its influence. The debt-trap diplomacy has become a significant challenge for countries being part of the initiative. It remains a new tool of China connected to the Belt and Road Initiative. In another aspect, Montenegro is a small country in the Western Balkans and became the first country to be a victim of debt-trap diplomacy. Chinese investments were present in the country.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, Western Balkans, Debt-trap diplomacy, Chinese investments



THE PROBLEMS OF THE BALKAN COUNTRIES' ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Aizhan AITBAEVA

PhD Student, Hacettepe University, Political Sciences and Public Administration

Abstract: The article deals with a set of problems that make it possible to place the Balkans in the context of pan-European development, primarily the so-called unlimited expansion of the European Union, the entry into which is the goal of the post-socialist countries of the Balkan region/ South-Eastern Europe. Currently, Bulgaria, Romania, as well as the post-Yugoslav states of Slovenia and Croatia have become full members of the EU. Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania are still in different stages of the process of joining the European Union. Accession to the EU is the logical conclusion of the social, political, economic and legal transformation of the Balkan countries, in which both they and the EU as a whole and its individual states are interested in for reasons of geopolitics and geoeconomics. However, the accession to Europe (or return to Europe) of the Balkan states, whose history is associated with an authoritarian socialist past, includes not only the reform of the economic and political systems, but also a change in value orientations. Nevertheless, while in the founding countries of the EU a Western European corporate civic identity is being formed, in the countries of the former Eastern Europe and the Balkan region, the basis of public consciousness is still largely ethnic identity.

Keywords: EU, Southeast Europe, Balkans, Identity, Geopolitics, Geo-economics, Foreign Politics



REGIONAL COOPERATION AND TRADE LIBERALIZATION IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE WESTERN BALKANS ON THE PATH TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Blerim MORINA

PhD Student, University of Prishtina, Economic Development and EU Integration

Abstract: Regional Cooperation and Trade Liberalization in South Eastern Europe - Benefits and Challenges of Western Balkans in way of European Integration - Abstract: Regional cooperation and trade liberalization is considered the most important factor of a sustainable economic growth which should contribute to the mutual trade among SEE countries, growth of the foreign direct investments, further production specialization and export-import relation structure change. Countries of the region have accepted liberalization as one of the conditions of the Stabilization and Association Process, hoping, each of them individually, in that way they would improve proper position. Creating a free trade area will contribute to a further increase of intra-regional trade flows, but it shouldn't be expected that the relative importance of mutual exchange will prevail the importance which EU has for the WB countries. European integration of West Balkans countries has two main dimensions: (i) bilateral relation of European Union (EU) and (ii) their regional integration. European integration is almost universally recognized as the key strategy for achieving the twin goals of peace and prosperity in the Western Balkans. European policy-makers trust that greater European involvement in the Western Balkans can have positive and long-lasting effects on the management of ethno-political conflict. The European Commission identified the prospect of EU membership as 'the ultimate conflict prevention strategy' and committed itself to maintain and increase its proactive presence in the region. The academic near-consensus is that the Western Balkans' greater involvement in European institutions is the necessary condition for stabilization. Paper is divided into five sections. After the introduction, the trade liberalization process in the SEE region is explained in the second part (section 2). The third section analyses actual intraregional trade flows and SEE countries trade relations with the EU (section 3). Some issues raised in recent debates on Western Balkans in way of European Integration also discussed (section 4). The main is given at the end (section 5).

Keywords: Trade liberalization, Free trade area, Intra-regional trade, South East Europe, Western Balkans, European Integration, etc. JEL: F02, F16, F42, etc.



UNRAVELLING INSTABILITY: IDENTITY POLITICS AND THIRD- ACTOR INFLUENCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Elira LULI

Dr., Luarasi University, Public law

Abstract: In today's competitive and polarized world, political warfare has emerged as a significant expression of international relations. It operates outside the context of traditional war and encompasses various strategies linked to a certain grey zone, hybrid warfare, new generation warfare, politicization, and mediatization of political/ nationalistic/ ethnic issues to divert attention from real political issues - but still poses a risk of escalation. This abstract aims to scrutinize the complexity of identity politics within the leadership of certain countries and its implications for instability and conflict escalation in the Balkans, with a specific focus on how this politics amplifies with the interference of third actors. Political warfare, as observed in these cases, exhibits certain key characteristics: it utilizes all elements of national power, heavily relies on unattributed forces and means, remains below the legal threshold of open armed conflict, extends traditional conflict, achieves objectives at lower costs, and exploits shared ethnic or religious bonds and other internal issues. Disinformation campaigns, a crucial component of political warfare, are employed to pursue national objectives. These campaigns can have both short-term goals, such as influencing election outcomes, and long-term objectives, such as undermining trust in the European Union. Some Balkan countries have a well-known history of identity politics, where personal interest is camouflaged through populist and power-driven approaches, perfected and shaped by external actors with concrete malign influences in the region. The way domestic politics allows external influences and becomes the object of scenarios that cross state borders involves strategies such as weakening democratic institutions, curtailing freedom of expression and reaction, polarizing society, eroding checks and balances, and creating economic vulnerabilities. This study scrutinizes the background of how identity politics is constructed to produce instability and uncertainty in the Balkans, emphasizing the means and instruments used as potent weapons in contemporary warfare. By examining some cases, this research aims to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the challenges posed by identity politics and their consequences in the WB region.

Keywords: Identity politics, Western Balkan, Instability, Uncertainty, Malign Influences



UNRAVELING THE KNOT: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL POWER POLITICS IN THE SERBO-ALBANIAN RIVALRY OVER KOSOVO

Georgios ANTONOPOULOS

Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, International, European and Regional Studies

Abstract: The unresolved Serbo-Albanian rivalry over Kosovo stands out as a central issue in the present-day Balkans, often fueling significant tensions. Apart from the challenge presented by the recognition of Kosovo, the issue of the future of the Serb-majority municipalities within Kosovo is particularly important. As a matter of fact, the vast majority of the recent tensions between Belgrade and Pristina have arisen because of these Serb enclaves, which enjoy the support of the former and strongly resist the latter's assimilation policies. Taking the above into account, this paper conducts a comparative analysis of the Serbian and Kosovar parallel structures in Kosovo, spanning the periods from 1999 to the present and from 1992 to 1999 respectively. Drawing upon historical and empirical data, it examines the evolution, functions and impact of these parallel structures within the context of Kosovo's complex political landscape. The Serbian parallel system in Kosovo emerged following Serbia's defeat in the war and subsequent takeover of the region by Kosovars. These institutions aimed to strengthen Serb control and resist Kosovo's assimilation practices, notably in Serb-majority areas in northern Kosovo around the city of Mitrovica. Examining their objectives, structure and evolution, the paper evaluates their role in preserving Serbian identity and promoting Serbian interests amidst ongoing tensions. In contrast, the Kosovar parallel system developed during escalating tensions and repression under Serbian rule. These parallel structures served as alternative institutions aimed at establishing governance, providing services and preserving Kosovar identity. On the same wavelength, by analyzing their objectives and structure, the paper examines their significance in Kosovo's path towards independence. Through a comparative lens, this paper illustrates the similarities and differences between the Serbian and Kosovar parallel institutions, highlighting their respective roles in promoting their interests, preserving their identity and standing up to repression. Thus, it demonstrates the enduring impact of the past conflict and current division in post-war Kosovo, while also shedding light on a different aspect of the complex dynamics of the Serbo-Albanian rivalry and the difficulties the normalization of relations in the region faces.

Keywords: Serbo-Albanian rivalry, Kosovo, Parallel structures, Serbian identity, Political dynamics



AUSTRIA-HUNGARY'S ANNEXATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN HUMOROUS MAGAZINES

Hakan ŞENDİLMEN

PhD Student, Dokuz Eylül University, History

Abstract: With the rapid and organized progress of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan geography in the mid-15th century, it first dominated Bosnia and then the geography of Herzegovina. The region, which is a strategic location for the south of Central Europe and one of the key points in terms of the Adriatic, has become one of the central points of due to influence between the Habsburg dynasty and the Ottoman Empire over time. Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has important underground resources in addition to its geographical location, has increased its importance with the mercantilist policies as a result of the new age colonization. For such reasons, in the 19th century, conflicts and reformist demands arose between Russia with its Pan-Slavist policy, Austria-Hungary due to its geographical location, and the Ottoman Empire, which wanted to protect its rights over the region with its religious and cultural ties dating back nearly four hundred years. One of the important crises in this network of relations in which many actors were influential was the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in late 1908. After the declaration of the Second Constitutional Era, the peaceful and ideal plans for a solution in the Balkans, which were expected for the Ottoman Empire, were postponed for a while due to Türkiye this crisis, and an active policy was tried to be followed against annexation in both domestic and foreign politics. İttihat ve Terakki also used the press in order to be strong in its planned politics. In this context, it is planned to establish the public and state perspectives on a common ground. In our study, domestic and international magazines, especially Karagöz and Kalem magazines, which were the important humor magazines of the period, were scanned and how the press commented on the annexation was examined. Austria-Hungary's Balkan influence conflicts with Russia, and the ineffectiveness of the Ottoman government in the process are the main drawing subjects in the magazines. With these drawings, political history was approached and analyzed from a different perspective.

Keywords: Annexation, Balkan conflicts, Press and media, Karagöz and Kalem magazines



HOW DOES RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IMPACT THE WESTERN BALKANS' SECURITY

Harun NUHANOVIĆ

University of Sarajevo, International Relations and Diplomacy

Abstract: Since 2013, Russian influence in the Western Balkan has been coming to the fore. In the same year, Russia published a strategic document, „Foreign Policy Concepts, “marking the Balkan region as strategically important. Besides traditional ties with the Orthodox population in the Western Balkans, the document marked the Balkans as a region of strategic importance to Russia in distributing gas and oil to European countries. Since then, Russia has piled up its engagement in the Western Balkan region as a spoiler. Russian engagement in the region was primarily to thwart countries from the EU and NATO accession. It leads to threatening security as well as democracy in the region. Russian oligarchs play an important role in undermining regional security. Ivan Savvidis thwarted the Prespa Agreement between Greece and Macedonia. By implementing the agreement, Macedonia was granted candidate status by the EU. On the other side, Russia had tried a coup d'etat in Montenegro before NATO accession. Further, Russia equipped Serbia and the Bosnian entity Republika Srpska (RS) with weapons, making a balance in favor of the Serbs. Also, Russian personnel in the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) play in favor of Serbia, implementing its own agenda and collusion with the West in the region. In the economic sphere, Russian oligarchs purchased oil refineries, making the region dependent on Russian gas and oil. The staunchest Putin's allies got favorable oil and gas prices, but the question is the background of favorable prices for them. Recently, Russian media and NGOs have penetrated the Western Balkans. Russian presence was entrenched by establishing affiliations with the Cossack Army and Night Wolves in the region. They organize events and gatherings praising Putin and his politics. Also, Night Wolves drew attention in 2018 when they made a Western Balkans tour visiting important Orthodox places. In the media field, the Russian news state agency Sputnik opened its office in Serbia, transferring news across the region. Pro-Russian media in the region share news that contributes to the sense of insecurity and negatively depicts Euro-Atlantic democratic reforms.

Keywords: Russian influence, Western Balkans, Geopolitics, Security threats



THE NAME CRISIS AND THE RESOLUTION PROCESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to discuss the name crisis and resolution processes of the Republic of North Macedonia (formerly the Republic of Macedonia), which includes political, cultural and identity elements, in the historical framework. The study continues in the direction of the formation history of North Macedonia and the name crisis with the Republic of Greece. The first part covers the international agreements of the Republic of North Macedonia since independence. The second part covers the theoretical framework of identities and the third part covers the bilateral temporary agreement signed in New York and its obstacles, its implementation, the decisions of the International Court of Justice and how to establish peace through reconciliation due to Macedonian internal movements. In short, it analyzes the resolution process of the twenty-seven-year crisis and the Prespa Agreement.

Keywords: Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Greece, Name crisis, International Agreements, International Court of Justice, Prespa Agreement.



NAVIGATING THE CROSSROADS: CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE BALKANS ON THE PATH TO EU INTEGRATION

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Abstract: The Balkans, a region with a long and complicated history and a complicated social and political climate, is at a turning point on the road to EU membership. Constitutional reforms and the rule of law strengthening are the hallmarks of this critical phase, as they are essential conditions for EU accession. Within the framework of the Balkans' EU integration process, this paper seeks to delve into the complex interplay between constitutional reforms and the rule of law. Our first step will be to take a look at the constitutions of the different Balkan countries as they stand right now and see what needs fixing so they can meet EU requirements. Examining democratic rule, safeguarding human rights, and dividing powers are all part of this. We will focus on the difficulties experienced by post-conflict societies in the area, where reconciliation and state-building are often intertwined with constitutional reforms. Second, the article will examine the rule of law, an essential principle of the European Union, and how it has been applied in the context of the Balkans. The reforms are being implemented to address concerns like judicial independence, corruption, and transparency. We will also examine how these reforms are affecting the region's stability and democratization as a whole. In addition, the article will delve into the ways in which the European Union (EU) has guided and assisted these reforms via programs like the Copenhagen Criteria, pre-accession aid, and the Stabilization and Association Process. The intricate conditionality policy of the European Union (EU), its merits and shortcomings, will be examined in detail. Taking into account the interaction between constitutional reform and the rule of law, the article will conclude by offering insights into the future prospects of the Balkans' EU integration process. It will contend that the road to EU membership is not without its obstacles, but that it also offers the Balkan states a once in a lifetime chance to strengthen their democratic institutions and legal frameworks, which will help bring stability and prosperity to the region.

Keywords: Balkans, EU integration, Constitutional reform, Rule of law, Democratic institutions



THE ‘NEUTRALITY’ OF AUSTRIA DURING THE OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN WAR OF 1877-1878 AS SEEN THROUGH GREEK-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS OF THE OTTOMAN STATE

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Abstract: The aim in this paper will be to study Austria’s stance of “neutrality” during the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878. The research will be based mainly on seven Greek-language newspapers, Anatoli (Ανατολή), Anatoliko Astir (Ανατολικός Αστήρ), Byzantis (Βυζάντις), Thrace (Θράκη), Metarthymisis (Μεταρθυμισίς) and Neologos (Νεολόγος) which were published in Istanbul and Nea Smyrni (Νέα Σμύρνη) which was published in Smyrna during the Ottoman period. The specific newspapers are digitized in the Digital Library of the Hellenic Parliament. At the same time, information from documents found in the Archive of “T.R. Presidential State Archives Directorate (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı)” and related bibliography will be combined. Russia declared war on Ottoman State on April 24, 1877. Russia’s entry into the war brought the Balkan crisis to its most acute phase and gave it an international character. Already earlier, Russian diplomacy, facing the possibility of war with Ottoman State, had concluded an agreement with Austria to neutralize a possible Austrian reaction to Russia’s attempt to invade the Balkans (Reichstadt Agreement 1876 and Budapest Military Convention 1877). It ensured Austria’s benevolent neutrality in the event of a future war between Russia and Türkiye. In return, Russia agreed that Austria would occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, in case of defeat of the Ottomans. Thus, it was leaving the western Balkans to Austria and Austrian politics while shifting the center of its Balkan interests to Bulgaria, which lay on the road to İstanbul. The contribution of this paper to a well-known topic and its greatest interest will be precisely the depiction of Austria’s “neutrality” through the eyes of the Greek-speaking - Greek press that was published within the Ottoman State, while it was being fought by Russia-Great Powers and the Balkan peoples whom the Great Powers used.

Keywords: Austria’s neutrality, Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878, Greek-language newspapers, Balkan crisis, Ottoman diplomacy



THE BALKANS AS A TEST CASE FOR THE MILITARIZATION OF TÜRKIYE'S FOREIGN POLICY: A HYPOTHESIS

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Abstract: The Balkans has always had important strategic significance for Türkiye. The countries in the region and Türkiye share deep historical, political, and cultural ties. The objectives of this article are several: first, to offer a chronologisation of the Turkish foreign policy towards the Balkans during the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP in Turkish) since 2002. The first period of the AKP rule is characterized by intensified ties with most Balkan countries under the slogan “Zero problems with neighbors”. After 2009, relations between Türkiye and Serbia also started to improve, and in this way, no blank spots for the Turkish foreign policy remained on the map of the Balkans. Secondly, another Bulgaria aim of the text is to explore whether features of the Turkish foreign policy in other regions are also applicable to the Balkans. While most authors note an increased militarization of the Turkish foreign policy in the period 2016 – 2020, especially in the Middle East, after extensive review of the foreign policy instruments, used by Türkiye, the article demonstrates that the “soft power” remain the key characteristic of Türkiye’s foreign policy vis-à-vis the Balkans. Thus, it can be argued that the Balkans are a case study, which shows that the hypothesis of the militarisation of the Turkish foreign policy is not universally applicable. The use of the hard power in the Middle East by Türkiye is to counter a direct threat to its national security, but at the same time the lack of such threats, emanating from the Balkans, allowed peaceful and productive cooperation between Türkiye and the regional countries to continue. In conclusion, the text argues that in the Balkans Türkiye is using multidimensional strategy, thus compensating its relative weakness in some spheres, e.g. economy and investments. In the last decades for most of the Balkan countries Türkiye moved from a distant state to one of their most important partners.

Keywords: Turkish foreign policy, Balkans, Soft power, Multidimensional strategy



BALKANS' ROLE IN EUROPEAN AND TURKISH POLICY

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Abstract: The Balkans in general is a priority for Türkiye not only from a political, economic and geographical point of view, but also because of the historical, cultural and human ties with this region; Also, in recent years, the Balkan region has become an attractive market for Turkish investors with qualified labor force, suitable investment environment and tax and financial incentives. The fact is that the Balkan region, in addition to being a strategic political region, is also considered an important passage for world powers economically. Meanwhile, America, Russia, China and Türkiye are trying to use this situation to develop their influence in the Balkans. For economic, strategic and political reasons, this region is considered one of the key regions in world politics, and because of its importance for the great powers, it is like the powder store of Europe and despite the expansion of trade exchanges and especially the role of the European Union in establishing stability in the Balkans. The fields of ethnic conflicts in this region are still smooth and world powers use this situation to their advantage.

Keywords: Strategic region, Great powers, Ethnic conflicts, European Union, Investment opportunities, Geopolitics



THE ROLE OF FOREIGN POLICY IN SOFT POWER POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF TÜRKİYE'S YUNUS EMRE INSTITUTE LANGUAGE POLICIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: Türkiye, one of the major historical powers in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been making efforts to improve political, cultural, and economic relations with BiH. To strengthen its ties with the country, Türkiye has utilized various institutions and tools for foreign policy, such as official government institutions, media outlets, educational institutions, and economic investments that sparked the interest of the younger generation in learning the Turkish language in BiH. This interest is motivated by various factors, such as the aspiration to secure employment in Turkish companies, to study in Türkiye, or simply to explore Turkish culture. The Yunus Emre Institute opened its first center in Sarajevo, aims to foster cultural exchange and a deeper understanding of Türkiye and its people across different cultures. The Institute introduced Turkish as a selective foreign language in the school curriculum of BiH and involved in several language-related projects, which support over 8,000 primary and secondary school students in more than 165 schools. In this regard, I propose using this summer school as a platform to present my research on Türkiye's language policies in BiH. My ongoing PhD research deals with a related topic, specifically exploring the role of foreign language studies as an executive instrument of soft power politics in international relations. For the case study, I administered questionnaires to 250 Turkish learners in secondary schools to gather information about their language learning motivations and opinions on the language policies implemented by Türkiye and conducted interviews with over 40 Turkish teachers in secondary schools and policymakers of Türkiye. My research questions include: 1. What is the significance of Türkiye's goal to promote and teach Turkish culture abroad through the Institute in relation to its foreign policies? 2. What motivates Turkish learners in secondary schools in BiH?

3. What impact do Türkiye's economic investments in BiH, studying opportunities in Türkiye, relationships with the Bosnian Diaspora in Türkiye, and cultural affinity towards Turkish culture have on the acquisition of Turkish language skills?

Keywords: Yunus Emre Institute, Turkish language policies, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cultural exchange, Educational diplomacy



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