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**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IS A PART
OF THE EUROPEAN SPHERE OF CIVILIZATION**

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1. Introduction

The idea of European integrations, as it is represented in public, is rather young. One could say that this idea is a specific result of the traumas caused by World War II. Namely, the wish to unite Europe, at least when it comes to promoting the necessity of implementing it, has marked the period after World War II.

The first organizations and even more fervent campaigns that promote the idea of European integrations have come to exist only at the end of the 40s of the 20th century¹. At the Congress of Europe², they united very fast into the so-called European Movement, an organization that even today coordinates the work of organizations that promote the unification of Europe.

The following year, the Statute of the Council of Europe was adopted, and its role was to be the main carrier of European integrations in culture, science, promotion of human rights and democracy, as well as being the carrier of higher-level integrations among European countries³.

¹ For instance, The Brussels Pact, that was signed in March 1948 between Great Britain, France and the Benelux countries for the European defence, was later re-named into the West-European Union.

² Soon after the European movement was founded at this Congress, some other organizations and institutions with a similar mission were founded, such as: The Council of Europe, The European Monetary Fund, European Association of Cultural Researches, The College of Europe in Brugges.

³ The Council of Europe adopted The Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, founded The Court and Commission of Human Rights, adopted the agreement on social insurance - The European Social Charter, The European Cultural Convention, etc.

European Economic Community- EEC and *European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM)*⁴ were established during the second half of the 50s.

The process of setting up the structure of common institutions continued during the 60s as well. First, a contract was signed about establishing a free trade association, *European Free Trade Association - EFTA*, and the first common policy of EEC, *Common Agricultural Policy – CAP*, was introduced, as well as the *Taxation and Customs Union*, etc. The continuity in the development of the idea, even on an ample basis, was ensured during the 70s of the 20th century as well. On the one hand, the union increased significantly. Denmark, Ireland, Great Britain got the membership. On the other hand, the continuity in establishing common institutions was ensured.

For instance, in the second half of this decade, *European Monetary System* was established with the aim of developing systems of fixed currency values with long-term monetary stability and capital mobility. A similar type of continuity is found in the eighth decade of the 20th century. Greece, and later Spain and Portugal⁵, got the European Union membership.

The Single European Act (February, 1986), with the aim of establishing European Union as a super-national political and economic integration, encourages political co-operation with the aim of creating common foreign politics, replacing unanimous with majority vote, and, as its final goal-creating a unique market.

The Treaty on European Union from the first half of the 90s⁶ also introduces significant novelties to the process of European integrations, especially to the development of the monetary union, strengthening the institutional structure of the Union, and defining the common foreign and security politics.

However, *The Treaty on European Union* made further integration process possible. Namely, soon after this treaty, another agreement on creating European economic area (*European Economic Area - EEA*) was signed

⁴ Contracts about their foundation were signed on March 25th 1957 in Rome, and were enforced on February 1st 1958.

⁵ Greece got the EU membership in February 1981, Spain and Portugal in January 1986.

⁶ The Contract was signed on February 7th 1992, and was enforced on November 1st 1993.

and it united the markets of the EU and EFTA members at the time, which created the largest single market in the world⁷. By the end of the 90s, a new European currency is introduced- the Euro.

All these acts brought in new members of the Union. In mid-90s, namely, on February 1st, 1995, Austria, Finland, and Sweden entered the Union. In mid-2004 (May 1st 1995), another ten European countries were accepted into the Union.⁸ In this way, it was definitely made known that the European Union is an all-Europe project, and how the process of integration is not intending to stop before it has encompassed all the area of the old continent.

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Integrations – Estimation of the Achieved

Objectively speaking, B&H integration into the community of European nations is one of its top-priority goals. However, reaching it is not to be taken for granted. On the contrary. In order to achieve it, it is necessary to fulfil minimum conditions that this Union requires as *conditio sine qua non* to all its potential members. The potential members are, actually, asked to achieve the standards of the Union in all the significant segments of state and society.

Therefore, it is not strange that the history of B&H ambition to join the community of European nations dates back to its first days as a sovereign republic. However, its history becomes more interesting only in the second half of the 90s of the 20th century.

The Stabilisation and Association Process – SAP, that dates back from May 1999, offers to Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to the other ex-Yugoslav countries anyway, an evident opportunity to be integrated into the structures of the European union. Later, the “*Road Map*” from March 2000, defines eighteen key pre-conditions that B&H had to fulfil, so that the *Feasibility Study* could be made in order to start negotiations about Stabilization and Association.

⁷ The new single market included nineteen countries and even 380 million people.

⁸ Poland, Cyprus, Slovenia, Malta, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Hungary.

The European Commission, by the end of 2002, notified B&H that the guidelines defined in the “*Road Map*” have been fulfilled to a great degree. In accordance with that, by the end of 2003, the EC adopted the proposition Report on the readiness of B&H for commencing the negotiations with the European Union about *The Stabilization and Association Process*. In the Report, however, it is given in the footnotes, that the pre-conditions for commencing the negotiations hadn’t been fulfilled. Sixteen pre-conditions of top-priority were to be fulfilled before negotiations would be possible to commence.

The Stabilization and Association Process, however, due to not fulfilling the conditions from the *Feasibility Study* on the part of local authorities, was signed only by the end of 2005. In this way, of course, B&H made a new step in coming closer to the European processes of integration.

The Agreement, namely, ensured B&H with certain privileges it did not have before. What has been ensured is the development of its credibility when it comes to the international sphere, the institutions of the EU and other international organizations, a possibility to establish the area of free trade, the country became more appealing to foreign investors, basic requirements for commencing negotiations on liberalisation of the visa regime have been ensured, as well as the conditions for the opportunity of using new pre-membership funds of the European Union, etc.

However, if we are to judge by the current situation, Bosnia and Herzegovina is relatively far from the European standards and the probability to reach them in the near future is low, which can also be seen from the Report of the European Commission about the progress of B&H in 2005. Although there is a positive shift, there is a warning to pay attention to specific critical spots in the process of B&H integration to the EU, such as⁹:

- There is still no significant progress in terms of free movement or recognizing professional qualifications and diplomas
- There is little progress in terms of movement of workers
- No progress in the area of free movement of capital
- Neither strategic nor political guidelines have been prepared for the area of industry, small and mid-size companies

⁹ See: the document of the Commission of Europe, November 9th 2005, “Bosnia and Herzegovina 2005 Progress Report”

- There is a significant delay in the area of restructuring and privatisation
- There is still the logic of oligopoly in the field of telecommunications
- The police reform has not been completed
- Organized crime continues to threaten stability, security and socio-economic development
- There is no complete co-operation with the Hague Tribunal
- The legal frame is insufficient, as well as the actual protection of minorities, etc.

In other words, European standards do not set themselves. It is the other way round. In order to become members of the Union, new candidates are required to achieve EU standards in all the significant segments of state and society, as well as in all segments of life and work.

However, judged by the 2005 Report, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still far from those standards. Besides that, namely, it is unlikely that in the near future there can be any progress in achieving the standards due to the inner oppressive atmosphere of B&H at the moment. Therefore, if we observe the strategy of the European Union, when it comes to B&H integration, it is possible to expect one of the two scenarios:

- That there will be no exception made in case of B&H, and that, as it is the case with all the other European countries, it will be persevered in fulfilling the required pre-conditions for entering EU. Together with the inner political and system blockades that burden this country, this concept might delay the process of integration to the next ten years or so, especially when it comes to the dynamics so far.
- That there will be a conscious exception made in case of B&H when it comes to the criteria and fulfilling the pre-conditions asked from all the others. This could be done due to the dynamics of the European integrations process, especially the one related South-East Europe. Some details point to the fact that this scenario should not be excluded. In fact, it is, for example, quite clear that Europe tends to speed up the negotiation process with the Republic of Croatia.

Therefore, it is doubtless that this has been the case of Macedonia as well. In case the pressure on Serbia and Montenegro related to full co-operation with the Hague Tribunal results in desired political changes,

which makes this possibility even more realistic after Milošević's death, it is not excluded that, in the near future, the logic of speeding up the process of negotiation be applied to this country as well.

If this scenario, which is not unfounded, finally comes to life, B&H, as it is today, could find itself in a specific European "circle" of the European southeast. In that case, of course, one should not exclude the scenario of it being sucked out of the usual EU criteria, in order for the system of European standards be imposed in a new European milieu.

3. Being a part of the European sphere of civilization as a B&H argument

In everyday communication and in different situations, the question that often arises is related to the future of B&H in relation to European processes of integration. For instance, can we imagine Bosnia and Herzegovina in the large frame of European nations?

Again, in case we get a positive answer, how soon is the entrance possible to happen? How well-founded are the frequent predictions that it is realistic to expect in the next ten years or so?

The question of when it is possible to catch the European train is problematic indeed. Based on the current situation, the entrance to EU in the next few years does not seem realistic. After all, this claim is suggested in the European Commission Report about the progress B&H achieved in 2005. However, this estimation is also imposed by other known details about the B&H reality. Let us mention some of them:

- Ethnic division, created by the last war, is still today one of the crucial guidelines of the B&H society. To be more precise, its intensity is such that it is not a big mistake to perceive the B&H society as composed of three mono-ethnic societies, rather than having an integral structure.
- Political philosophies that support this kind of division are still strong. According to the majority, this phenomenon still has, relatively speaking, the greatest influence on the citizens. Unless greater changes related to this issue happen, it is realistic to assume that these forces could, in the near future, give shape to the overall social and development processes in B&H.

- The ethnic divisions and the dominance of ethnic political philosophies, that managed to remain viable even after the fire ceased, are the reason that the actual return of the citizens to their pre-war homes is, objectively speaking, below the level that can be considered acceptable. Namely, the data about the return we operate¹⁰ with tend to be overestimated. The real-life data, in our view, give them the right to be so.
- In other words, a relatively insignificant number of returns has been statistically realised in order to own the pre-war possessions so as to be able to sell them. The return, in a significant number of cases, to be more precise, although recorded in statistics, actually never happened. Unless something significant happens which would destimulate the existence of the ethnic political philosophies, the war-imposed presence of the three mono-ethnic entities/societies could become a part of B&H future. In that case, it is again obvious the integration to the European processed could be significantly delayed since it would bring a series of other processes marked negatively, the ones that are incompatible with the European system of values. However, this does not mean that the European future of the B&H state and society is questionable. On the contrary. What is questionable is the dynamics of the process, the speed by which the train of European integrations will be caught. Put in abstract terms, the integration, in our view, cannot be prevented at all. There are many reasons for that. We believe that one of them is of a priceless value. Namely, it is a fact that B&H in many ways belongs to the European sphere of civilization.

Above all, the B&H history is an inevitable composing part of the European history and its march trough history, with its ups and downs, is a part of European march trough history as well. By this we, of course, refer to the historical phases of B&H development that it, in a certain way, shared with the other parts of Europe. Some of the historical processes, such as the process of social and civil developments, the process of ethnic constitution, the process of defining the role of religion, contribute to the above-given claim. Then, there are also the characteristics of a cultural identity that is, in its broadest sense, rather European. Today, B&H is under

¹⁰ UNCHCR data are among them. For more details see: www.unhcr.ba

the pressure of ethno-national doctrines that attempt to deny the existence of any kind of B&H cultural identity. Instead of that, national identities are singled out as the only original and the only existing ones. However, on both the individual and the collective level, the reality is significantly different. We cannot escape this view even if we focus on average B&H citizens. Namely, any serious characteristics analysis would show that their common traits, regardless of their national belongingness, are relatively more pronounced than the specific characteristics that spring from their ethnic or religious group. Today, these common traits are attempted to be completely ignored, denied, or marked as a result of ideological constructs, rather than expressions of reality. However, when it comes to an average citizen, a part of that identity transcends B&H, and shares the traits with a wider regional, even European sphere. It is seen more clearly when it comes to famous names of the B&H culture, literature and art. A.B. Šimić, Andrić, Selimović, and many others from different spheres of cultural expression, transcended not only the national. As a matter of fact, such people transcended the borders of both the national and the regional and are an inevitable part of the European cultural identity. Owing to them, a part of that identity is B&H as a whole.

The set of values that shapes the B&H space, in its traits, is rather European. There is a myriad of details to support this claim. In its most significant moral values, for example, B&H is an inevitable part of the European sphere of civilization. However, this judgement can be given for all the other parts that compose a set of values in the broadest sense.

4. Instead of conclusion

The process of European integrations is a process that will significantly define the future of Europe as well. It is difficult to assume that it, together with all the related issues present in France and some other countries, could be stopped before it has reached the final destinations of the European geographical frame. In this view, it is logical and natural that the wave of European integrations will reach Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. It is in the focus of the European interest sphere even today. What could be in question is the speed of the B&H process of integration.

The integration depends less on the European will, and more on the processes that will become dominant in B&H itself, the ones turned to

Europe, or the ones still significantly present in this country and more turned to the centuries past, rather than to the atmosphere of the third millennium. In abstract terms, the speed of B&H integration into the community of European nations and “europeising” the B&H territory is not something that would cause a culture shock. In fact, Bosnia and Herzegovina and its history, culture, set of values, and all the traits of the individual and collective identity belongs to the European sphere of civilization.

In other words, Bosnia and Herzegovina is an organic part of the European community. A delay in formally accepting it as a part of Europe can, therefore, cause cracks that would later transform into channels for the flow of non-European values into the B&H social tissue. Is Europe ready to allow this process to happen in its very bosom? A positive answer to a question formulated in this way seems rather unconvincing.

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