

IEŚ

3/2021

POLICY
PAPERS

Agata Domachowska, Anna Jagiełło-Szostak,
Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska,
Konrad Pawłowski, Magdalena Rekść, Jacek Wojnicki

Serbia Twenty Years After the Fall of Slobodan Milošević: Success, Evolution, or Continuation?



Publishing series IEŚ Policy Papers

Number 3/2021

Series editors Beata Surmacz and Tomasz Stępniewski



Agata Domachowska, Anna Jagiełło-Szostak,
Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska,
Konrad Pawłowski, Magdalena Rekść, Jacek Wojnicki

Serbia Twenty Years After the Fall of Slobodan Milošević: Success, Evolution, or Continuation?

Reviewer

Dr Paulina Szelaġ, The East European State Higher School in Przemyśl

Copyright Instytut Europy Środkowej | Institute of Central Europe

ISBN 978-83-66413-50-4

Published and edited

Instytut Europy Środkowej | Institute of Central Europe

ul. Niecała 5

20-080 Lublin

www.ies.lublin.pl

Cover design and typesetting www.targonski.pl

Cover photo © kirill_makarov | shutterstock.com

Print www.drukarniaakapit.pl



Table of contents

Introduction	7
Résumé	13
Agata Domachowska	
A landmark event? Disappointment? Lost hope?	
Memories of October 5, 2000 in Serbia	
twenty years later	17
Jacek Wojnicki	
The evolution of the social and political situation	
in the Republic of Serbia after 2000	35
Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska	
Between European integration and dictatorship	
– the policy of the Republic of Serbia	
(at the time of the pandemic) in 2020	49
Anna Jagiełło-Szostak	
The foreign policy of Serbia under Aleksandar Vučić	
presidency (2017-2020). Hauling the rope	
between powers	73

Magdalena Rekść	
Serbia and the third wave of the migration crisis	99
Konrad Pawłowski	
The question of the 'unfinished past': the problem of Kosovo in Serbia's policy after Milošević	115
Bibliography	131
About the Authors	151

The policy paper covers the factual situation as of October 2020

Introduction

On September 24, 2000, the elections for the Parliament of Yugoslavia and local governments, as well as an early election for the office of the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, were held. These elections represented a political clash between the incumbent President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević, and the candidate of the united democratic opposition, Dr. Vojislav Koštunica. On September 28, the Federal Electoral Commission announced that none of the candidates had won a simple majority (according to figures provided by the commission, Milošević won 38.6% of the vote, while Koštunica won 48.9%). The commission also announced that the second round of voting would be held on October 8.¹

The decision to have a second ballot outraged the Serbian public, who were convinced that Koštunica had won at

¹ Centar za slobodne izbore i demokratiju (CeSID), *Oko izbora 4: Izveštaj sa parlamentarnih i predsedničkih izbora u SRJ i pokrajinskih izbora u Vojvodini (septembar-oktobar 2000)*, Beograd 2000, pp. 9-18, 59-66, <http://www.cesid.rs/pdfovi/OKO%20IZBORA%204.pdf> [21.03.2021].

the first round. It subsequently led to social mobilization and mass protests, organized and/or coordinated by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (*Demokratska opozicija Srbije*, DOS).²

On October 5, 2000, about 1 million citizens protested in Belgrade against the falsified results of the presidential elections and the Milošević regime. Around 3 p.m., in the atmosphere of democratic revolution and general chaos paired with a passive attitude of police and military, demonstrators broke into the building of the Serbian Parliament. On that day, one of the protesters, engineering vehicle operator Ljubisav Đokić, drove his bulldozer through a police cordon and reached the entrance door of the Radio Television Serbia (RTS) building.³

The mass demonstrations in Belgrade represented the culmination of dissatisfaction that had grown over the years in Serbian society. But they were also much more. The protests symbolically and effectively ended the authoritarian and anti-democratic regime of President Milošević, a politician who dominated the Serbian political scene for 13 years, and his rule led to subsequent wars, a deep economic crisis, and international isolation of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The Belgrade protests were undoubtedly one of the most important events in the modern history of Serbia. They are usually referred to variously as the October 5th Revolution, the

² Ibidem; A. LeBor, *Milosevic. A Biography*, London 2003, pp. 306-308; D. Bujosevic, I. Radovanovic, *The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5th Revolution*, New York – Basingstoke 2003, pp. v-vi, 1-8.

³ T. Gallagher, *The Balkans in the New Millennium*, London – New York 2005, pp. 112-113; *Konačni obračun – dokumentarni film o Petom oktobru ili kako je srušen Milošević*, *Nedeljnik Vreme*, 25.02.2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fTMatYw4SY> [18.11.2019].

bloodless coup, the peaceful revolution, the 24-hour coup, the citizen rebellion, or the Bulldozer Revolution. Although quite emotional, these terms are not unfounded.⁴

The protests also resulted in the gradual seizure of power in Serbia by the representatives of the anti-Milošević democratic opposition and the commencement of the painful process of state reform. Almost immediately, the new authorities faced serious challenges and problems, both internal and international. They included, among others, the *sui generis* criminal network between the world of Serbian politics, state services, big business, and organized crime; influences of the people who took leading posts in the former regime in state institutions, media, and economy; the dramatic economic consequences of the wars and international sanctions imposed on FRY; a large shadow economy; poverty and income inequalities; a refugee crisis; international pressure for the trials of war criminals and Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; deteriorating relations between Serbia and Montenegro; the unresolved Kosovo question; a collective sense of suffering and a post-war mentality; radical nationalism and populism; political disputes, individual ambitions, and personal dislikes between the leaders of anti-Milošević coalition; ethnic tensions in the Preševo Valley; and many others. These were certainly severe challenges and problems that many other countries, not only post-com-

⁴ D. Bužosevic, I. Radovanovic, op. cit., p. 3; I. Vejvoda, *Serbia after four years of transition*, [in:] *The Western Balkans: moving on*, J. Batt (ed.), "Chaillot Paper", 2004, no. 70, pp. 37-38.

munist authoritarian Serbia, would have difficulty dealing with successfully.⁵

Although after October 5 Serbia had undoubtedly entered the path of democratic transformation and modernization, the nature and scale of the negative burden of the Milošević era would have a negative impact on any further development of the country, the pace of internal reforms, and Serbia's relations with its neighbours. As a result, Serbia's symbolic and factual "return to Europe," modelled on the path of the other post-communist Central European countries, turned out to be more difficult, complicated, and longer than initially expected. For many at home and abroad it was also only partially successful, remained unfinished, progressed too slowly, and was superficial or even disappointing. Moreover, it raised serious doubts about the state of the young Serbian democracy and the possibility of actual political and systemic changes in the post-Milošević Serbia.⁶

In recent years public discussion on the state of democracy in Serbia has intensified again. The opposition parties – including many former members of DOS coalition – and part of Serbian society openly accuse the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka*, SNS) and its leader Aleksandar Vučić of serious violations of the rules of democracy, the capturing of state institutions, and an authoritarian mind-set. They also point out that under the surface of the officially democratic political system function real limitations of democracy, while Serbia under Vučić

⁵ I. Vejvoda, op. cit., pp. 37-57; J. Batt, *The question of Serbia*, "Chaillot Paper", 2005, no. 81, pp. 11-14, 55-71, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cpo81-English.pdf> [20.03.2021].

⁶ I. Vejvoda, op. cit., pp. 37-52; J. Batt, op. cit., pp. 7, 41-61; T. Gallagher, op. cit., pp. 119-131.

is elevating towards the standards of Milošević's regime. These arguments come down to the conclusion of a political regression and connectivity – in terms of methods and personalities – between the 'old' and 'new' Serbian authoritarianism (*vel* autocracy), being separated only by a short democratic *interludium* after October 5 (2000-2012).⁷

State authorities, which are invariably striving for Serbia's membership in the EU, strongly reject those accusations. Leading SNS politicians argue consistently that 'elitist' political opposition is in fact weak and divided, deprived of a political mandate, and detached from the needs of ordinary citizens. They also accuse the opposition parties of violations of the rules of democracy. These accusations are based on the claim that the main opposition parties try to initiate major political change through street protests, boycott parliamentary sessions, refuse to participate in political dialogue with the government, choose not to participate in general elections, etc.⁸

In light of the above, the following questions remain legitimate and valid. What were the political consequences of October 5 for Serbia and the Balkan region? How do Serbia's democracy and political scene look today? What are the main political challenges facing Serbia? And finally, where is Serbia two decades after the fall of Milošević? These intriguing questions constituted the starting point for the preparation of this publication about the modern history and politics of Serbia.

⁷ *Utisak nedelje: Boris Tadić, Teofil Pančić i Predrag Voštinić*, NOVA S, 10.06.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBA9m26T1Xo> [21.03.2021].

⁸ A. Вучић, АУТОРСКИ ТЕКСТ ПРЕДСЕДНИКА СРБИЈЕ ЗА „ПОЛИТИКУ“, *Елита и плебс*, Политика, 10.07.2019, <http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/433411/Elita-i-plebs> [21.03.2021].



Résumé

- On October 5, 2000, about 1 million Serbs protested in Belgrade against the falsified results of the elections for the office of president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the regime of the incumbent FRY President Slobodan Milošević. The mass demonstrations in Belgrade represented the culmination of dissatisfaction that had grown over the years in Serbian society.
- The protests symbolically and effectively ended the authoritarian and anti-democratic regime of President Milošević, a politician who for over a decade dominated the political scene of Serbia and Yugoslavia. His rule led to subsequent wars, a deep economic crisis, and the international isolation of Serbia and Yugoslavia. The Belgrade protests were undoubtedly one of the most important events in the modern history of Serbia.
- Although after October 5, Serbia had certainly entered the path of democratic transformation and modern-

ization, the nature and scale of the negative burden of the Milošević era would have a negative impact on any further development of the country, the pace of internal reforms, and Serbia's relations with its neighbours. As a result, Serbia's symbolic and factual "return to Europe," modelled on the path of other post-communist Central European countries, turned out to be more difficult, complicated, and longer than initially expected.

- In recent years public discussion on the state of democracy in Serbia has intensified again. For almost a decade, Serbia has been co-ruled by people from political parties that also ruled in 2000 and were defeated as a result of the events of October 5. What is more, looking back on October 5, some Serbian politicians and intellectuals claim about surprising similarities between the present situation in the country and that of the Milošević era.
- In 2020 there were no significant events organized on the occasion of the 20th anniversary on October 5. The event was not officially commemorated in the country. There was no central ceremony (just as in previous commemorations).
- After 2000 the importance of the ground-breaking nature of October 5 was questioned, and it lost its historical significance mostly because it did not necessarily lead to the realization of Serbian society's hopes and dreams. Inextricably linked with the memory of October 5 is the memory of October 6 as a missed opportunity, a day that has come, but not as expected.

- Today, over twenty years after the fall of President Milošević, Serbian authorities and society still face severe challenges and problems, both internal and international. Many of them actually represent the political legacy of the Milošević era. Despite visible successes in the domestic and international fields, Serbia still cannot successfully overcome this burden. There are certainly many reasons to say that the unfinished reforms and unsettled disputes condition and limit the foreign and domestic policy of Serbia.
- The Republic of Serbia is pursuing a multi-vector foreign policy. On the one hand, it maintains its “historical” relations with Russia, but a slight cooling of that relationship is visible. The increasing importance of China, Serbia's committed partner in the midst of the pandemic, may lead to Russia-China competition for the influence in Serbia. On the other hand, Serbia aims for closer relations with the United States and the membership of the European Union.



Agata Domachowska

**A landmark event?
Disappointment? Lost hope?
Memories of October 5, 2000
in Serbia twenty years later**

Introduction

The overthrow of Slobodan Milošević (*Svrgavanje Slobodana Miloševića*), also known as the 5 October Overthrow (*Petooktobarska revolucija*) or the Bulldozer Revolution (*Buldožer revolucija*), was the crucial event in the recent history of Serbia and the Serbs. After many years, Serbs managed to overthrow the rule of Slobodan Milošević, hoping it would be a turning point for Serbia's future. In 2020, exactly 20 years have passed since these landmark events. The aim of this article is to analyse how the memory of the October 5, 2000, has been constructed in Serbia. The analysis will focus on the public debate about this event. The study uses both the discourse method and content analysis, with material including newspapers, articles, television broadcasts, and public speeches. The first part is a brief overview of the events

(as well as key actors) that led to the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević and to the democratic changes in Serbia. The next part deals directly with the analysis of the memory of the events of October 5, twenty years later. The paper aims to be a starting point for discussion and further research about the understudied issue of the Serbian memory of the historical and landmark event.

October 5, 2000 – the victory of society

On 21 September 1997, elections for the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia took place. The Left Coalition (*Leva koalicija*), made up of the Socialist Party of Serbia (*Socijalistička partija Srbije*, SPS), Yugoslav Left (*Jugoslovenska Levica*, JUL), and New Democracy (*Nova demokratija*), won the election. It won 34.2% of the vote, which translated into 110 seats in a parliament with 250 seats.¹ Turnout was 57.4%. The Left Coalition was supported by Slobodan Milošević, who was at that time (since July 1997) the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Therefore, the Left Coalition had to look for a partner to form a new government. The Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka*, SRS) became that partner, and the so-called “red-black” coalition (*Crveno-crna koalicija*) was formed.² It needs to be added that the elections were boycotted by, for instance, the Democratic Party of Serbia (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*, DSS), the Democratic Party (*Demokratska stranka*, DS), and the Civic Alliance of Serbia

¹ V. Goati, *Izbori u SRJ: od 1990. do 1998.: volja građana ili izborna manipulacija*, Beograd 1999, p. 114.

² D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *Demokratyczna transformacja w Serbii i Chorwacji w latach 1990-2010*, Kraków 2014, pp. 212-213.

(*Građanski savez Srbije, GSS*). All of them claimed that the elections would not be fair.

Mirko Marjanović became the new prime minister.³ He became the PM for the first time in 1994. His new government was created in March 1998. M. Marjanović no longer enjoyed the same popularity as he did during his first term (1994-1998). The controversial laws introduced by the government were a major issue, first among them, those concerning the abolition of the autonomy of universities (the University Act) or the Public Information law.⁴ Moreover, as Vladimir Goati emphasized, the liquidation of the fierce critics and political opponents began. It was clearly exemplified by the murder of a journalist Slavko Ćuruvija (April 11, 1999), the assassination of the politician of the communist era and the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, Ivan Stambolić (August 25, 2000)⁵, as well as assassination attempts on Vuk Drašković (October 3, 1999⁶ and June 15, 2000⁷). Furthermore, participants of anti-government protests were persecuted.

On July 6, 2000, the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia adopted constitutional amendments in a specially convened session under which the president of the Federation was to

³ Mirko Marjanović was a Serbian prime minister from 1994 till 2000.

⁴ D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *Demokratyczna transformacja w Serbii...*, p. 214.

⁵ Ivan Stambolić used to be mentor and a friend to Slobodan Milošević. See: *Elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, OSCE, 24.09.2000, p. 5, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/2/15184.pdf> [15.11.2020]; *Yugoslavia's presidential election: the Serbian People's moment of truth*, "ICG Balkans Report", 2000, no. 102, pp. 13-14.

⁶ *Yugoslavia: Opposition Leader Says He Survived Assassination Attempt*, Radio Free Europe, 09.10.1999, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1092308.html> [08.11.2020].

⁷ *Na licu mesta: Budva. Atentat i posledice*, Vreme, 24.06.2000, https://www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/494/02.ASP [14.11.2020].

be elected in general elections, which resulted in the shortening of Milošević's term of office by one year – the term of the president did not run until July 2001. Then (July 27, 2000) it was announced that the next elections would take place on September 24 for the president of the Federation and for the deputies to the two houses of the Federal Assembly and the municipal assemblies of Serbia.⁸ The president was convinced of his victory and underestimated the opposition. It should also be added that amendments to the constitution were introduced without any consultations with Montenegro (a constituent federated state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and without public debates. Therefore, Montenegro considered them unconstitutional and announced that it would not participate in the planned elections.⁹

Before the 2000 elections, the opposition was better prepared than in the previous election. After the 1997 elections, the opposition parties again took steps to form a joint opposition force. Earlier, in September 1996, part of the opposition united to form a coalition “Zajedno” (*Together*), comprised of the Democratic Party (*Demokratska stranka*, DS), the Serbian Renewal Movement (*Srpski pokret obnove*, SPO), and the Civic Alliance of Serbia (*Građanski savez Srbije*, GSS). However, disputes between the leaders of individual entities led to its break up in 1997.¹⁰ The Democratic Opposition of Serbia (*Demokratska opozicija Srbije*, DOS) was formed in January 2000. It was an unexpected coalition of different

⁸ *Elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia...*

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ V. Goati, *Izbori u SRJ...*, p. 110.

opposition parties and groups with the aim of overthrowing Slobodan Milošević. DOS was dominated by the Democratic Party led by Zoran Đinđić, the Democratic Party of Serbia (*Demokratska stranka Srbije*, DSS).¹¹ Ultimately, the Serbian Renewal Movement took part in the elections on its own – not as part of the DOS coalition. The united opposition was not the only force that had a huge impact on changing the regime in Serbia. From the very beginning, DOS consistently called for democratic elections.

Opposition leaders urged cooperation with Otpor! (*Resistance!*) to show unity.¹² Otpor! was a new, decentralized and dynamic organization established in October 1998. It was the key player whose activities led to the overthrow of Milošević's rule. Otpor! had over 70,000 members who were strongly expressing their dissatisfaction with the regime.¹³ The members were mostly young people who organized various happenings and created street posters and graffiti (Otpor's symbols, along with the slogans – "Gotov je!" [*He's finished!*] were almost everywhere in Serbia).¹⁴ They collaborated with local authorities, the civil sector, as well as with the independent media in order to mobilize society. The Serbian authorities used violence against them – members of the Otpor! movement were often beaten, arrested, and called terrorists.¹⁵

¹¹ Ultimately, the Serbian Renewal Movement took part in the elections on its own – not as part of the DOS coalition.

¹² M. R. Thompson, P. Kuntz, *Stolen elections: the case of the Serbian October*, "Journal of Democracy", 2004, vol. 15, no. 4, p. 166.

¹³ A. LeBor, *Milosevic: A biography*, London 2002, p. 303.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ *Yugoslavia's presidential election...*, p. 7.

Otpor!, as well as the Democratic Opposition of Serbia, received support from the Western countries. It is estimated that around 70-80 million dollars were provided by western European governments and the US. A significant part of this amount was transferred in cash during meetings that took place in Budapest.¹⁶ Hungary was eager to help Serbian oppositionists at that time.

The opposition parties agreed on a common electoral list. What is more, they chose one candidate who ran for the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It was Vojislav Koštunica, who had no connections with communists nor with Slobodan Milošević.¹⁷ He had an image of an honest politician.¹⁸ The leader of the Democratic Party Zoran Đinđić was engaged in managing Koštunica's presidential campaign. They were meeting with different people from every part of Serbia and were present in the independent media.¹⁹ The opposition also had Western support.

In fact Milošević thought that his rival would be either former Central Bank governor Dragoslav Avramović, Zoran Đinđić, or Vuk Drašković.²⁰ All in all, the Serbian Renewal Movement decided to support its own candidate – the mayor of Belgrade, Vojislav Mihajlović²¹, so talks with the Demo-

¹⁶ T. Maršal, *Igra senki: Petooktobarska smena vlasti u Srbiji*, Beograd 2005, p. 196; A. LeBor, op. cit., pp. 304-305. On financial aid from the West, see more: N. Vladislavljević, *Competitive authoritarianism and popular protest: Evidence from Serbia under Milošević*, "International Political Science Review", 2016, vol. 37, no. 1, p. 46; D. de Krnjevic-Miskovic, *Serbia's Prudent Revolution*, "Journal of Democracy", 2001, vol. 12, no. 3, p. 103.

¹⁷ D. de Krnjevic-Miskovic, op. cit., p. 102.

¹⁸ M. R. Thompson, P. Kuntz, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁹ D. de Krnjevic-Miskovic, op. cit., p. 103.

²⁰ *Yugoslavia's presidential election...*, p. 1.

²¹ *Serbia 2000 Election Watch*, NDI, 11.09.2000, p. 1, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/1071_yu_2000electwatch_5.pdf [08.11.2020].

cratic Opposition of Serbia to run joint lists failed. There was also a fourth candidate, Miodrag Vidojković.²²

During the campaign, there were restrictions on freedom of speech, and members of NGOs, journalists, and teachers were arrested.²³ Repression was directed against activists from the Otpor movement and members of Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (*Centar za slobodne izbore i demokratiju*, CeSID), which was planning to monitor the elections.²⁴ On September 8, police raided the Belgrade office of CeSID, confiscating computers and other equipment.²⁵ The election was in fact a referendum on whether Serbs wanted change or not.²⁶ On the other hand, Milošević tried to “sell” the election as a choice between national autonomy and dependence on foreign forces supported by the opposition. The run-up to the elections had been marked by unprecedented intimidation of and violence against opposition leaders and civic activists.

The general elections were held on 24 September 2000. The opposition was convinced that they won them. On the night of 25 September, CeSID published the results: 56.8% for Koštunica, Milošević – 34.2%, with a turnout of 71%.²⁷ However The Federal Electoral Committee claimed that Koštunica gained 48.22% and Milošević 40.23 %, so no can-

²² *Svi kandidati i rezultati*, Vreme, 25.01.2017, <https://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1461219> [18.11.2020].

²³ *Yugoslavia's presidential election...*, pp. 13-14.

²⁴ *Elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia...*

²⁵ *Serbia 2000 Election...*, p. 3.

²⁶ M. Kolin, *This is Serbia calling*. Rokenrol radio i beogradski pokret otpora, Beograd 2001, p. 185.

²⁷ M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Serbia pod rządami Slobodana Miloševicia: serbska polityka wobec rozpadu Jugosławii w latach dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku*, Kraków 2008, p. 245.

didate won over 50% of the votes so a second round would need to take place on October 8.²⁸

DOS did not intend to take part in the second round of the election because it claimed that the Federal Electoral Committee made them unreliable. Therefore, an appeal was made to Milošević to resign by October 5, 3.00 pm. It is worth adding that then Serbian Patriarch Pavle also recognized the election victory of the opposition candidate and congratulated Koštunica.²⁹ Vojislav Šešelj did the same.³⁰

On September 29, the leaders of the DOS called for civil disobedience. The aim of the DOS strategy was to create the perception that “the whole nation” stood up against Milošević.³¹ The first was the miners’ strike in Kolubara, which supplies electricity to a large part of Serbia.³² Then, acts of civil disobedience took place throughout the country – high school students skipped classes, factory workers, bus drivers, and taxis also started to protest. During the demonstrations, the Koštunica’s victory was celebrated.³³ On October 2, Milošević addressed the people, calling for patriotism and warned that NATO was trying to attack Yugoslavia all the time and that the opposition were traitors to the nation.³⁴

At that time, the opposition tried to prevent the security forces from intervening in the protests. In order to achieve

²⁸ T. Maršal, op. cit., p. 195.

²⁹ A. LeBor, op. cit., p. 308.

³⁰ M. Kolin, op. cit., p. 189.

³¹ V. Pešić, *Rekonstrukcija petooktobarskih zbivanja na osnovu memoarske i stručne literature*, [in:] *Razvoj demokratskih ustanova u Srbiji – Deset godina posle*, Fondacija Heinrich Böll, Regionalna kancelarija za Jugoistočnu Evropu u Beogradu, Beograd 2010, p. 26.

³² S. Maričić, *5. oktobar, 20 godina kasnije: Dani kad je Srbija stala*, BBC News, 29.09.2020, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-54333180> [14.11.2020].

³³ M. R. Thompson, P. Kuntz, op. cit., p. 167; D. de Krnjec-Miskovic, op. cit., p. 105.

³⁴ T. Maršal, op. cit., p. 196.

that, Zoran Đinđić met with Milorad Ulemek (also known as *Legija*)³⁵, a former commander of the Serbian police special unit, the Special Operations Unit (*Jedinica za specijalne operacije*, JSO – also known as Red Berets – *Crvene beretke*) and a former paramilitary commander, to make sure his formation did not defend the Milošević regime. During one of the meetings, Legija admitted that he knew the election was falsified and that his troops would not intervene if they were not attacked.³⁶ What is more, Legija advised Đinđić to refrain from attacking police during the protests.³⁷ These meetings are still controversial to this day.

The protests culminated on October 5. More than 700,000 people took to the streets all over Serbia.³⁸ The largest protests were organized in Belgrade. Some of the protesters managed to break into the Federal Parliament and the buildings of the state television station. The next day Milošević recognized Vojislav Koštunica victory.³⁹ After meeting with him, Slobodan Milošević addressed the people for the last time as the president and went with his wife and daughter to his villa in the exclusive neighbourhood of Dedinje.⁴⁰

After the events of October 5, it was the Democratic Opposition of Serbia that seized power in the state, which was confirmed in the parliamentary elections that took place in

³⁵ Legija was convicted of the assassinations of Zoran Đinđić in 2003.

³⁶ D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *Wpływ nieformalnych sił sprzeciwu na przebieg procesu demokratycznej transformacji w Serbii na przykładzie funkcjonowania służb specjalnych*, "Athenaeum", 2014, vol. 41, p. 133.

³⁷ A. LeBor, op. cit., p. 308-309.

³⁸ M. R. Thompson, P. Kuntz, op. cit., p. 168.

³⁹ *Dvadeset godina od demokratskih promena u Srbiji*, Glas Amerike, 05.10.2020, <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/dvadeset-godina-petog-oktobra/5609034.html> [05.11.2020].

⁴⁰ M. Kolin, op. cit., p. 196.

December 2000. In those elections, the DOS won a landslide victory – they won 176 mandates out of a total of 250 seats in the Serbian parliament. The ruling parties in the pre-October period lost, securing only 60 seats in the new parliament.⁴¹ In January 2001, Zoran Đinđić was elected as prime minister.

Serbia – twenty years later

In 2020, exactly two decades had passed since these ground-breaking events in Serbia. To define the current situation in this Balkan country, it is worth recalling a famous quote from the Italian writer Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: “If we want everything to stay as it is, everything has to change.” In the present Serbian political scene, there has been no trace of the Serbian Democratic Opposition for a long time. Winners from October 5, 2000, are also gone. Zoran Đinđić was murdered in 2003 when he served as prime minister. Vojislav Koštunica, although he held the office of the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for three years (2000-2003) and then the prime minister of Serbia (2004-2008), is currently in political retirement. When, in 2012, Koštunica decided to run for president, he received only 7.5% of the vote. In turn, in 2014, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), of which he was the chairman, did not get into the parliament. After that, Koštunica resigned as par-

⁴¹ Socialist Party of Serbia achieved 37 mandates and Serbian Radical Party – 23 mandates. The Yugoslav Left lost all the seats in the new parliament. See: V. Goati, *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskom razdoblju*, Beograd 2006, p. 25; OSCE, *Republic of Serbia. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Parliamentary Elections 23 December 2000. Final Report*, 20.02.2001, p. 16, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/f/15269.pdf> [15.11.2020].

ty leader. Vuk Drašković has also been outside politics for years and focuses mostly on writing new books.

Therefore, those who were in power during the times of Slobodan Milošević regime returned to power. Namely, the current President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, the former minister of information (1998-2000) in the government of Mirko Marjanović. In fact, Vučić has been dominating the Serbian political scene since 2012, when he became the deputy prime minister in the coalition government of the Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, the chairman of the Socialist Party of Serbia, a party founded in 1990 by Slobodan Milošević. It should also be emphasized that A. Vučić is a leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka*), which was founded by former members of the Serbian Radical Party, including Tomislav Nikolić, the president of Serbia from 2012 to 2017.

It can be concluded that for almost a decade, Serbia has been co-ruled by people from political parties that also ruled in 2000 and were defeated as a result of the events of October 5. It is worth mentioning other names of other people who currently hold some of the most important functions in the country and who in 2000 stood on the side of Milošević. They are: Jorgovanka Tabaković, the current governor of the National Bank of Serbia, who in the 90's was a member of the Serbian Radical Party and in the second government of Mirko Marjanović held the position of the minister of ownership and economic transformation; Maja Gojković, currently the deputy prime minister and the minister of culture and information, who between 1998 and 2000 served as the minister without portfolio and then as the deputy prime minister of Yugoslavia; Aleksandar Vulin

who in the 90s was one of the founders of the Yugoslav Left (a political party led by Mirjana Marković) and currently is the minister of internal affairs and has been a member of the government since the SNS came to power in 2012. All in all, Serbia once again is being ruled by the members of the SPS and former members of the SRS and the Yugoslav Left – three political parties that were part of the ruling coalition from 1998 until 2000.⁴² It needs to be added that in the current government, we can also find ex-activities of Otpor! movement as well as ex-members of Democratic Opposition of Serbia – for instance, Marko Đurić, who serves as the ambassador of Serbia to the United States, Rasim Ljajić, who used to be the deputy prime minister and the minister of trade, tourism and telecommunications (2012-2020), and Goran Vesić, who has been serving as the deputy mayor of Belgrade since June 2018.⁴³

It should also be emphasized that in 2020 there were no significant events organized on the occasion of the 20th anniversary on October 5. The event was not officially commemorated in the country. There was no central ceremony (just as in previous commemorations). There were only some public discussions on the issue, attended by intellectuals, journalists, or local officials.⁴⁴ However, on that day,

⁴² N. Rujević, *Peti oktobar: Rađanje davno zaboravljene nade*, DW, 05.10.2020, <https://www.dw.com/sr/peti-oktobar-ra%C4%91anje-davno-zaboravljene-nade/a-55126168> [20.11.2020].

⁴³ A. Popović, S. Čongradin, M. D. Miljković, *Šta mladima danas predstavlja Peti oktobar?*, Danas, 05.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/sta-mladima-danas-predstavlja-peti-oktobar/> [20.11.2020].

⁴⁴ *Peti oktobar 20 godina kasnije bez većih obeležavanja*, Radio 021.rs, 04.10.2020, <https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Srbija/254902/Peti-oktobar-20-godina-kasnije-bez-vecih-obelezavanja.html> [20.11.2020]; R. Ranković, *Tribina o 5. oktobru – dve decenije kasnije: Srbija dobila šansu da živi*, Glas Amerike, 05.10.2020, <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/>

During the press conference, President Vučić presented his opinion about October 5, 2000. Namely, he stated that for him symbols are not important, but that it is a “normal working day” and that he does not live in the past, but focuses on the future. Vučić emphasized that he did not have any position towards these events; however, he was disgusted with the photos of the parliament set on fire and the beating of an old man. He noticed one positive thing regarding October 5, namely that Serbia that day turned back to the world, although, as Vučić claims, it cost the release of Albanian terrorists.⁴⁶ So he used this date politically. Moreover, he accused many politicians and members of the media of calling for a new October 5 with creating chaos so that they can seize power. What is more, Vučić accused them of getting rich and robbing Serbia after this landmark event from 2000.⁴⁷ The attitude of the current government towards these events is similar to what Maja Gojković held in 2018 when she was the speaker of the National Assembly in Serbia. Namely, at a press conference, she publicly informed the parliament about the return of two chairs which were

⁴⁷ Vučić: *Na novi peti oktobar pozivaju oni koji su ga obrukali*, Studio B, 01.10.2020, <https://studiob.rs/vucic-na-novi-peti-oktobar-pozivaju-oni-koji-su-ga-obrukali/> [08.11.2020].

stolen on October 5, 2000.⁴⁸ Symbolically, these chairs prove that the protection of institutions is more important for the authorities than citizens, who expressed their opposition against oppressive power in 2000.

In turn, the Democratic Party of Serbia, one of the key DOS entities, decided on that very day to dissolve all of its party committees in order to create a new space for everyone who would like to get involved.⁴⁹ Recalling the events of October 5, 2000, the current Chairman of the DSS, Miloš Jovanović, emphasized that not all the expectations of that time had been met because on the one hand, they were too great, and on the other hand, expectations were not met by various circumstances – historical, political, and geopolitical.⁵⁰

Analysing the Serbian media twenty years after the events of October 5, it can be noticed that this symbolic day twenty years later was described as: “Our Berlin Wall” (*Naš Berlinski zid*), “The birth of a long-forgotten hope” (*Rađanje davno zaboravljene nade*), or “Stolen victory” (*Oteta pobjeda*). These terms indicate the ground-breaking nature of the hopeful event as well as the disappointment that followed it.

Looking back on October 5, most people pay special attention to the similarities between the present situation in the country and that of the Milošević era. One of the Otpor! activists, Srđan Milivijević, stated that although Milošević had been the embodiment of evil, the present power was a farce, but at the same time he emphasized that in his opinion Vučić did not use all his “arsenal of evil” at his disposal, yet. On the

⁴⁸ N. Rujević, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Jovanović: *DSS raspustio sve stranačke odbore po Srbiji*, Danas, 05.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/jovanovic-dss-raspustio-sve-stranacke-odbore-po-srbiji/> [14.11.2020].

⁵⁰ *Dvadeset godina od demokratskih promena...*

other hand, media control is absolute – there is currently no media freedom in Serbia. If there were no N1, Nova S, NiN, Danas, and Vreme TV stations, the Serbs would not have a window to the world. Of course, as Milivijević pointed out, the economic situation has improved significantly, but the credit is due to the citizens, not the politicians.⁵¹

In turn, historian and DOS activist, the former ambassador to the United States and Switzerland, Milan St. Protić, recalled that October 5, 2000, had lost its historical significance. He stated that after the Milošević era, the very return to reality should be considered a success. Further, building a new system is a long process, but did not take place in Serbia.⁵² On the other hand, Teofil Pančić, Serbian journalist, points out that at present, it is not known what exactly this date means or how it should be observed. In the beginning, in the time of euphoria, some advocated to declare the October 5 to be a public holiday, but now it seems that this date is anonymous.⁵³

Commenting on the disappointment of part of society on October 5, Nikola Parun, political scientist, stated that disappointment is in fact only from those who never wanted this event to take place. The rest of the people are proud of this “Freedom Day” (*Dan slobode*). In his opinion, it is the

⁵¹ Milivojević: *Ključna je bila uloga Otpora, sad na vlasti strašila iz tog vremena*, N1.rs, 05.10.2020, <https://rs.minfo.com/vesti/a657486-milivojevic-kljucna-je-bila-uloga-otpora-sad-na-vlasti-strasila-iz-tog-vremena/> [14.11.2020].

⁵² N. Rujević, op. cit.

⁵³ T. Pančić, *Peti oktobar i poraz sećanja*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 06.10.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/pan%C4%8Di%C4%87-peti-oktobar-i-poraz-se%C4%87anja/30878257.html> [16.11.2020].

Democratic Party, but everything changed in 2003 when Zoran Đinđić was shot by a sniper in 2003.⁵⁴

It is worth noting that together with the memory of October 5 goes the memory of October 6 – as “Serbia has not yet lived to see October 6” (*Srbija još nije dočekla šesti oktobar*) or “Wasted October 6” (*Propušteni 6. oktobar*). Thus, these are terms that draw attention, on the one hand, to the ground-breaking nature of this event in Serbia’s history, and, on the other hand, to the disappointment with the course of events that followed the breakthrough on October 5. Thus, inextricably linked with the memory of October 5 is the memory of October 6 as a missed opportunity, but also as a day that has come, but not as expected. Serbian historian Predrag Marković defined October 6 as an “unfulfilled dream” (*nedosanjan san*), a day when institutional reforms were about to start. The transformation process in Serbia, according to Marković, was carried out by incompetent people, so the first years after 2000 was a time of “wild privatization.” During the Milošević regime, independent institutions collapsed, and after 2000 nothing was done in order to rebuild them.⁵⁵

Young people who do not agree with the current situation in the country also draw attention to these issues, which have changed (or perhaps have not) after October 5. Uroš Stambolić, a grandson of Ivan Stambolić and also an activist of the radical left, stated that after October 5 everyone had forgotten about ordinary people who in fact overthrew the

⁵⁴ N. Parun, *Peti oktobar – Ko nam je rekao da smo razočarani?*, Talas.rs, 01.10.2020, <https://talas.rs/2020/10/01/peti-oktobar-ko-nam-je-rekao-da-smo-razocarani/> [16.11.2020].

⁵⁵ „Peti oktobar je bio naš Berlinski zid”, RTS.rs, 05.10.2020, <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/politika/4100928/predrag-markovic-peti-oktobar-20-godina.html> [08.11.2020].

regime. So that event is also a warning for the future – before the government collapses, it needs to make a precise plan of what to do when the power is taken away.⁵⁶

Valentina Reković from the “One of Five Milion” movement (*Jedan od pet miliona*) also pointed out similar issues. According to her, the victory of ordinary people on October 5, 2000, was wasted by irresponsible politicians. Those events taught Serbs, on the one hand, that if they wanted to act together, they are able to overthrow the government. On the other hand, it needs to be realized that it is not enough to change the people who are in power – to make a real difference, the system must be changed. So on October 5, 2000, the people won, but on the very next day, the politicians took the victory from them.⁵⁷

Conclusions

Vuk Drašković already on October 9, 2000, only a few days after the landmark events in Serbia, emphasized that “Ten long and terrible years I dreamed of Serbia without Milošević, and what do I see? Lawlessness, robberies, naked fear, drunkenness and arrogance of the winner [...]”.⁵⁸ He also claimed that the naive and blind in Serbia do not see that on October 5, 2000, Serbia was handed over through a DOS pact with the devil (he meant the talks with Milorad Ulemek). Thus, for the last ten years, change has not been about overthrowing Milošević, but the system he created.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ A. Popović, S. Čongradin, M. D. Miljković, op. cit.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ V. Drašković, *Iseći vremena*, Beograd 2016, p. 127.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 128.

It should be noted that in the following years the disappointment with the events of 2000 was emphasized by some events and the importance of their ground-breaking nature was questioned. In the elections that took place in Serbia in 2004, Predrag Matvejević wrote that the “radicals” of Šešelj returned, which meant the return of the Serbs to the times before October 5, 2000.⁶⁰ These words turned out to be prophetic looking at the current situation in Serbia. From 2012 the same people who were part of the system created by Slobodan Milošević are still in power – a system that the protesting Serbs in 2000 hoped to overthrow, once and for all.

The events were ground-breaking, but they did not necessarily lead to the realization of all the society's hopes and dreams. This is one of the key reasons for the feeling of disappointment among at least some Serbs. Of course, it should be highlighted that many Serbs, despite their disappointment, are still proud of the events of 2000 and emphasize the crucial role of the ordinary people in the changes taking place at that time.

⁶⁰ S. Nowak-Bajcar, *Demokracja w języku prasy serbskiej 1999-2003*, [in:] *W poszukiwaniu nowego kanonu. Reinterpretacje tradycji kulturalnej w krajach postjugosłowiańskich po 1995 roku*, M. Dąbrowska-Partyka (ed.), Kraków 2005, p. 137.



Jacek Wojnicki

The evolution of the social and political situation in the Republic of Serbia after 2000

Introduction

This article attempts to outline the evolution of the social and political situation in the Republic of Serbia after the so-called Bulldozer Revolution, which ended the rule of President Slobodan Milošević, the pre-eminent figure of the political scene in Yugoslavia and then Serbia since the late 1980s. The timeline considered here spans from the October 2000 revolution to the year 2020, when the research for this article was completed and the last parliamentary election was held in the country.

Serbia was regarded as one of the countries of the so-called delayed systemic transformation, not only against the background of other Central European countries, but also the Yugoslav Republics. Democratic changes were launched relatively late, and democratic groups weren't sufficiently

strong to put the process of political and systemic changes on a fast and steady track. The incumbent political faction (the League of Communists of Serbia, later transformed into the Socialist Party of Serbia), employing social and nationalist slogans, managed to maintain its popularity, as evidenced by successive elections after 1990. The model of systemic transformation in Serbia in the 1990s has often been described in Western political science as “*demokratura*,” or a combination of features of a democratic and authoritarian system.¹ Similar terms were used to describe the system formed by President Franjo Tuđman in the neighbouring Republic of Croatia or Central Europe’s Slovak Republic under the rule of Vladimir Mečiar. The linchpin of the system was President Slobodan Milošević, who concurrently acted as the leader of the dominant Socialist Party of Serbia, established through the organizational structures of the League of Communists of Serbia in July 1990. It was only following four military defeats (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo) that the domestic situation produced social fatigue with the dictatorship and favourable conditions for the activities of opposition politicians. In July 2000, the federal parliament of Yugoslavia (consisting of the two republics of Serbia and Montenegro) changed the procedure for electing the president from indirect to direct. The incumbent Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević officially declared his willingness to run. However, opposition groups

¹ L. Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Cambridge – Oxford 1997; *Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, K. Dawisha, B. Parrott (eds.), Cambridge 1997; A. Agh, *The Politics of East-Central Europe*, London 1998; E. Bujwid-Kurek, *Państwa południowo-wschodnie. Szkice polityczne*, Kraków 2008; J. Wojnicki, *Instytucjonalizacja przemian ustrojowych państw postjugosłowiańskich*, Pułtusk 2007.

decided to seize the opportunity to assert their presence and put forward a candidate with a moderately conservative profile, Vojislav Koštunica. The decisive battle for the chair of the Serbian head of state took place between the two. At the same time, elections to the federal parliament were held in both republics, with the Montenegrin authorities choosing to boycott the election of their part (20 seats) of the Council of Republics. Starting from 1997, the republican authorities around President Milo Đukanović hinted at the possibility of pursuing a different domestic policy from the strategic plans of Slobodan Milošević. This policy was symbolized by a unilateral introduction of the Euro as the currency of Montenegro and neutrality towards the military operations of NATO forces in Kosovo in the spring of 1999 after the failure of the Serbian-Kosovo talks in Rambouillet on the future of the rebellious district. Faced with a fierce outbreak of popular discontent, the dictator was forced to acknowledge his defeat in the presidential election.²

The evolution of political situation in the Serbia after 2000

The social and political situation in the Republic of Serbia after 2000 can be divided into several stages. The first one, covering the period from the early parliamentary election in December 2000 to the next election in December 2003, is initially marked by cooperation within the broad democratic camp, but from mid-2001 there were growing divisions and

² A. Koseski, *W bałkańskim tyglu*, Pułtusk 2002; M. Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, *Serbia pod rządami Slobodana Miloševića*, Kraków 2008; R. Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*, New York 1999; V. Stevanović, *Milošević. Jadan epitań*, Zagreb 2002; B. Głębocki, *Serbia bez Miloszevia*, "Przegląd", 10.10.2000.

a progressive erosion of the wider bloc. The second stage covers the period of four years from 2004 to 2008, marking cohabitation between the social-liberal camp around the Democratic Party and moderate conservatives from the Democratic Party of Serbia. The next stage, in turn, covering another four years (until 2012), is characterised by a domination of the camp of the then President Boris Tadić together with other liberal political factions on the political scene. Finally, the last period (beginning in 2012) sees a growing influence of the Serbian Progressive Party right up to the current dominance of the political camp centred around Aleksandar Vučić.

Among the factors determining the evolution of the social and political situation in the Balkan state, we should mention internal and external elements. The endogenous premises include those of a political, systemic, economic, social, ethnic, and cultural nature. The external premises, in turn, are determined by the progressive decomposition of the Yugoslav federation, with a special case of the state inhabited by the Serbian population. At this point we come to a fundamental conclusion: to what extent was the Yugoslav state formed after 1918 an emanation of the idea born in the 19th century of uniting the nations of Southern Slavia, and to what extent did it turn out to be a vehicle for assembling the Serbian population in a single entity? The answer to be given to this crucial question explains the course of systemic transformation in the former Yugoslav federation, created under the propaganda slogans of brotherhood and unity of the South Slavic population.³

³ W. Walkiewicz, *Bałkany słowiańskie. Aspiracje-uwikłania-sprzeczności*, Białystok 2016; M. Tanty, *Bałkany w XX wieku. Dzieje polityczne*, Warszawa 2003; R. Lee Wolff, *The*

The united opposition, admittedly more anti-Milošević than democratic, buoyed by the political success of forcing the former dictator Slobodan Milošević to acknowledge his defeat in the general election, set about seizing full power in the country. The next stage was an early election to the Skupština, called for December 2000. The front-runner was the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (*Demokratska opozicija Srbije* – DOS) which brought together several democratic factions, led by two of them – the Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia. An agreement between two anti-Milošević opposition politicians, Zoran Đinđić and Vojislav Koštunica, proved to be the key to success. The former became head of the Serbian government (the first non-communist one after 1945), and the latter was elected the president of Yugoslavia (made up of Serbia and Montenegro) by popular vote. The success was admittedly quite remarkable as DOS won 176 seats out of a total of 250, but it turned out to be incomplete as it was based on a fragile foundation of organizational, structural, and platform unity. Not long after the main political goal of ousting the Socialists who had been in power for decades was achieved, political differences and growing ambitions among politicians came to the fore. The main lines of social and political disputes included the following issues: 1. the pace and scope of accountability for the Milošević dictatorship; 2. the future shape of the union with Montenegro and the federal state; 3. the pace and scope of economic changes; 4. dem-

Balkans in our time, Cambridge 1956; B. Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge 1985; V. Tismaneu, *Wizje zbawienia. Demokracja, nacjonalizm i mit w postkomunistycznej Europie*, Warszawa 2000; T. Judah, *The Serbs. History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, New Haven – London 1997.

ocratic and systemic changes in the country. The catalyst for a breakdown in cooperation between the two leaders of “democratic Serbia” came when the ex-president was detained and the government of Zoran Đinđić agreed to hand him over to the Hague-based International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Some prominent DOS politicians, led by President V. Koštunica, did not accept this decision, believing that he should be brought before the Serbian justice system. The straw that “broke the camel’s back” was confidential negotiations conducted by Zoran Đinđić and Milo Đukanović and an agreement reached by both politicians to transform the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into a looser union of the two republics. A dramatic moment in the recent history of Serbia was the assassination of the Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March 2003 in Belgrade, which revealed close links between the world of politics, secret services, and criminal-mafia circles.⁴

General tendencies on the post-revolutionary political scene

It is necessary to identify a few general tendencies seen on the post-revolutionary political scene of the Republic of Serbia. First, the break-up of the broad democratic coalition led to a fragmentation of the party system into small and medium-sized factions. Second, relatively high support (close to 30% of votes cast) was received in opinion polls

⁴ *Republika Serbii. Aspekty polityki wewnętrznej i międzynarodowej*, A. Jagiełło-Szostak (ed.), Wrocław 2016; Z. Ivanović, *Zoran Djindjić u mreži mafije*, Beograd 2004; K. Kęciek, *Czy Jugosławia przetrwa?*, “Przegląd”, 23.04.2001; M. Karolkiewicz, *Rozwiane nadzieje Serbów*, “Przegląd”, 07.10.2002; M. Głogowski, *Belgrad jak Sarajewo*, “Przegląd”, 23.03.2003; K. Kęciek, *Gangsterzy i spiski*, “Przegląd”, 25.05.2003.

and successive elections to the Skupština – in 2003, 2007, 2008 – by a populist-nationalist faction called the Serbian Radical Party (*Srpska radikalna stranka* – SRS). Thirdly, a significant drop in confidence (to a dozen or so, then just a few percent) was recorded by the former ruling party centred around President Slobodan Milošević (*Socijalistička partija Srbije* – SPS). The main lines of political disputes involved internal issues, but also concerned the country's foreign policy, especially in the context of the new political order in the Balkans (this primarily involved the post-Yugoslav states), as well as relations with Montenegro (within a common state or separately) and the future of the independence-minded Kosovo district. Hopes for imminent accession talks with EU institutions led to increased social optimism, especially among the young and well-educated generation living in urban and academic centres. An important dilemma in domestic politics was also the issue of defining the national identity of the Serbs, how much to look back (the issue of Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian statehood), and how much to look ahead and chart new foreign policy horizons (the European Union, close cooperation with Western Europe, or an alliance with Russia).⁵

The creation of a specific “cordon sanitaire” around the Serbian Radical Party pushed the two democratic groups, centred around Boris Tadić and Vojislav Koštunica, to form a government coalition with participation of minor factions.⁶ The two politicians split their influence on the politi-

⁵ J. Piaseczny, *Czarnogóra niepodległa*, “Przegląd”, 04.06.2006; P. Sokołowska, *Zakładnicy Unii*, “Przegląd”, 17.02.2008.

⁶ J. Piaseczny, *Serbowie poparli nacjonalistów*, “Przegląd”, 11.01.2004.

cal scene – B. Tadić was elected the president of the Republic of Serbia in June 2004 (after 18 months of vacancy in the post, subsequent elections were invalid as the turnout failed to reach 50% of eligible voters, which not only caused a constitutional crisis in the country, but also demonstrated the distance of the public from the political elite and the candidates put forward), while the last President of Yugoslavia, V. Koštunica, became the head of government. This stage of political development marked the next four years, from 2004-2008. Work was then undertaken on new legal regulations in the context of the constitutional order. It was completed in the summer of 2006, and the text of a new constitutional law was submitted for a national referendum at the end of September 2006. This was, in two respects, a symbolic fact, which has a significant meaning in Serbian politics. First, it was a break with the constitutional order symbolized by the government of Slobodan Milošević and the first stage of the political system transformation in the Republic of Serbia (when the first constitution was adopted in July 1990, it was still a fully-fledged union republic forming part of the Yugoslav federation). Second, the constitutional regulations held that Kosovo was an integral part of the Serbian state. This proclamation was drafted in a broader external and international context following Montenegro's separation from the state union with Serbia that had existed since February 2003. It was intended by the legislators to safeguard the state interests of Serbia.⁷

⁷ E. Bujwid-Kurek, *Serbia w nowej przestrzeni ustrojowej. Dzieje, ustrój, konstytucja*, Kraków 2012; D. Mikucka-Wójtowicz, *Demokratyczna transformacja w Serbii i Chorwacji w latach 1990-2010*, Kraków 2014.

Both of the main coalition groups (*vide: Demokratska Stranka – DS and Demokratska Stranka Srbije – DSS*), however, were divided by many political and economic issues. This was a natural process since their coalition was not policy-based, but formed around opposition to the post-communist governments operating after 1990. Different views were expressed on the accountability of the dictatorship of Slobodan Milošević and on the historical policy towards Montenegro and Kosovo; the two groups differed on issues related to the extent of socioeconomic changes and their pace. The divergences became more pronounced when Montenegro held an independence referendum in May 2006, from which V. Koštunica's faction distanced itself. Another watershed event that directly shattered coalition cooperation was the reaction to the declaration of independence by Kosovo, which had a majority Albanian population but was of enormous symbolic importance for the shaping of Serbian statehood. The Democratic Party of Serbia ruled out recognizing this international fact, while the Democratic Party and the president of the Republic took a more pragmatic stance on the issue. In fact, they did not rule out international negotiations on setting the conditions for recognizing the declaration of independence of the former Serbian autonomous district.⁸

The next four years saw President Boris Tadić and his political faction (DS) take the political initiative. The government of Marko Cvetković was formed, supported by dem-

⁸ K. Pawłowski, *Państwowość Kosowa. Geneza, uwarunkowania, współczesność*, Lublin 2018; M. Ickiewicz-Sawicka, *Serbsko-albański konflikt o Kosowo. Studium kryminologiczne*, Białystok 2019.

ocrats and liberal parties. The new cabinet worked closely with the Presidential Palace, benefiting from its political support. The government's political actions were aimed at three major issues. First, vigorous efforts were made to obtain the status of a candidate country in the European Union accession procedure. In January 2007, two other Balkan states, Bulgaria and Romania, became EU members, thus the European direction of the Republic's foreign policy was perceived as "a kind of forward escape." Politicians perceived this direction as a safeguard against the Republic of Serbia sliding into a "grey zone." Opinion polls at the time – which are worth noting – indicated high support for the integration efforts. It was perceived as compensation for the loss of the historic land that was Kosovo, which was supposed to symbolize a backward-looking policy. The European direction, in turn, was seen as a symbol of a forward-looking strategy in a new global and European architecture. The second issue was closely connected with the previous one and involved negotiations with European politicians and the Kosovo authorities on normalizing relations with the former rebellious district. Suffice it to recall here that the main requirement before the start of accession talks was to stabilize relations with neighbouring countries, including Kosovo. This direction was also aided by steps taken to normalize relations with the post-Yugoslav countries with which Serbia had been at war in the 1990s (mainly Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Visits by President Tadić and expiatory gestures made during these visits were meant to demonstrate the will to turn a new page in Serbian-Muslim and Serbian-Croatian relations. The third direction of domestic policy resulted from the effects of the global economic crisis and focused

on stabilizing the economic situation in Serbia and a quick recovery from recessionary developments.⁹

The final stage in the evolution of Serbia's social and political situation begins with the defeat of incumbent President Boris Tadić seeking re-election in May 2012. The parliamentary and presidential elections in Serbia once again shaped as a clash between Boris Tadić and his party – the governing Democratic Party (DS) – and the right-wing Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka* – SNS) led by Tomislav Nikolić, which originated from the radical faction. The decision by the president to shorten the term was, however, a rather risky tactical move, which was intended by the author of the political strategy to increase the chances of an electoral victory for B. Tadić and his own party – DS. The then president primarily hoped that his personal popularity would translate into electoral success for the party and its candidates. At the same time, it is worth noting that presidential elections in Serbia are characterized by higher turnout, which seemed to favour DS, whose electorate was less disciplined. It should also be noted that due to a deteriorating economic situation in Serbia and the need to implement austerity measures, re-election of President B. Tadić in an election brought forward by nearly 10 months appeared much more likely than if the elections had been held within the constitutional time frame. The Serbian government also took a number of steps to mitigate the direct impact of the economic crisis on the standard of living of the population (by unfreezing public sector wages as well as pensions and

⁹ Ł. Reszczyński, *Belgrad rozlicza historię*, "Przegląd", 09.05.2010; J. Piaseczny, *Serbia bliżej Unii*, "Przegląd", 11.03.2012.

disability benefits).¹⁰ However, this tactic proved to be a mistake; fatigue with the rule of the incumbent head of state and his political camp prevailed, and the radical candidate Tomislav Nikolić narrowly won the presidential election. His victory came as quite a surprise to foreign commentators, sparking fears of a fundamental shift in foreign policy, i.e. vacillating between Brussels and Moscow, which sought to play a greater role in the Balkan region and saw the Republic of Serbia as its strategic partner.¹¹

The following years saw a strengthening of the position of the Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić from SNS. In March 2014, the politician triggered early elections to the Skupština, which strengthened the position of his political group and him personally its political leader. The party won nearly 50% of the vote and 158 seats in the 250-seat parliament, thus gaining an opportunity to form a government on its own for the first time since 2000. Its coalition partner, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) of the Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, also strengthened its position on political scene, as the Socialists received 13.5% and 44 seats. The 5% nationwide threshold was also crossed by two liberal democratic parties which used to form a single faction – the Democratic Party (nearly 6%, 19 MPs) and the New Democratic Party led by the former President Boris Tadić (also nearly 6%, 18 MPs). The election to the Skupština clearly confirmed

¹⁰ M. Szpala, *Taktyczna rezygnacja prezydenta Serbii*, "Analizy OSW", 18.04.2012, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2012-04-18/taktyczna-rezygnacja-prezydenta-serbii> [24.10.2020].

¹¹ M. Ristic, *Tomislav Nikolic – Stuck Between Brussels and Moscow*, Balkan Insight, 25.05.2012, <https://balkaninsight.com/2012/05/25/tomislav-nikolic-stuck-between-brussels-and-moscow/> [24.10.2020].

the domination on the political scene of A. Vučić's party, which successfully changed its image from a radical-nationalist profile to a moderate and pro-European one. In turn, the handover of the prime minister's post to Iвица Dačić in 2012 made it possible to hold the coalition partner responsible for failures and a sluggish pace of social and economic reforms. Despite the economic problems, the tactically effective moves of A. Vučić allowed SNS to double the number of seats in the National Assembly after two years of governing the country jointly. The party gained widespread support with its slogans of a total war on corruption, bold plans for foreign investment (from Russia, China and the United Arab Emirates), and the start of accession negotiations with the EU. It is worth noting at this point that the division into pro- and anti-European factions lost its significance on the political scene, and the Kosovo issue – given the waning interest of voters – ceased to be a central theme of election campaigning.¹²

Conclusions

The period after 2014 was marked by a gradual strengthening of the political position of Aleksandar Vučić, an ambitious Serbian politician. First, he headed the government, and after 2017 he moved – successfully – to the Presidential Palace, without losing control over his party. He effectively used the “forward escape” tactic by triggering early elections to the Skupština twice (in 2014 and then in 2016). His

¹² M. Szpala, *Wybory w Serbii: Pełnia władzy dla Vučića*, “Analizy OSW”, 19.03.2014, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-03-19/wybory-w-serbii-pelnia-wladzy-dla-vucicia> [24.10.2020].

party twice won nearly half of the valid votes cast, which translated into an absolute majority of parliamentary seats. And in the last election, held in the spring of 2020, the party won more than 60% of the vote (no party has had such a majority since the early 1990s). The success of SNS was facilitated by an election boycott strategy adopted by the main opposition parties. The president created clientelist structures, effectively controlling most local governments and state institutions. Mass propaganda tools used by the public media favoured the ruling party. The strengthening of A. Vučić's position was aided by the fragmentation of democratic factions, which were commonly blamed for the ineffective rule in the first decade of the 21st century. Thus, it can be concluded that the Serbian political scene has turned full circle over the past 20 years, with the dominance of the post-communist SPS being replaced by the strong position of the populists from SNS. It should not be surprising in these circumstances that A. Vučić began his political career as a minister in the 1990s governments under the watchful eye of Slobodan Milošević. The democratic factions remain as weak and fragmented as they were twenty years ago.¹³

¹³ M. Szpala, *Wybory w Serbii – manifestacja dominacji Vučića*, "Analizy OSW", 24.06.2020, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2020-06-24/wybory-w-serbii-manifestacja-dominacji-vucicia> [24.10.2020].



Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska

Between European integration and dictatorship – the policy of the Republic of Serbia (at the time of the pandemic) in 2020

Introduction

After Joe Biden won the presidency of the United States, the President of the Republic of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, stated that Serbia would be better off if Donald Trump won. Trump's defeat is seen in Europe as the beginning of the end of the triumph of the last decade's populist fervour which led to numerous distortions of democracy in the countries of Central Europe, but also in the Balkans, creating hybrid systems known i.a. as stabilocracy, which well reflects the political situation in Serbia in recent years. 2020 – significant for the whole world due to the COVID-19 pandemic – was a politically intense year for Serbia, which essentially reflected the image of Serbian domestic and international politics.

The following text aims to analyse the last year, which was politically intense in this country and during which three of the most important events came to the fore: the parliamentary elections in June, the election of the new patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and, of course, the pandemic, which is the leading theme of 2020 throughout the world. These are the key points that are part of Serbia's domestic and foreign policy (due to the volume of the article, the focus will be on integration with the EU – other political subjects, important in this policy, will only be mentioned). Significant threads that appear constantly in Serbian politics are Republika Srpska and Kosovo, which currently play a greater role in Belgrade's foreign policy than in internal affairs. All the above-mentioned issues comprehensively reflect the image of the Serbian state and the nature of the power exercised by President Aleksandar Vučić and his party. Hence, all these issues will be comprehensively analysed below.

Looking at the above-mentioned aspects of Belgrade's current policy, the article is based on the public statements of the politicians themselves and the discourse around the condition of the political opposition, which includes both analytical texts by experts from research centres, texts in scientific journals, and statements of the opposition representatives themselves. In the area of pandemic and electoral issues, information has been drawn from both national and international research and statistics.

General elections – June 2020

The current political situation in Serbia is undoubtedly related to the result of the general election, which, despite the

pandemic situation, occurred on June 21, 2020. There were 21 electoral parties and coalitions on the electoral list, and the election threshold was 3%, but that threshold does not apply to minority parties. As a result, there are only three parties in the parliament that have exceeded this threshold and four minority groups with a total of 19 seats.

However, it should be pointed out that currently in Serbia we are dealing with a one-party political system, where there is no political balance between the parties, and *the winner takes all*. Some Serbian analysts point to the fact that the last time when only three groups joined the parliament, which occurred in 1997 under the rule of Slobodan Milošević, the balance between the rulers and the opposition was greater (the first three groups received 34%-28%-19%) than in 2020, where the domination of one party excludes the real influence of other political forces (60%-10%-4%).¹⁴

¹⁴ In the context of the elections, attention should also be paid to the position of national minorities, which have also been skilfully managed in politics for several years. Currently, authorities are focusing on cooperation with Muamer Zukorlić, a longtime opponent and critic of his power, whose Justice and Peace Party won the June elections through the influence of Bosniak groups in Sandžak and is now the most influential Bosniak political force. Suleiman Ugljanin's party, which for many years alternately cooperated and opposed the Serb authorities, also received three seats. The Serbian authorities are also trying to play the BNV – the representative Bosniak institution as far as the Bosniak minority is concerned – the second largest minority in Serbia, in order to influence the election process of its members and the president. The Bosniaks see this as the implementation of a deliberate policy by Belgrade for many years that is aimed at dividing Bosniak society in Serbia in order to control this community with the help of individual politicians (for many years they were Ugljanin and Ljajić). Zukorlić himself denies his close cooperation with the authorities, pointing to the fact that he is not in the Serbian government and does not approve of every activity of the current authorities. See: B. Stojanović, *Da li je bilo ko pobedio na ovim izborima?*, Talas, <https://talas.rs/2020/06/23/dali-je-bilo-ko-pobedio-na-ovim-izborima/> [20.01.2021]; H. F. Buyuk, *Divide and Rule: The Rise and Rise of a Bosniak Strongman in Serbia*, Balkan Insight, 04.01.2021, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/04/divide-and-rule-the-rise-and-rise-of-a-bosniak-strongman-in-serbia/> [10.02.2021].

Electoral lists by name		Number of candidates	Number of votes received (percentage of votes)	Number (and percentage) of seats in parliament received
1.	Aleksandar Vučić – For Our Children	250	1 953 998 (60,65%)	188 (75,20%)
2.	Ivica Dačić – Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), United Serbia (JS) – Dragan Marković Palma	250	334 333 (10,38%)	32 (12,80%)
3.	Dr Vojislav Šešelj – Serbian Radical Party (SRS)	250	65 954 (2,05%)	0 (0,00%)
4.	Union of Hungarian of Vojvodina – Istvan Pastor	250	71 893 (2,23%)	9 (3,60%)
5.	Aleksandar Šapić – Victory for Serbia	250	123 393 (3,83%)	11 (4,40%)
6.	For Kingdom of Serbia (Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia, Monarchist Front) – Žika Gojković	250	85 888 (2,67%)	0 (0,00%)
7.	United Democratic Serbia (Vojvodina Front, Serbia 21, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Party of Modern Serbia, Citizen Democratic Forum, Democratic Union of Croats of Vojvodina, Democratic Bloc, Together for Vojvodina, Union of Romanians of Serbia, Vojvodina Party, Montenegro Party)	238	30 591 (0,95%)	0 (0,00%)
8.	Academic Muamer Zukorlić – Straight Ahead, Justice and Reconciliation Party (SPP), Democratic Party of Macedonians	86	32 170 (1,00%)	4 (1,60%)
9.	Metla 2020 (The movement established by the leader of Democratic Party of Serbia – Miloš Jovanović)	235	72 085 (2,24%)	0 (0,00%)

10.	Milan Stamatović – May the Health Win, Dragan Jovanović – Better Serbia – Healthy Serbia	181	33 435 (1,04%)	0 (0,00%)
11.	Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak – dr Sulejman Ugljanin	27	24 676 (0,77%)	3 (1,20%)
12.	Milica Đurđević Stamenkovski – Serbian Party Oathkeepers	250	45 950 (1,43%)	0 (0,00%)
13.	People's Bloc – Velimir, Ilić – general Momir Stojanović	70	7 873 (0,24%)	0 (0,00%)
14.	Sergej Trifunović – Movement of Free Citizens	158	50 765 (1,58%)	0 (0,00%)
15.	The Sovereignists – Supporters of sovereignty	130	73 953 (2,30%)	0 (0,00%)
16.	Albanian Democratic Alternative – United Valley	11	26 437 (0,82%)	3 (1,20%)
17.	Group of Citizens: 1 of 5 million	98	20 265 (0,63%)	0 (0,00%)
18.	Let the Masks Fall, Green Party, New Party	190	7 805 (0,24%)	0 (0,00%)
19.	Russian Party – Slobodan Nikolić	31	6 295 (0,20%)	0 (0,00%)
20.	Čedomir Jovanović – Coalition for Peace (Liberal-Democratic Party, Serbia's tolerance, Bosniac Citizen Party, Party of Montenegrins, Vlah National Party, Liberal-Democratic Movement of Vojvodina, Association of Yugoslav in Serbia, AMARO – Active Network of Roma Associations and Organizations, Association of Citizens "Romanians of Homolje," Skaska	188	10 158 (0,32%)	0 (0,00%)
21.	Leviathan Movement – I Live for Serbia	26	22 691 (0,70%)	0 (0,00%)

Source: Own elaboration based on Republika Srbija, Republička izborna komisija, *Izborne liste*, <https://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/tekst/sr/1937/izborne-liste.php> [16.01.2021]; *Broj dobijenih mandata – XII saziv Narodne skupštine*, Narodna Skupština Republike Srbije, [http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-narodna-skupstina-u-brojkama.737.html](http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-narodna-skupstina-u-brojka-ma/narodna-skupstina-u-brojkama.737.html) [16.01.2021].

As the analysts of the Talas portal note, Serbia, next to Armenia, is the country with the lowest level of trust in the election processes. Irregularities that were noted during the election and then prosecuted include theft of votes, the presence of dead souls on election lists, and adding votes to the diaspora lists. In total, after the analysis, the number of people on the electoral lists exceeded the number of adults entitled to vote by 700,000. There were opinions that these were the elections with the highest percentage of irregularities related to the electoral process since the revolution on October 5, 2000. If it hadn't been for these irregularities, the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) would not have exceeded 45%, possibly with a high score but not giving such an overwhelming advantage over political opponents.¹⁵

The condition of the opposition after the boycott of the 2020 elections

As of the beginning of March 2021, the opposition in parliament plays a marginal role. This situation is related to the lack of agreement and credible program proposals that would present it as a coherent force capable of managing the state, both in terms of returning to democratic standards and reforms that would be attractive to society as an electorate. Apart from the fact that the Serbian opposition is unable to offer citizens anything that the ruling party would not propose, which makes them hardly competitive on the political scene, it also does not have other arguments

¹⁵ B. Stojanović, *Da li je bilo ko pobedio...*; D. Bursać, *Glasanje u Srbiji: otkud višak u biračkom spisku?*, Talas, 19.01.2021, <https://talas.rs/2021/01/19/glasanje-u-srbiji-otkud-visak-u-birackom-spisku/> [20.01.2021].

and tools to convince voters to support it, and it turns out to be internally conflicted. Moreover, this conflict does not occur between representatives of groups with extremely different views. An example is the attitude of opposition groups towards the June elections, where some of them considered the boycott to be the best political manifesto against the authoritarian policy of the ruling camp as well as the circumstances of the elections and the change of electoral law shortly before them.¹⁶ The second part considered the boycott to lay down arms and give up the entire field to the winning party, so they took part in the elections. The consequence was a political conflict and the breakdown of cooperation between politicians six months later. The very act of boycott achieved its goal, drawing the European Parliament's attention to the Serbian political scene, which led to negotiations between the rulers and the opposition mediated by MEPs (from March 2021). However, it is likely that a total boycott by the opposition activists would trigger

¹⁶ The election campaign would be conducted under the conditions of a state of emergency, which was criticized in the West and influenced the attitude of opposition politicians, who called for the election to be postponed due to the situation in the country. The state of emergency made it impossible to conduct an honest and equal election campaign, which was factually implemented only by the ruling party, especially in the person of Vučić himself, who, as a president, was very active and involved in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the boycott was to draw attention to the fact that there was no formal and legal framework for the functioning of institutions and the implementation of civil rights in Serbia. Similarly, there were no control mechanisms that would guarantee the implementation of these rights. The Serbian government lowered the electoral threshold from 5% to 3% three months before the elections, which is the biggest change in the electoral system since 2002. There could be several reasons. The first one could be that the authorities at the time were aware that no opposition party would exceed 5% and that having an opposition in parliament is necessary to maintain at least the appearance of political pluralism, especially in the face of Western scepticism and the tendency to perceive Serbia as an undemocratic state. Secondly, Vučić and his parliamentarians could have predicted that lowering the electoral threshold would encourage smaller opposition groups to participate in elections.

a faster and more decisive reaction from the EU. Moreover, the conflict within the opposition itself led to the divergence of the paths of its leaders and ineffective activity by the opposition.¹⁷

Considering that there is no alternative to the opposition but to jointly undertake the election struggle in the future in the face of such a strong position of the SNS, Đorđe Vukadinović¹⁸ initiated the reunification of opponents of the current power with a view to the elections in 2022 (combined – local government and presidential elections in which they can put forward a common candidate), and this path is the only way to increase the chances of gaining wider support from more realistic Serbian citizens and other analysts also. Moreover, according to Vukadinović, the opposition must break its current state of hibernation, and its powerlessness on the political scene should be overcome even if it is aware that, contrary to the official – untrue – statistics, the difference between those who support the current government and its opponents is, in fact, between 5 and 7%.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Podpuni raspad sistema. Đilas i Jeremić jedan drugom okrenuli leđa*, Republika. Portal srpskog telegrafa, 14.12.2020, <https://www.republika.rs/vesti/srbija/247606/potpuni-raspad-sistema-djilas-jeremic-jedan-drugom-okrenuli-ledja> [20.12.2020].

¹⁸ Đorđe Vukadinović – editor of the journal “Nova Srpska Politička Misao” and one of the founders of the United Opposition of Serbia.

¹⁹ B. Stojanović, *Šta rade vlast i opozicija 18 meseci pred izbore?*, Talas, 20.11.2020, <https://talas.rs/2020/11/20/sta-rade-vlast-i-opozicija-18-meseci-pred-izbore/> [25.02.2021]; Đ. Vukadinović, *Najzainteresovaniji za ime opozicionog kandidata je naravno, režim – da big a mogli blagovremeno oblatiti i demonizovati*, Nova srpska politička misao, 12.01.2021, <http://91.222.7.144/politicki-zivot/najzainteresovaniji-za-ime-opozicionog-kandidata-je-naravno-rezim-%E2%80%93-da-bi-ga-mogli-blagovremeno-oblatiti-i-demonizovati.html?alphabet=l> [25.02.2021].

Domestic policy

While the first years of the rule of the SNS and Aleksandar Vučić were perceived as a new political reality after the ineffective transformation in the first decade of the 21st century, the evolution of populist trends in Europe and the United States drew attention to the multifaceted political actions of the present Serbian authorities, which were in line with these trends, aimed at weakening democracy, centralizing power, and subordinating public administration bodies, while at the same time eliminating its tripartite division of powers. Taking into account the Freedom House ranking, it can be indicated that 2018 was the last year in which Serbia was recognized as a 'free country,' receiving 76 out of 100 possible points. The following year and 2020 showed a decrease in the total by as much as 12 points, placing Serbia in the group of 'partly free' countries, with the number of points 67 in 2019, 66 in 2020, and 64 in 2021. Among the areas assessed in terms of democratic standards, the area of political rights scored the lowest, most notably exemplified by the election of representatives to parliament, which occurred in clear violation of the law, both for the 2016 and June 2020 elections. The possibility of the opposition gaining public support or even winning elections was assessed equally low due to the control and manipulation of the entire election process by the current authorities. The influence of non-political and external forces on social attitudes and choices was subjected to the same low assessment. In the area of government functioning, the lowest was assessed for the representativeness of the authorities, which was defined as a personalized tool to implement the presidential pol-

icy, which was also caused by the politicization of other public-use institutions and the lack of transparency of their activities (similarly to the government's actions). In addition, the level of security against corruption and cronyism was rated the lowest in the ranking. Regarding the scope of civil rights, the lowest-rated aspect is the freedom of speech and media, and in terms of the rule of law, judicial independence and reliability in conducting civil and criminal trials, as well as political and judicial equality of all social groups is low. A characteristic feature is that for 2020, there was no decline in the assessment of elements in the area of the right to organize and associations compared to 2019 (this will only happen in the assessment for 2021). The last, lowest-rated category is the issue of equal opportunities, freedom of employment, and the possibility of avoiding economic exploitation, which is characteristic of the early stage of transformation.²⁰

Summing up, the above assessments show that the political, social, and economic situation in Serbia is a kind of amalgam of the use of modern populist tools and mechanisms to concentrate power by a narrow ruling group and its supporters. The phenomena of an underdeveloped economic transformation can also be observed in which the introduction of a free market occurred, but the mechanisms of its control have not yet been standardized in accordance with the determinants of a developed democracy. Hence, for example, it indicated the phenomenon of economic exploitation and the lack of equal opportunities in taking up

²⁰ Serbia, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2020> [20.02.2021].

employment. Regardless of whether the Serbian authorities like the assessment of the political situation of MEPs (as in the case of Tanja Fajon's criticism of the 2020 elections), to further progress with integration, the Serbian authorities will have to comply with their opinions and recommendations. In the second half of February 2021, Serbian public opinion was electrified by a report by MEP Vladimir Bilčík, adopted by the Foreign Policy Committee of the European Parliament, which expressed full support for Serbia in the integration process, but clearly indicated the expectations of democratizing actions in the area of justice, the fight against corruption, and media freedom. As a key element of contemporary Serbian politics, Bilčík pointed to the need to re-pluralise the political scene and encourage opposition groups to be active and take part in the next elections in the face of the boycott of these in 2020. For this purpose, an inter-party dialogue was to be launched on 1 March 2021 with the mediation of EU representatives.²¹

²¹ The report may be related to the closed meeting of the SNS, which took place at the end of February 2021, at which Aleksandar Vučić had to harshly discipline his ministers for insufficient involvement in the work of the government and contact with citizens. The fact is that the Serbian president's commitment is very visible, is covered by the media and leaves no doubt as to the role and agency of this office in the state. Perhaps it was a gesture aimed at sending a signal to Brussels. See: *Vladimir Bilčík: Nastavak međupartijskog dijaloga u Srbiji 1. marta. Ključni cilj mi je da na narednim izborima učestvuju oni koji su bojkotovali prošle izbore*, Nova srpska politička misao, 25.02.2021, [http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/vladimir-bilcik-nastavak-medjupartijskog-dijaloga-u-srbiji-uz-posredstvo-evropskih-parlamentaraca-pocece-1.-marta.html?alphabet=\[25.02.2021\]](http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/vladimir-bilcik-nastavak-medjupartijskog-dijaloga-u-srbiji-uz-posredstvo-evropskih-parlamentaraca-pocece-1.-marta.html?alphabet=[25.02.2021]); *Vučić grmeo: otkrivamo šta se dešavalo iza zatvorenih vrata na sednici Predsedništva SNS*, НОВОСТИ, 25.02.2021, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/968616/vucic-grmeo-otkrivamo-sta-desavalo-iza-zatvorenih-vrata-sednici-predsednistva-sns> [25.02.2021].

Integration with the EU

The assessment of 2020 in terms of the integration process for Serbia is much more critical than the year before. There was no moving forward, and the process began to stretch in time and represented a disturbing stagnation, already known to Serbs of the first decade of the 21st century. Thus far, the dynamics of transformation in Serbia have been visible, and the government's activity has created a credible appearance of change in Serbia towards Western European standards, which could have contributed to turning the blind eye to the progressive stabilization in the country. The slowdown in the integration process (no opening or closing of any of the chapters in 2020) and the decline of Serbia in the international assessment as a country that implements democratic standards, along with the combination of opinions about another postponement of Serbia's accession to the EU, highlights the nature of the rule of Aleksandar Vučić and his party, placing him unequivocally in the ranks of the populist authorities. Critics of the SNS rule pointed to the fact that the closer Serbia was to the European Union, the further it moved away from its standards. Despite the internal signals in the form of mass protests, as well as the external ones in the form of international rankings, the nature of the power of the president and his party was acceptable to the West.²²

²² V. Velebit, *Koliko je Srbija zalutala na evropskom putu tokom 2020. godine?*, Talas, <https://talas.rs/2020/12/29/koliko-je-srbija-zalutala-na-evropskom-putu-tokom-2020-godine/> [23.01.2021].

This is confirmed, for example, by the position of Olivér Várhelyi,²³ who, after the elections in Serbia in June 2020, stated that the gaining of the majority of seats in the parliament by the ruling party would give them the opportunity to accelerate reforms in the formal and legal area and in media freedom. In Serbia, criticism has been raised by the anti-government camp, accusing EU commissioners of complete ignorance of the Serbian reality. The fact is that it is the area of media activity that is presented as most limited by state authorities, as is the stagnation of reforms in the area of the rule of law, while efficiency and independence of the judiciary are clearly noticeable in the accession process. Várhelyi's statement could have been both a political bluff and a real incentive for the Serbian authorities to take advantage of the power of ruling to implement effectively the requirements set by the EU without possible internal political disputes.

What is more, among the voices of criticism there is a statement that this model of exercising power is deliberately implemented by Vučić, who is aware of the need to change the methods of exercising power, and until he changes his methods, integration will not progress and ultimately will not be possible. It therefore seems that at the moment it is a politically successful situation for the SNS, in which, on the one hand, Serbia gives the West the appearance of a democratizing state, and the EU, by taking up this game, indicates that there is still a long way ahead of Serbia, playing against reluctance in the EU to expand further. On the

²³ Olivér Várhelyi – longtime European diplomat and member of the European Commission, supported by Viktor Orban for this position.

other hand, the Serbian authorities may point to the ongoing dialogue between the EU and Belgrade, proving the legitimacy of the ruling party's moves without alarming signals from Brussels. However, while its authoritarian aspirations have already been reviewed by the EU, the question can be asked about the limit of endurance of Serbian society, which is currently mired in apathy, unable to generate a stimulus to mobilize political change.²⁴

The state's fight against COVID-19

The pandemic and the decisions made in relation to various bans which are taking place all over Europe is undoubtedly one of the factors that both caused and perpetuates this apathy. On March 15, 2020, a state of emergency was introduced in Serbia, was lifted one and a half months later, and has not been re-introduced since. Despite warnings about a third wave of the pandemic, in February 2021, the president announced that the state of emergency would not be introduced. A curfew has been introduced several times, including 83 hours during Easter 2020. At the beginning of June, many restrictions were loosened, which, like in Poland, was related to the elections, and announcements of the introduction of new restrictions appeared shortly after them at the beginning of July. Serbia is among the countries with a high infection incidence (until February 21, 2021), amounting to over 370 people per million inhabitants. The peak occurred on December 1, 2020, when 1,175.53 were in-

²⁴ V. Velebit, op. cit.

fects per million people.²⁵ However, Serbia is among the countries with the fastest rate of vaccination of citizens. The government has adopted a strategy for Serbia to purchase all vaccines approved for the European market. Not being an EU member, they also avoided the solidarity scenario, which is one of the reasons for delaying vaccination in other countries. In addition to the American Pfizer vaccine, the British-Swedish Astra Zeneca, the Russian Sputnik V, and the Chinese Sinopharm vaccines were purchased. The largest number of vaccines purchased by Serbian authorities came from China (1.5 million), then from Russia (Serbs are expected to receive 2 million doses). By February 10, the authorities had purchased 45,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and 150,000 of the British Astra Zeneca.²⁶

The first delivery of vaccines appeared on December 22, 2020, in the amount of 5,000 (10,000 were planned). Taking into account the pace of order delivery, the Republic of Serbia was at the forefront of European countries that received vaccines the earliest, and in the region, it was the leader. The Serbian authorities, citing statistics, paint a picture of the complete success of the vaccination process, showing the state of February 10, 2021, when Serbia was 8th in the world for vaccinated people, with 8 out of 100 vaccinated people. Compared to other European countries, it was even better, being in the 2nd place, and on February 14 it was even in the 5th place in the world. Moreover, as of February 21, 2021, it

²⁵ More details on it see: COVID-19, Република Србија. Министарство здравља, <https://covid19.rs/> [25.02.2021].

²⁶ M. Janković, J. Geogievski, *Zašto je Srbija u vrhu zemalja po broju imunizovanih*, BBC News, 11.02.2021, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-55980819> [20.02.2021].

was the second after Israel in terms of the number of people vaccinated per day.²⁷

President Aleksandar Vučić uses, like other political leaders in Europe and in the world, the successes of the policy towards the pandemic to create a positive image of the authorities. Since the appearance of vaccines, it has been announced that anti-COVID-19 vaccinations will be free, and Serbia itself will receive 50-100,000 free of charge vaccines because he *has friends in the world*. On December 24, Serbia transferred 55 doses to Serbian municipalities in the north of Kosovo to vaccinate the medical staff of the local health service. There have been protests by the Kosovar authorities over the fact that the transfer of these vaccines occurred without agreement between Belgrade and Pristina. More vaccine trucks, which were dispatched in the following days, were stopped at the border. In response to the attitude of the Kosovar authorities, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić stated that Serbia was shipping medical articles that save lives, not artillery. Moreover, Serbian authorities declared their willingness to send vaccines to Kosovo Albanians, which was treated as a propaganda gesture by Belgrade due to the small number of them and the fact that Kosovo was to receive its vaccines only in spring. It should be noted, however, that Serbia continues to support Kosovo Serbs regarding vaccinating against other diseases, so the question should be asked whether these deliveries, which have been going on

²⁷ Daily new COVID-19 vaccination doses administered per 100 people, Feb 21, 2021, Our World in Data, <https://tiny.pl/9xq4w> [21.02.2021]; Serbia leads region in Expecting COVID 19 vaccines within days, Balkan Insight, 21.12.2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/21/serbia-leads-region-in-expecting-covid-19-vaccines-within-days/> [21.02.2021].

for 20 years, are the subject of the Pristina-Belgrade agreement, or whether it is also an arbitrary action?²⁸

The Kosovo issue

The vaccine thread is, however, one of the many topics related to the topic of Kosovo in Serbian politics. At the beginning of March 2021, during the visit of the EU special envoy Miroslav Lajčak, Aleksandar Vučić left no doubt about Serbia's unchanging position on further dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina aimed at normalizing relations, a wording that often defines the nature of talks with Pristina over the past decade. In the near future, the position of Joe Biden, whose policy towards the Balkan Peninsula may provide new stimuli for political change in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, may become crucial for the Serbian authorities. Serbian public opinion is informed by Washington's strong pressure, with Germany's firm stance on this issue, to recognize its own subjectivity. A question can be asked what strategy will be taken by the Serbian authorities, which are currently stressing the lack of implementation of the agreements of recent years by the Albanian side (mainly the lack of implementation of the agreement on the Union of Serbian Municipalities in Kosovo), and, according to Vučić, leads to a situation where one side gets everything and the other gets nothing.²⁹ However, attention should be paid to

²⁸ X. Bami, A. Ahmeti, *Serbia accused of playing politics by sending vaccines to Kosovo*, Balkan Insight, 29.12.2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/29/serbia-accused-of-playing-politics-by-sending-vaccines-to-kosovo/> [01.02.2021].

²⁹ D. Milinković, *Beograd neće sporazum uz priznavanje: Vučić tokom razgovora s Lažakom izneo jasnu i nepokolebljivu poziciju naše strane u nastavku dijaloga*, Новости, 05.03.2021, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/971469/beograd-neze-spora->

new elements in the statements of the Serbian authorities to Serbian citizens. The president himself stated that *nobody in the West thinks that Kosovo is not independent*,³⁰ stressing that regardless of the change of government in the United States or in Germany, the position of these authorities will not change. He also added that the independence of Kosovo will not be recognized until the elections in 2022, and that after the elections, *the people will decide*.³¹ This is the first of the signals showing a change in the narrative. Currently, Belgrade seems to be most focused on the concept of territorial exchange, which Vučić probably considers the most optimal solution to the political stalemate. This is a rational option that could reconcile both the objectives of contemporary Serbian policy: EU pressure on Serbia to resolve the Kosovo issue, which is a precondition for accelerating the accession process, and the historic importance of Kosovo for the Serbian people. Obtaining a part of the territory inhabited by Serbs, as well as the one containing the most important religious and cultural heritage sites, would allow the authorities to indicate the true state of affairs that the territory of present Raška region, which (partially) constitutes the cradle of first medieval Serbian state, belongs to Serbia. Assuming that this would be an acceptable position for a more moderate part of Serbian society, it could support such a position by the authorities in a referendum (which is essentially what the current ruling party and the president

zum-priznavanje-vucic-tokom-razgovora-lajcakom-izneo-jasnu-nepokolebljivu-poziciju-nase-strane-nastavku-dijaloga [07.03.2021].

³⁰ Vučić: *do izbora 2022. neće biti priznanja Kosova, posle narod odlučuje*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 18.12.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/31008258.html> [13.01.2021].

³¹ Ibidem.

are counting on). For now, people interested in the Serbia topic may determine that the Serbian authorities will not admit again that they have reaffirmed Kosovo's independence (which is often emphasized by Pristina in the circumstances of signing another agreement). Perhaps the goal is to make the topic tired. Repeating this phrase so often that people will stop reacting to it and will not realize when the narrative changes suggests that the Serbian authorities have not denied that they have confirmed Kosovo's independence.

The Republic of Srpska

In addition to the Kosovo theme, the political entity that has played out most prominently in Serbian politics for 25 years is the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbian politicians, both those from the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Srpska, have fundamentally changed their approach to the Bosnian state over the past 25 years while still placing the Serbian national interest first. However, the systemic positioning of this national interest has changed. In 1995, the incorporation of Republic of Srpska into the Bosnian state was considered a failure of the Pale and Belgrade policies, and the political state itself was described as a temporary one. The narrative presented by Serbian politicians from Banja Luka, aimed at striving for separation and independence, was maintained until 2018. In the second decade of the 21st century, this narrative evolved under the influence of political factors obliging the Bosnian state to introduce fundamental changes at the constitutional level, for which Serbian BiH politicians became the guardians of the constitutional order established in Dayton and refused to agree to changes in the area of received rights and com-

petence. In both these attitudes, they could count on the support of Belgrade, which was playing a double political game, slightly different from Sarajevo and different from Banja Luka. The situation of the Bosnian state, which has kept it in economic and political stagnation, has for years required in-depth, systemic, and perhaps also constitutional solutions. For years, however, there has been no stimulus to initiate these changes. This changed at the beginning of 2021, when the newly elected President of the United States, Joe Biden, announced a revision of the Dayton Agreement. It was negatively assessed by the Serbs and the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, who considered it as an attempt to take away the Serbian Republic's powers and competences, vital to the interests of the Serbian people.

The Serbian Orthodox Church and the election of a new patriarch

Vučić and his party gained influence not only in the minority field in Kosovo and the Republic of Srpska, but also by gaining support for the direction of their policies, which are important in the life of Serbs of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC), which has been very actively involved in Belgrade's politics since the creeping collapse of the SFR of Yugoslavia. The church plays an important role in the political and social life of Serbs, as well as in the Kosovo narrative, and has so far been firmly opposed to the recognition of Kosovo's independence. After 2000, SOC was heavily involved in criticizing the pro-Western and pro-EU direction of the authorities, highlighting the correlative compatibility of the Serbian state, identity, and culture with the Orthodox Church and the Slavic East, in which it was strongly supported by the

Russian Orthodox Church. After the death of Patriarch Pavle and the election of Irinej as the Patriarch of SOC in 2010, there was a decade of activity by the church, which may have been due to the election of new, presumably more conservative, SNS authorities in 2012 and the patriarch's ambivalent attitude to the policies of Aleksandar Vučić.³² In addition, in 2018 the SOC Holy Synod rejected the current concept of territorial exchange, but the president did not stop trying to convince Orthodox hierarchs of it. The death of Patriarch Irinej in November 2020 could mark the opening of a new chapter in SOC's cooperation with the authorities, hence the election of a new patriarch was an important issue for the current ruling camp. The question may be raised as to whether and to what extent the Serbian president was unofficially engaged into the election of the new patriarch. Analysts' opinions on this issue are divided. Although the theologian Jovan Blagojević claims that the election of the patriarch was not influenced in a decisive way by a political factor, or in particular by the president, it follows from his words that the political element was probably taken into account, although not in a decisive way. The former metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana, Porfirije was elected the new patriarch and is perceived as a representative of the younger generation of clergymen in Serbia who is better acquainted with modern technological trends as a means of communication and more involved in social life than in

³² A. Domachowska, K. Pawłowski, *Serbska Cerkiew Prawosławna w Żalobie: śmierć metropolity Czarnogóry i Przymorza Amfilohije oraz patriarchy Serbskiej Cerkwi Prawosławnej Irineja*, "Komentarze IES", 2020, no. 296, 07.12.2020, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/serbska-cerkiew-prawoslawna-w-zalobie-smierc-metropolity-czarnogory-i-przymorza-amfilohije-oraz-patriarchy-serbskiej-cerkwi-prawoslawnej-irineja/> [20.02.2021].

the construction of another church. Thus, he is a representative of a more moderate ecclesiastical party, although he is not perceived as *the best possible choice of Vučić*.³³ Certainly, the role of the patriarch will be an important element in the continued exercise of power; hence, the president met the patriarch a few days after his election, where in the light of media flashes a common position was heard that for the proper functioning of the state, cooperation between the church and the authorities was needed.

Conclusions

The current Serbian authorities in 2020 were in a very good position. Serbia is ruled by a new generation of politicians who use existing structures to exercise power for the sake of power, with little responsibility to society. In countries where society has allowed populism, the seizure of power has created a closed system, increasingly distant from society and at the same time giving the impression that society ceases to influence what is happening in the state. The broad populist program leads to a kind of inertia of opposition, which is unable to offer an alternative attractive to the voters. Moreover, it is unable to convince the majority of society that restoring the rule of law and democratic standards will benefit them. Activities in the field of combating the pandemic allow the authorities to create the impression of large and prosocial activities, covering other measures taken by the authorities. The pandemic, if

³³ N. Anđelković, *Srbija i crkva: Šta znači ozbor Porfirija na mesto patrijarha Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, BBC News, 18.02.2021, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-56116083> [20.02.2021].

not strengthening populism, then prolongs the beginning of their end. On the other hand, the change in the EU's policy towards Serbia indicates that these authorities have reached the limit of institutional centralization. Moreover, international circumstances forced Serbian authorities to end its manoeuvring over Kosovo and the Republika Srpska and to define its position unequivocally. Belgrade opted for a hard course in defending national interests, but managed to develop a relatively strong position and arguments for setting its own conditions in both the above cases. However, in domestic politics, the apathy of the opposition indicates that the only stimulus for political change may come from civic protests, which have been systematically limited due to the pandemic. However, despite the fact that their scale in 2018 was large, it showed that the attitude of populist rulers is calculated to ignore this form of civic expression of will until citizens, tired of prolonged demonstrations, give up. A question may be asked whether this form of expressing civic will is no longer a means of influencing the centres of power? Looking at the example of Serbia, one can answer in the affirmative (in Poland, the dissatisfaction of citizens, expressed in the protests, influenced the change of support for the ruling party, noted in the polls). One can only hope that the end of the pandemic will release new energy and willingness to act in citizens, perhaps supported by the effects of EU mediation in the dialogue between the opposition and the authorities.



Anna Jagiełło-Szostak

The foreign policy of Serbia under Aleksandar Vučić presidency (2017-2020). Hauling the rope between powers

Introduction

This article analyses contemporary foreign policy of the Republic of Serbia, focusing on the presidency of Aleksandar Vučić, elected in 2017.¹ Attention was paid to important external and, to some extent, internal factors, including the political, economic, military, and cultural dimensions of relations with the European Union, NATO, Russia, Turkey, China, and the U.S. Reflection on the political dispute over Kosovo with the engagement of international actors was taken into consideration. However, in order to fully investigate the factors shaping Serbia's foreign policy, reference

¹ Aleksandar Vučić – the president of Serbia from May 2017; in the years 2014-2017 the prime minister; in the years 2012-2014 the deputy prime minister. During Milošević's rule, he was the minister of information in 1998-2000. Leader of the Serbian Progressive Party.

was also made to the policies pursued by his predecessors, Boris Tadić and Tomislav Nikolić, in the period 2004-2017.

The goals of the foreign policy of Serbia

The foreign policy of the Republic of Serbia since 2006 has no precisely defined priorities. It is mainly shaped by the inclinations of foreign ministers and presidents. Thus the last discussions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dačić² held in 2018 were taken into account. The current government is also seen as a successor to the Milošević era, e.g. the President of Serbia, A. Vučić, the Foreign Minister, I. Dačić, and the Minister of Defence, Aleksandar Vulin,³ who started their political careers during the rule of Slobodan Milošević. There is also no strategic document setting out the assumptions of foreign policy. Some of the objectives and elements of the analysed policies are evident in the National Security Strategies of the Republic of Serbia issued in 2009 and 2019;⁴ however, they relate mainly to security issues. In the discussed period between 2017-2018, the direction of foreign policy is described as “pillars” or “geopolitical options,”

² Ivica Dačić – from 2020 the speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, the minister of foreign affairs (2016-2020); the prime minister of Serbia (2012-2014); from 2008 to 2014 the minister of the internal affairs, from 2006 the chairman of the Socialist Party of Serbia. Ivica Dačić's successor is Nikola Selaković, who is the minister of foreign affairs since 2020. In the years 2012-2016 he was the minister of justice.

³ Aleksandar Vulin – in the years 2012-2016 he was the minister for Kosovo and Metohija, and then the minister of labour. In the cabinet of Ana Brnabić from 2017 he was the minister of defence and from 2020 the minister of internal affairs.

⁴ Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade 2009, <http://www.voa.mod.gov.rs/documents/national-security-strategy-of-the-republic-of-serbia.pdf> [12.11.2020]; Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade 2019, http://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2019/Strategy%20of%20National%20Security%20of%20the%20Republic%20of%20Serbia.pdf [12.11.2020].

among which the most strongly emphasized elements are protection of territorial integrity and sovereignty; preservation of Kosovo; the continuation of the negotiation process with the European Union aimed at full membership; cooperation with strategic partners of China and Russia and developing relations with Turkey,⁵ as well as further development of good neighbourly relations and stronger economic ties with the most important countries; and “military neutrality.” In addition, cooperation with the U.S. and the development of relations with the countries of Africa, Asia, and South America were also mentioned⁶ as further goals of foreign policy.

The foreign policies of the three presidencies of Boris Tadić (2004-2012), Tomislav Nikolić (2012-2017), and A. Vučić (from 2017) can be described as “juggling” of international cooperation. After winning elections in 2004, B. Tadić from the Democratic Party (DS) continued the policy of the former Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, maintaining the pro-European course and implementing the necessary reforms and international cooperation. Among the most delicate and key issues were the status of Kosovo, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugo-

⁵ Serbia's strategic partners who have signed strategic partnership and cooperation agreements include: Italy (2009), France (2011), China and Russia (2013), Greece (2019). Moreover, Azerbaijan is described as such by Serbia and Turkey, which consider Serbia to be a strategic partner. See: The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Strengthening strategic partnership of Serbia, Azerbaijan*, 20.09.2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/145401/strengthening-strategic-partnership-of-serbia-azerbaijan.php> [22.11.2020]; The President of the Republic of Serbia, *Declaration on strategic partnership between the two countries signed in Greece*, 11.12.2019, <https://www.predsednik.rs/en/press-center/news/declaration-on-strategic-partnership-between-the-two-countries-signed-in-greece> [24.11.2020].

⁶ *Ključni prioriteti spoljne politike Srbije*, Politika.rs, 11.01.2018, <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/396249/Kljucni-prioriteti-spoljne-politike-srbije> [20.11.2018].

slavia (ICTY), reform of the judiciary and security apparatus, the fight against organized crime and corruption, and trials of the alleged murderers of Z. Đinđić. The right-wing government headed by Vojislav Koštunica from the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) stood in opposition to Z. Đinđić and B. Tadić. There were big differences of opinion between the two politicians about Serbia's past and future. V. Koštunica was an opponent of the EU, opposed cooperation with the ICTY, and was a supporter of Russia.⁷

During the presidency of B. Tadić, EU representatives indicated that Serbia is a key partner in the region and that its integration is in the EU's interest, but the state needed to take concrete steps to reform and cooperate with the Hague Tribunal.⁸ It was emphasized that Serbia stood at a crossroads and had two choices: follow the European path or turn towards isolation. However, T. Nikolić (Serbian Progressive Party, SNS) counter-candidate in the 2008 elections, pointed out that Serbia's future is linked to the East and Russia, which is a "symbolic" friend or "sentiment" friend of Serbia and rejects the United States and the European Union policy on Kosovo. By contrast, Tadić was following a pro-European course. Generally, Serbia's foreign policy after 2008 was highly dispersed and focused on the four pillars of cooperation with Russia, the EU, the U.S., and China. In addition, subsequent goals assumed cooperation with Turkey and NATO and maintaining good relations in South-Eastern Europe. Despite numerous obstacles, the period 2004-2012 was

⁷ L. Leszczenko, H. Giebień, J. Jarząbek, A. Jagiełło-Szostak, E. Szyszczak, T. Szyszczak, *Pogranicza cywilizacji. Wpływ dylematów tożsamościowych na politykę zagraniczną i bezpieczeństwa wybranych państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Warszawa 2019, pp. 105-130.

⁸ Ibidem.

characterized by rapprochement with the EU, cooperation with the ITCY, normalization of relations with Kosovo, and improvement of relations in the Western Balkans region. When T. Nikolić was elected president in 2012, a strong pro-Russian course and, at the same time, cooperation with the EU became apparent. Such a policy was continued by his successor, A. Vučić, who did not sever pro-Russian sympathies even while maintaining relations with the EU and drawing attention to regional and bilateral relations. During A. Vučić presidency, the most frequent and important internal policy problems described by the media were the slow process of European integration, the lack of freedom of the media, corruption, and national and identity discourse over the past events with neighbouring countries.

The EU and NATO - the policy of “cold love and hate”

The involvement of the European Union in Serbia has been visible since the beginning of the 1990s. After signing the Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2008, Serbia applied for official membership in the EU, and negotiations for accession to the Union started in 2014. But events over the last few years, such as the migration crisis (Serbia was financially supported by the EU), Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the renewal of Catalanian independence aspirations in 2017 (what may cause separations in the Balkans), Brexit in 2020, the desire of Greece or Hungary to leave the EU, the epidemiological crisis, and the climate crisis all had an enormous impact on the stability of EU and its enlargement process. It should be noted that in 2016 the EU's European Security Strategy indicated a policy of enlargement, the

fight against terrorism, and stabilization through the use of external missions. However, the Serbian government proposed the “regatta principle” in the assessment of the preparation for the membership, which provided for individual assessment of candidate countries in the Balkan region instead of treating them as a “package.” The EU is the biggest donor in grants (Instrument for Pre-Accession, IPA) and lending (e.g. European Investment Bank, EIB, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, EBRD) to Serbia. The financial support is provided through the EU in the areas such as the rule of law, public administration reform, social development, the environment, and agriculture. Further, Serbia is one of the biggest recipients of the EU funds among the Western Balkans. Investments are made in the areas of transport infrastructure (e.g. Gazella bridges, roads, and border crossings), health care (e.g. ambulance cars), air and water quality, solid waste (e.g. Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica), education (e.g. Erasmus cooperation), and reforming public administration.⁹

Opinion about EU enlargement among Serbian politicians varies. The Prime Minister Ana Brnabić¹⁰ in 2017 stated that “Serbia would choose the EU before Russia if it had been forced to make such a choice,” while the Minister for Integration, Jadranka Jaksimović, argued that Serbia’s position on integration remains unchanged. Boško Jaksimović, an analyst from Belgrade, points out that “the country is confused as Serbia declares EU membership as its strategic

⁹ The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, *EU Assistance to Serbia*, <https://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/?lang=en> [01.12.2020].

¹⁰ Ana Brnabić – since 2017 the prime minister of Serbia.

goal.”¹¹ At present, Serbia has 18 of 35 open chapters, two of which are provisionally closed¹² and the whole process of integration is slow, dependent on internal and external aspects, as well as the Kosovo issue.

Analysing citizen opinion of EU integration in 2006, 2012, 2017, 2019, and 2020 there is a significant change in support for the European path. According to the Ministry of European Integration in Serbia, in November 2006, 69.9% of respondents acknowledge that they would be in favour of European integration. In June 2012, 49%, and in December, 41% would vote for the EU, a huge drop of EU support in the period of between 2006-2012 that was related to the internal power shifts. In June 2017, 49%, while in June 2019, 53% were in favour of Serbia's integration with the EU.¹³ The last governmental poll, from January 2020, showed that 54% would vote in support of EU integration slight but constant increase in support for the EU.¹⁴

NATO is an important area of foreign and security policy for Serbia, but I. Dačić strongly emphasizes that Serbia should implement a policy of military neutrality, which means that it does not want a membership in any military alliance. However, military neutrality is not an obstacle to

¹¹ M. Seputyte, G. Filipović, *Russia's Embrace Sows 'Total Confusion' for Serbia's EU Hopes*, bloomberg.com, 18.08.2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-18/russia-s-embrace-sows-total-confusion-for-serbia-s-eu-hopes> [20.12.2018].

¹² European Commission, *Serbia 2020 Report*, Brussels, 06.10.2020 SWD(2020) 352 final, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf [24.11.2020].

¹³ Ministry of European Integration, Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Public opinion Poll*, <https://www.mei.gov.rs/eng/documents/national-documents/public-opinion-poll/> [23.11.2020].

¹⁴ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Continuous support of citizens to Serbia's EU membership*, 22.01.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/149496/continuous-support-of-citizens-to-serbias-eu-membership.php> [20.11.2020].

improving cooperation with NATO. Political dialogue is developing, especially with the adoption of the Action Plan on Individual Partnership and participation in the Partnership for Peace since 2006. The policy of neutrality was introduced by a resolution of the National Assembly of Serbia in 2007 *On the protection of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and internal order of the Republic of Serbia* that describes Serbia as a militarily neutral state.¹⁵ Thus, contention around the illegal bombing of Serbia and the illegality of the government in Kosovo suggests problems with the aforementioned “neutrality” policy. Similarly, the minister of national defence in a December 2018 speech pointed out that military neutrality is a costly and honourable decision for Serbia. As noted by Božidar Forca, Serbia emphasizes a policy of neutrality towards political and military alliances, but focuses it mainly on NATO.¹⁶ The issue of neutrality has been minimally mentioned in the *National Security Strategy* (2019), and the country cooperates with NATO by means of the PfP Programme while pursuing military neutrality even in the absence of membership in any military-political alliance,¹⁷ which *de facto* means that Serbia does not want to be a NATO

¹⁵ ‘Due to the general role of NATO, from the unlawful bombing of Serbia, without a decision of the Security Council to Annex 11 of the rejected Ahtisaari plan that defines NATO as the “highest authority” in “independent Kosovo,” the National Assembly decides to declare the military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia with respect to the existing military alliance, until a possible referendum in which the final decision will be taken.’ See: National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, *Резолуција Народне Скупштине Републике Србије о заштити суверенитета, територијалног интегритета и уставног поретка Србије*, 26.12.2007, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/> [29.11.2020].

¹⁶ B. Forca, *Vojna neutralnost Republike Srbije. Između deklarativnog opredeljenja i postupanja u praksi*, [in:] *Uticaj vojne neutralnosti Srbije na bezbednost i stabilnost u Evropi*, S. T. Korać (ed.), Beograd 2016, p. 118.

¹⁷ Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade 2019, p. 24.

member. Serbia seems to be implementing a policy of military neutrality by participating in symbolic exercises with its Western and Eastern allies. In 2017, manoeuvres, also called the Slavic Brotherhood, took place in Brest, Belarus, in which soldiers from Russia, Belarus and Serbia participated. Similar exercises took place also in 2018 and 2019. But in 2020 Serbia withdrew from participating in the joint Slavic Brotherhood exercise due to its aspirations to the European Union. Moreover, in this period Serbia suspended military exercises with any partner (NATO, Russia, China) for six months, motivating its decision with the policy of military neutrality. In turn, in Lisičij Jarak in Serbia, exercises with the American and Serbian troops called 'Winter – 2017' and 'Double Eagle 2017' took place. NATO-Serbia exercises result from the Partnership for Peace.¹⁸ According to the Balkan Security Network, in 2019 there were 17 military training sessions, 13 of which were organized under NATO and 4 with Russia. It should be noted that NATO respects Serbia's policy of military neutrality.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the Serbian elite and society seem to have a negative attitude towards NATO due to its bombing campaign in 1999. In a 2019 Atlantic Council's survey, 89% of

¹⁸ Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, *Joint Air Live Firing Exercise "Shabla 2017"*, 13.07.2017, <http://www.mod.gov.rs/eng/11255/zajednicko-bojno-gadjanje-ciljeva-u-vazdusnom-prostoru-sabla-2017-11255> [29.10.2020]; A. Radić, *Whom to rely on: Serbia between East and West*, europeanwesternbalkans.com, 06.12.2017, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/12/06/rely-serbia-east-west/> [29.10.2020].

¹⁹ *Serbia held more exercises with NATO than with Russia in 2019*, europeanwesternbalkans.com, 18.11.2019, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2019/11/18/serbia-held-more-exercises-with-nato-than-with-russia-in-2019/> [10.09.2021]; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Relations with Serbia*, 06.04.2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50100.htm [10.09.2021].

Serbian citizens did not support Serbia joining the organisation.²⁰

U.S. – slow rapprochement in bilateral relations?

Due to the bombing of Serbia in 1999 related to the escalation of the conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, U.S.-Serbia relations have been very strained over the past 30 years. One event, the arson of the U.S. embassy in Belgrade, followed the declaration of independence by Kosovo in 2008. I. Dačić emphasized in 2018 that Serbia wanted to improve relations with the U.S. despite the lack of a solution to the Kosovo problem. Americans also appear to have taken over the role of mediators between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. After the Alpbach forum,²¹ in 2018 the idea of border correction appeared with the support of Hashim Thaçi, contrary to the EU, which opposes such a solution and opts for a multi-ethnic society because it fears a renewed escalation of violence.

The American position sees Serbia as a one of key points in the Balkans. In 2019, the president appointed the special envoy for peace negotiations in Serbia and Kosovo, and the secretary of state appointed a special representative for the Western Balkans. The envoy's goal was to encourage Kosovo and Serbia to accelerate the process of normalizing mutual

²⁰ S. Bjelotomic, *Survey: 89% of Serbian citizens against their country joining NATO*, serbian-monitor.com, 12.06.2019, <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/survey-89-serbian-citizens-against-their-country-joining-nato/> [20.11.2020].

²¹ A. Ivković, *Supporters and opponents of Kosovo-Serbia border change: What do we know so far?*, europeanwesternbalkans.com, 04.09.2018, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/09/04/supporters-opponents-kosovo-serbia-border-change-know-far/> [29.11.2020].

relations and to focus on mutual recognition, which, according to the U.S. counsel, contributed to stabilization in the region. The U.S. makes further cooperation dependent on public reform, private sector growth, and a rule of law amendment.²² Signing an agreement on normalization and economic relations in Washington in September 2020 is an example of the U.S. policy towards Serbia. Serbian President A. Vučić and Kosovo's Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti signed the agreement in the presence of President Donald Trump. The agreement aroused a lot of controversy from the very beginning. No mention was made of the partition of Kosovo, mediated by Presidents A. Vučić and H. Taçi. On the one hand, the U.S. can be seen as a rival to Serbia-EU relations, and on the other hand, it can be seen as support for earlier promises to normalize Belgrade-Pristina relations, previously made under the auspices of the EU Brussels Agreement (2011, 2013, 2015). Vučić indicated that he is proud of the agreement with the Americans.²³ According to the *Financial Times* in its discussion of the bombings of the 90s, the president of Serbia mentioned that it was not

²² U.S. Embassy in Serbia, *U.S. & Serbia Relations*, <https://rs.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/us-country-relations/> [02.12.2020].

²³ The states agreed on the development of infrastructure (including the construction of the Belgrade-Pristina motorway and work on the construction of the Belgrade-Durrës railway line), the deepening of work on the diversification of energy supplies, not to attack each other on the international forum. It was also indicated that countries will not use equipment on the 5G network from unreliable suppliers, what can be seen as a blow to Chinese companies. The Serbian side also pledged to move its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to recognize each other. See: N. Zaba, *Serbia i Kosovo godzą się w białym domu*, gazetaprawna.pl, 07.09.2020, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1490196,serbia-kosowo-pokoj-usa.html> [01.12.2020]; *Turkey 'disappointed' by Kosovo's move to recognise Israel*, macaubusiness.com, 06.09.2020, <https://www.macaubusiness.com/turkey-disappointed-by-kosovos-move-to-recognise-israel/> [30.11.2020].

the Trump administration that authorized the bombings.²⁴ On the one hand, an American diplomat, Richard Grenell, promised to rebuild the Ministry of Defence in Belgrade. On the other hand, Grenell proposed that the disputed Gazivoda/Ujman lake in Kosovo could be called the Trump Lake, which was highly controversial for the Serbian side, and welcomed by A. Hoti. It seems that Serbia may sacrifice relations with Russia and China in particular to normalize relations with its neighbour and show a peaceful approach to the difficult Kosovo issue.

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) Centre for Insights in Survey Research (CISR) conducted a survey in Western Balkan countries where one of the questions was which country is the most important economic partner. The results from mid-June 2020 are as follows: 94% answered that in Kosovo the United States is the most important, while in Serbia only 13% of respondents indicated the U.S., whereas Russia (73%) and China (71%) are among the most important economic partners,²⁵ and their relations are described as strategic.

Russia – dividing lines between East (Russia) and West (EU)?

Serbian-Russian relations are developing in the political, military, economic, cultural, and religious spheres, and are also important in terms of maintaining political, energy, and identity security. Mutual relations are described by the

²⁴ V. Hopkins, *Serbia cultivates both US and China in Balkans tug of war*, ft.com, 11.10.2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/2ecob093-40d7-461a-a3f5-d31bf45c4b67> [23.11.2020].

²⁵ *Western Balkans Polls show strong support for EU*, iri.org, 02.06.2020, <https://www.iri.org/resource/western-balkans-poll-shows-strong-support-eu> [20.11.2020].

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia as friendly, diverse, traditional, and historical, and indicate Slavic closeness. Additional qualities were provided by the Declaration on Strategic Partnership signed in 2013.²⁶ The 2016 Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, in the chapter devoted to international humanitarian cooperation and human rights, indicates that “development of cultural and humanitarian contacts between the Slavic nations at the international level.”²⁷ There is no direct provision in the Strategy regarding, for example, cooperation with the Western Balkans, including Serbia, but only a reference to “Slavic nations.”

During regular cooperation and meetings, Presidents A. Vučić and W. Putin met in mid-January 2019 in Belgrade. The president of Serbia was awarded the order of Alexander Nevsky, which is considered an honour. Before the meeting, Serbia’s expectations concerned investments in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, defence systems, education, and tourism. The plans also included contracts for the construction of railway corridors, the connection of Serbia to the Turkish Stream gas pipeline, and the export of Serbian food products to Russia. Both countries signed agreements of mutual cooperation. The Russian president was greeted with honours and described as a friend of Serbia. In turn, the Western media repeated that the Russian president had suggested that Western forces, including the

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Deklaracija o strateškom partnerstvu između Republike Srbije i Ruske Federacije*, 24.05.2013, Arh. broj 9077/13 D-77/13, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/images/stories/bilateral_ugovori/rusija.pd [22.11.2020].

²⁷ Ambasada Rosji w Polsce, *Koncepcja polityki zagranicznej Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Poland. mid.ru, https://poland.mid.ru/pl_PL/web/Polska_pl [22.11.2018].

U.S., would “destabilize” the Balkans by admitting Montenegro to NATO (2017) and attracting North Macedonia to Western alliances²⁸ and NATO (2020). In turn, there was a Putin visit planned in Belgrade in October 2020, but the plans changed and Putin did not arrive. The most probable reason might be the signing of the White House agreement on normalizing economic relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Russia is suspicious of Serbia’s recent rapprochement with the United States and a threat for Russia’s influence in the Balkans. Additionally Russia is afraid that the closest partner in the Balkans, which is Serbia, is resolving the Kosovo dispute without any Russian participation in the negotiations.²⁹ Additionally, Russia does not offer any alternative for Kosovo to Euro-Atlantic integration.³⁰

Also worth mentioning is an example of Russia’s support of the construction of cultural heritage in Serbia, which was the sponsorship of the finishing of mosaics of the monastery of St. Sava in Belgrade by Gazprom Nefit. As early as 2009, the then Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, initiated the financing of the construction of the temple in Belgrade. Experts from Russia took part in the design of the interior decoration of the temple of St. Sava. In 2016, but also currently, the initiative is named as friendly, fraternal, Christian, and

²⁸ *Putin warns West on Balkans as Serbia provides lavish welcome*, BBC, 17.01.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46892363> [01.12.2020]; M. Kokot, *Putin w Belgradzie. Kremlowska polityka wzniecania chaosu i serbska gra na dwa fronty*, wyborcza.pl, 18.01.2019, <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,24375145,kremlowska-polityka-wzniesienia-chaosu-i-serbska-gra-na-dwa-fronty.html> [20.01.2019].

²⁹ M. Stojanović, *Putin ne dolazi u oktobru u Beograd*, danas.rs, 14.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/putin-ne-dolazi-u-oktobru-u-beograd/> [20.11.2020].

³⁰ E. Vlasi, *Russian Influence in Kosovo: In the shadows of myth and reality*, “Occasional Paper”, 2020, no. 7, [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report-Russian-Influence-in-Kosovo-English-Version_\(1\)_61417.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report-Russian-Influence-in-Kosovo-English-Version_(1)_61417.pdf) [01.12.2020].

Orthodox help. According to Serbian media reports, in the last three and a half years, Serbia spent 43 million euro and Russia contributed an additional 10 million. Similarly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, also was scheduled to pay a visit at the end of October 2020, but it was cancelled due to the coronavirus.³¹

China – strategic and developing relations?

In principle, new relations with China have been taking shape since 2013, when the two countries established a strategic partnership.³² On the one hand, these relations are within the cooperation process of 17+1 Central European countries with China, mainly in the economic area. Since 2016, after the Chinese president's visit to Serbia, bilateral relations seem to be tightening. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia characterize mutual relations as a comprehensive strategic partnership that is traditionally friendly and good.

Serbia supports China's foreign policy due to its recognition of Serbia's territorial integrity and opposition to Kosovo's independence. The NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 during the Serb-Albanian conflict is also remembered. The collaboration is mainly based on aspects related to cooperation in the field of energy, in-

³¹ M. Stojanović, op. cit.; V. Radojković, *Hram Svetog Save otvoren za posetioce: Prelepo, grandiozno, jedinstveno*, RTV.rs, 27.10.2020, https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/hram-svetog-save-otvoren-za-posetioce-prelepo-grandiozno-jedinstveno_1173788.html [20.11.2020].

³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Zajednička izjava Republike Srbije i Narodne Republike Kine o Produbljivanju strateškog partnerstva*, Arh. broj 9119/13 D-119/1, *Međunarodni bilateralni ugovori*, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/images/stories/bilateral_ugovori/kina.pdf [01.12.2020].

frastructure, information technology, and rail transport. In October 2020 another project for the construction of Railway 10 and the Belgrade-Niš line and possible cooperation with Chinese companies was discussed.³³ Though China appears to be an opponent of the EU, through Serbia, it strengthens its position for European Union markets. In respect to human rights, cooperation between the countries seems controversial. Serbia has criticized the Sino-Uyghur conflict, which was also criticized in 2019 by EU countries. Likewise, A. Vučić supports China's policy towards Taiwan and Hong-Kong.³⁴ It is worth noting that in March 2020, a few months before the parliamentary elections, President A. Vučić, in a symbolic and unequivocal gesture of kissing the Chinese flag, confirmed that China was to be treated as a "true friend." On the other hand, it is a signal to the European Union that the EU is not supporting Serbia sufficiently. In the context of the current international situation and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, Serbia was supported by China with medical equipment, two new laboratories and Chinese experts. They were brought to Serbia as humanitarian aid and "Beijing's mask diplomacy." A controversial billboard entitled "Thank you, brother Xi" ("Hvala, brother Xi") appeared on the streets of Belgrade, diminishing at the same time in a populist way the EU

³³ *Brnabic: Serbia will continue its strategic partnership with China*, balkaneu.com, 12.10.2020, <https://balkaneu.com/brnabic-serbia-will-continue-its-strategic-partnership-with-china/> [25.11.2020].

³⁴ H. A. Conley, J. E. Hillman, M. McCalpin, D. Ruy, *Becoming a Chinese Client State: The Case of Serbia*, csis.org, 24.09.2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/becoming-chinese-client-state-case-serbia> [20.11.2020].

aid to Serbia.³⁵ Vučić described cooperation with China as working with “the most honest and trustworthy friend.”³⁶

The most visible investment for the Serbian government was a loan from the Chinese Exim Bank for the modernization and construction of the railway line linking Belgrade and Budapest.³⁷ The Republic of Serbia supports the initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping on “Belt and Road.” Chinese companies are the leading infrastructure contractors in Serbia. As noted by I. Dačić, Serbia, among Central and Eastern European countries, is the one that cooperates most intensively with China.³⁸ As reported by Boehler in the *Financial Times*, the U.S. is concerned about China’s presence in South-Eastern Europe and described China’s presence as “neo-colonization.”³⁹ It is worth emphasizing that Chinese investments in Serbia are perceived not as loans but as “gifts”. As the Center for Strategic and International Studies reports in the 2020 report, when answering who Serbia could count on in foreign policy, 34% of respondents in 2005 counted on Russia, 32% on the EU, and only 3% on China. In turn, in 2018, 60%, respectively, counted on Russia, 56% on China, and 27% on the EU.⁴⁰ In the Serbian media in March 2020, it was reported that 40%

³⁵ *Serbia sets the stage for Beijing’s mask diplomacy*, Euractiv.com, 02.04.2020, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/china/news/serbia-sets-the-stage-for-beijings-mask-diplomacy/1450727/> [02.12.2020].

³⁶ *China the most trustworthy friend of Serbia: Serbian president*, beltandroad.news, 23.09.2019, <https://www.beltandroad.news/2019/09/23/china-the-most-trustworthy-friend-of-serbia-serbian-president/> [29.11.2020].

³⁷ *Serbia and China sign Belgrade – Budapest loan agreement*, railwaypro.com, 17.05.2017, <https://www.railwaypro.com/wp/serbia-china-sign-belgrade-budapest-loan-agreement/> [29.11.2020].

³⁸ *Ključni...*

³⁹ V. Hopkins, op. cit.

⁴⁰ H. A. Conley, J. E. Hillman, M. McCalpin, D. Ruy, op. cit.

of Serbs believed that China finances Serbia the most. But *de facto* the European Union is Serbia's largest donor, followed by Germany, the U.S., and the United Nations, with China in fifth place.⁴¹

Turkey – “strategic partnership” and intensified relationships?

In recent years, relations between Serbia and Turkey have been very intense and has been described by the Turkish side as a dimension of the “strategic partnership.” In bilateral relations, despite not having a common border, the states refer to themselves as neighbours.⁴² Turkey is involved in infrastructure projects, and in Serbia Turkey's state aid agency, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) is involved in projects in the area of healthcare (e.g. delivery of seven ambulances to the Sanjak region or support for the production of masks and disinfectants in Serbia, as part of fight against COVID-19), infrastructure, social, and cultural ones. An example of cultural collaboration was the renewal by TİKA of the Ram Fortress, called one of the pearls of the Danube River.

One more dimension of cooperation is the tripartite mechanism Turkey-Serbia-BiH, the leader of which is Turkey and is seen as a mediator between BiH-Serbia and supports infrastructure investments, e.g. the Belgrade-Sarajevo Highway project. Another national issue is energy security, which is one of Serbia's key priorities. The projects that

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, *Relations between Turkey and Serbia*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-serbia.en.mfa> [25.11.2020].

Serbia has focused on are the “Trans Adriatic Pipeline,” the “Ionian Adriatic Pipeline” and the “TurkStream.” After President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s visit, Serbia and Turkey signed 15 bilateral agreements, including statements on the establishment of the High Cooperation Council, the first session of which took place in 2018.⁴³

It is worth noting that in political, cultural, and identity dimensions, the Balkans are also important for Turkey because of the historical ties between Bosnian, Macedonian, Kosovar, and Bulgarian communities of Turkish immigrants. In turn, ethnic groups such as Albanians (living in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia) and Bosniacs (living in BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Turkey) are seen by Turkey as traditional support for the Ottoman-Turkish policy in the Balkans. It should be emphasized that the Sanjak region in Serbia is seen as a “bridge of friendship” inhabited by Bosnians who have relatives in Turkey. Additionally, a strong Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo constitute an important priority for Turkey, where Turkish interests, through the above-mentioned states, may oppose the influence of Russia (cooperating with Serbia and Bulgaria) and Germany (through Croats and Slovenes)⁴⁴ and the EU in the region. The U.S. and Europe see Turkey as an ally in the Balkans. In turn, Turkey sees a symbolic priority in the Balkans and feels like the heir to the Ottoman empire. In addition, the president of Turkey indicated in 2019 that “our historical and

⁴³ *Ključni...*

⁴⁴ Д. Танасковић, *Неоосманизам. Доктрина и спољнополитичка пракса. Повратак Турске на Балкан*, Београд 2010, р. 93.

cultural heritage is our common wealth. Every work in this land is a monument to our solidarity and cooperation. We will build our future together with inspiration, power, and courage from the past.”⁴⁵

The partnership is also shown by the number of bilateral agreements between Serbia and Russia, China, Turkey, and the U.S. In the period between 2001-2016, there were 79 agreements signed with China and 19 between the period of 2017-2020. With Russia, there were 75 and 30 agreements in a three year period. The U.S. signed 27 in the 4 years between 2017-2020. Attention should also be paid to the large number of visits by representatives of Turkey, who signed 36 agreements by 2016 and 24 agreements in the last three years.⁴⁶

Kosovo – a key point to the stabilisation between Serbia and Kosovo and beyond

The priority for the government and President A. Vučić is to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty with Kosovo and Metohija as part of the Serbian territory. Kosovo is deeply rooted in Serbian identity, geography, policy, history, and has an impact on the overall political and geopolitical relations. Protecting the Serb population living abroad is also an important priority, especially in the context of maintaining good neighbourly political and economic relations

⁴⁵ Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, *President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Inaugurates TİKA Projects in Serbia*, tika.gov.tr, 06.11.2019, https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/president_recep_tayyip_erdogan_inaugurates_tika_projects_in_serbia-54201 [22.11.2020].

⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Bilateralni odnosi sa stranim zemljama*, <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/spoljna-politika/bilateralni-odnosi/117-bilateralni-odnosi/11520-sad?lang=lat> [23.11.2020].

and the protection of Serbian culture and language abroad. In the opinion of I. Dačić, “the process of integration is associated with the danger of assimilation. There is an effort to meet the needs of Serb citizens in foreign countries and help in preserving their national and cultural identity.” It is the so-called protection of “national geography.”⁴⁷

It is noteworthy that Serbia is cooperating with states that have not recognized Kosovo and is jointly preparing arguments against Kosovo’s membership in international organizations. Recently, Serbia prevented its admission to UNESCO or Interpol. The actions of the Serbian government slowed down the process of recognition of Kosovo and the withdrawal of recognition by several countries. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, Kosovo is recognised by 114 states,⁴⁸ but, according to the Serbs, 98 out of 193 countries in the UN do not recognize Kosovo.⁴⁹

In 2017-2020, Serbia and Kosovo continued the process of building and normalizing relations. The process oscillated between nationalism, distrust, and attempts towards peaceful agreements. In 2017, the year of the presidential elections that Vučić won, Kosovo prevented a Serbian train painted in the country’s national colours and decorated with Orthodox symbols and bearing the inscription, “Kosovo is Serbia,” from crossing the border between the two countries. The incident contributed to a crisis in bilateral relations.

⁴⁷ *Ključni...*

⁴⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo, *International recognition of the Republic of Kosovo*, <http://www.mfa-ks.net/en/politika/483/njohjet-ndrkombtare-t-republiks-s-kosovs/483> [01.12.2020].

⁴⁹ *The state that recognized Kosovo’s independence among the first, revoked recognition*, b92, 03.03.2020, https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2020&mm=03&dd=03&nav_id=108047 [01.12.2020].

The normalization of relations under the EU offices began in 2011. In 2013, the *First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Kosovo and Belgrade* was signed. Belgrade wants a full implementation of the agreements reached in Brussels, especially those related to the Community of Serbian Municipalities.⁵⁰ The Serbian side in 2018 strongly emphasized the need to adopt the *Statute of the Community of Serbian Municipalities* for the success of normalization in mutual relations. This would show, according to Serbia, that Pristina was ready to continue negotiations and make agreements under the auspices of the EU.⁵¹ Serbia continues to emphasize the key problems of the Kosovo population, such as failure to respect the rights of the Kosovo Serbs, its dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation in Kosovo-Metohija, high level of inter-ethnic tension, intimidation of Serbs by the Kosovo Police (ROSU), Pristina's efforts to control the northern part of Kosovo-Metohija, taxes on Serbian goods introduced by Pristina, cases with the education, judiciary system, police, property status of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and protection of property rights of the Serbs. An example and a bone of contention seems to be Kosovska Mitrovica with a dual healthcare, education, judiciary system for Kosovo Albanians and Serbs.

⁵⁰ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Agreement on normalisation of economic relations between Belgrade, Pristina signed*, 04.09.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/160635/agreement-on-normalisation-of-economic-relations-between-belgrade-pristina-signed.php> [22.11.2020].

⁵¹ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *No progress in Belgrade-Pristina dialogue*, 21.03.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/127187/no-progress-in-belgrade-pristina-dialogue.php> [25.11.2020].

The Chinese ambassador to Serbia in 2018 expressed his understanding of the situation of Serbs in Kosovo and described it as an attack on Serbia's integrity. Similarly, the ambassador of Russia expressed that provocation in Kosovo must be solved. The Serbian side suggested that despite efforts to peacefully resolve the dispute by Serbia, NATO and KFOR have not fully addressed the security situation of the Serb population and that there is no reason to trust KFOR and NATO.⁵² In May 2019, Vučić noted that he would not stop fighting for Kosovo and Metohija. He accused the U.S. and the states of the European Union of not allowing Pristina to create the Community of Serb Municipalities, which, as he noted, was the main and still unfulfilled obligation of the Albanian side under the Brussels Agreement. He pointed out that some did not react to the announcements of the creation of Greater Albania and pointed out that if Serbia had mentioned Republika Srpska from BiH, the situation would have been different, which he described as a double standard.⁵³ The Minister of Foreign Affairs, I. Dačić, at a meeting at the UN Security Council insisted that Pristina is responsible for the lack of dialogue.⁵⁴ Another significant

⁵² The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Support of China in solving situation in Kosovo-Metohija*, 24.11.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/134237/support-of-china-in-solving-situation-in-kosovo-metohija.php> [25.11.2020]; The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Vucic, Brnabic meet with Ambassador of Russia*, 23.11.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/134255/vucic-brnabic-meet-with-ambassador-of-russia.php> [25.11.2020].

⁵³ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Unprincipled attitude of great powers makes Serbia's struggle for Kosovo-Metohija more difficult*, 27.05.2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/141164/unprincipled-attitude-of-great-powers-makes-serbias-struggle-for-kosovo-metohija-more-difficult.php> [26.11.2020].

⁵⁴ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Pristina sole culprit for no dialogue*, 31.10.2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/147132/pristina-sole-culprit-for-no-dialogue.php> [26.11.2020].

moment in mutual dialogue was the meeting in Washington during which the Serbian president indicated that he would not sign a document that would recognize Kosovo's independence. Talks between Belgrade and Pristina are also continued under the auspices of the EU. Both A. Vučić and A. Hoti have noted to the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell that they give the highest priority to European integration, which is a key element of their path to the EU.⁵⁵

Conclusions

Serbia's foreign policy, twenty years after the S. Milošević era, seems to be dynamic and focused on balancing the relations between the EU, NATO, US, Russia, China, and Turkey. It is also a relationship between a small state and superpowers, which additionally creates an imbalance in mutual relations, and Serbia is treated as an international sphere of influence. However, there is a visible lack of a clearly defined Serbian foreign policy strategy and a lack of concrete documents. Serbia has referred to military neutrality since 2007, but first mentioned it in an important state document in 2019 in its National Security Strategy. The vital element of the Serbia-Kosovo relations is the issue of establishing the Community of Serbian Municipalities, which is recognized by the Serbian side as a huge obstacle and a challenge in the process of normalization of relations. Besides, aspects of national identity are based on the construction

⁵⁵ The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Belgrade-Pristina talks continue in Brussels*, 07.09.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/160692/belgrade-pristina-talks-continue-in-brussels.php> [26.11.2020].

of foreign and security policy for which national identity in both internal and external dimensions is intertwined with the national interest.

Western Europe's relations with Serbia are maintained on the basis of compliance with the requirements and depend on accession to the EU. The European Union co-finances reforms in Serbia and tries to diplomatically solve the Kosovo problem, but its role is diminished in public opinion. The resolution of the long conflict between the two countries gives Serbia a chance to join the EU in the future. Events in Serbia show that the government is slightly open to cooperation with the U.S., which has been marginalized so far. The U.S. wants Serbia to be part of a stable Balkan region, as is seen in the Washington Agreement. In addition, the Serbian president's policy is a visible manoeuvre between the forces to establish close relations with the next crucial players: China and the U.S., Russia and Turkey.

Russia's influence is based on enforcement of cooperation on the so-called traditional, strategic, and close relationships. There is also the "Slavic question," treated as a unique method of Russian development. In the context of Serbia's integration with the EU, Serbian-Russian cooperation seems to be losing importance, which "denies the myth" of Slavic unity supported by the Russian politicians. The European Union and Russia are in opposition. On the one hand, Russia has an ally in Europe, which is Serbia, but on the other hand, Serbia gets assurances from Russia that it does not support Kosovo's independence. In addition, Serbia is energy-dependent on Russia. Moreover, the resistance of the Russians and Serbs towards NATO and the memory of the latter about the bombing brings both Slavic nations

closer to each other. There is no decision by the Serbian government on full integration with the EU at the expense of relations with Russia.

China, in turn, exerts influence through infrastructure projects and is seen as another country opposing Kosovo's independence. Moreover, Chinese investments may pose a threat to economic cooperation with the EU due to the more difficult EU standards to achieve. Serbia is attractive to China as a large market in the Western Balkans, but is also seen as a "Chinese client state." The last influence on Serbia is Turkey, which describes Serbian-Turkey relation as a strategic one. Relations with Turkey have been gaining momentum in the last three years, and their further development can be forecast, driven by Serbia's desire to diversify its geopolitical options. It seems to be overlooked by the Serbs in direct relations, but it is inevitable to maintain stability in the region in the context of the Serbia-Kosovo conflict. Turkey recognized Kosovo's independence and is seen as the protector of Muslim communities.



Magdalena Rekść

Serbia and the third wave of the migration crisis

Introduction

In 2015, the world's attention was drawn to the so-called migration crisis caused by the influx of immigrants from the poor South, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa. It was considered the largest population movement since 1945. One of the main transit routes led from Greece and Turkey to Western Europe through North Macedonia and Serbia. News around the world was filled with footage from the vicinity of Belgrade bus station, where immigrants found a temporary "shelter."¹ This put the Balkans in the spotlight again for a short time. In March 2016, the European Union concluded an agreement with Turkey on the return of illegal immigrants back to Turkey, which gave

¹ *To nie jest obóz uchodźców na Bliskim Wschodzie. To niemal środek Europy. Park w centrum Belgradu stał się przystanią imigrantów*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 27.08.2015, <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/56,114944,18637913,to-nie-jest-oboz-uchodzcow-na-bliskim-wschodzie-to-niemal-srodek.html> [20.10.2020].

the illusion of solving the problem. It seemed that after the agreement, migrations would be institutionalized and that the challenges related to them would be solved as part of international cooperation.² The average person did not consider that since the agreement provided for the return of migrants of undetermined status from Greece to Turkey and the gradual, controlled admission of refugees residing in Turkey, it left migrants in the Balkans on their own. If we agree that thanks to the aforementioned agreement, newcomers from the Middle East stopped flooding into the Balkans, they nonetheless continued to arrive in a small stream, hoping that they would be able to get further to the West. The problem of thousands of people left alone just beyond the sealed EU border did not seem big enough to attract more public attention, although Balkan media and human rights organizations raised alarms about the tragedies of refugees.

It was only in 2018 that reports of the so-called new Balkan route, leading through Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina began to appear, especially as there was another increase in illegal border crossings, although it was far from the situation in 2015. The total number of refugees remaining in Greece and the Western Balkans was estimated at approximately 70,000,³ although it was widely believed that this number was greatly underestimated. At the same time, attention was paid to numerous problems,

² S. Domaradzki, *Porozumienie Turcja – UE: skuteczne czy niezbędne?*, Przedstawicielstwo Komisji Europejskiej w Polsce, 12.06.2018, https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/180612_EU_Turkey_migration_pl [20.10.2020].

³ *Szlak bałkański. Nowe drogi, przemoc i wypadki śmiertelne*, DW, 16.04.2019, <https://www.dw.com/pl/szlak-ba%C5%82ka%C5%84ski-nowe-drogi-przemoc-i-wypadki-%C5%9Bmiertelne/a-48334602> [16.04.2019].

challenges, and threats that had to be faced not only by Serbia and North Macedonia, but also by all countries in the region.⁴

At the end of February 2020, the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that Ankara would no longer hold refugees and that it would open its borders with the EU. This statement prompted understandable concern on the “mountainous peninsula.” The outside world, preoccupied with the coronavirus pandemic, did not pay enough attention to other problems, including the complicated situation in the South-Eastern outskirts of Europe. Meanwhile, humanitarian organizations in transit countries, including Serbia, are constantly alarmed about the growing number of people entering their states illegally.

The 3rd wave

It is difficult to present reliable quantitative data on this phenomenon, since most of the newcomers are not subject to registration and the media controlled by the regimes either do not see the problem or present it in the way the government desires. A director of the Belgrade centre for refugees estimated that about 150 people cross the southern border every day.⁵ Taking into account the growing scale of the problem, it seems justified to talk about a third wave of the migration crisis that the Balkan countries have to deal with. If the first, by far the largest, took place in 2015, and

⁴ M. Rekšć, *New Balkan Migration Route and Its Impact on Transit Countries*, “Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe”, 2019, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 139-158.

⁵ E. Wallis, *Numbers of Migrants in Serbia Hoping to Cross Borders Increasing*, InfoMigrants, 29.09.2020, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27630/numbers-of-migrants-in-serbia-hoping-to-cross-borders-increasing> [23.10.2020].

the second in 2018-19, then 2020 marked the beginning of a new, third instalment of the refugee drama.

It is worth emphasizing that although the newcomers treat Serbia as a transit country (few apply for asylum⁶), crossing the tight EU border turns out to be a very difficult challenge. As it is known, in the face of the crisis of 2015, Hungarians decided to build a fence on the border with Serbia, which significantly limited, but did not eliminate, the problem of illegal crossings.⁷ Croatia, and possibly Romania, are more popular destinations, but both Zagreb and Bucharest are applying to join the Schengen area; thus, they are making a substantial effort to show Brussels that they are perfectly capable of protecting the EU's external borders. As a result, human rights organizations regularly report the brutal behaviour of border guards, especially Croatian ones.⁸

This text is devoted to the third wave of the migration crisis from the perspective of Serbia, one of the most important countries of the "Balkan corridor," where the problem of the growing number of migrants suspended between their homeland and their dream of the West overlaps with other, serious internal problems. Along with the increase of immigrants in Serbian society, hate speech towards strangers is becoming more and more visible, especially in the virtu-

⁶ *UNHCR Serbia Monthly Update, August 2020*, ReliefWeb, 04.09.2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/unhcr-serbia-monthly-update-august-2020> [22.10.2020].

⁷ J. Cody, *Hungary: 151 Migrants Detained for Illegal Border Crossings in Just One Weekend*, Remix News, 18.05.2020, <https://rmx.news/article/article/hungary-151-migrants-detained-for-illegal-border-crossings-in-just-one-weekend> [23.10.2020].

⁸ *EU 'covered up' Croatia's Failure to Protect Migrants from Border Brutality*, The Guardian, 15.06.2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/15/eu-covered-up-croatias-failure-to-protect-migrants-from-border-brutality> [22.10.2020].

al space. Unfortunately, authorities are not taking decisive steps to pacify extremists.

The flow of immigrants across the Balkans has continued since the end of the wars that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, when human traffickers began to take advantage of the weakness of states and their uniformed services and pervasive corruption. Moreover, local criminal organizations treat the smuggling of newcomers as a profitable activity.⁹ According to information provided by Deutsche Welle in 2018, the cost of “transport” from Serbia to Vienna ranged from 6,000 to 8,000, and sometimes even 10,000, Euros per person.¹⁰ But the Balkan mafias do not only live off smuggling people across the “green border” because destitute people naturally fall victims to extortion, organ trafficking, and prostitution.

It should be made clear that among the immigrants, one can find people possessing different resources. Some can afford to rent a flat near the Belgrade railway station, the informal “centre” of illegal immigrants, while others sleep in nearby parks or on the street. Desperate to get to the EU at all costs, they wait long months in such difficult conditions, hoping that somehow they will finally achieve their goal. Illegal “visitors” from the Middle East are not only an element of the capital’s landscape, they can be seen begging on city streets or walking along national roads. The largest number of immigrants can be seen in border regions and

⁹ P. Lovšin, *Kodo tihotapi migrante v Slovenijo*, “Dnevnik”, 25.05.2019, pp. 1, 3.

¹⁰ J. Rose, *Kako djeluju krijumčari u Srbiji i BiH*, DW, 03.08.2018, <https://www.dw.com/bs/kako-djeluju-krijum%C4%8Dari-u-srbiji-i-bih/a-44941382> [25.10.2020]; M. Arnaudović, *Ko u BiH krijumčari migrante?*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 18.12.2019, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/ko-krijumcari-migrantima-u-bih/30332426.html> [25.10.2020].

in the south, where the vast majority of centres dedicated to them are located.¹¹

The government media tries to overlook the growing problem. According to official data, nearly 4,500 people were held in refugee camps at the end of 2019, i.e. before the flood of the new crisis wave.¹² However, there are many more immigrants outside of the camps. The terrible conditions in the camps mean that most of the newcomers prefer to stay outside of them, and those who have decided to report to them often leave after some time, especially since the envoys of mafia organizations penetrate the camps and offer easy income to those who live outside the enclosure.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit Serbia and President Aleksandar Vučić implemented a peculiar lockdown variant with drastic restrictions such as declaring a state of emergency and imposing a curfew¹³ lasting even throughout the weekend, the question arose as to how homeless immigrants would submit to such restrictions. The Serbian authorities announced the creation of an additional 2,000 places for the immigrants in camps, where the accommodation capacity had so far hovered around 6,000 places.¹⁴ It quickly became clear that the estimates have nothing to do with reality and that the number of illegal visitors from the Middle East was

¹¹ Asylum Protection Center/Centar za zaštitu i pomoć tražiocima azila, *Zaštita i prihvati*, <https://www.azilsrbija.rs/zastita-i-prihvat/> [19.11.2020].

¹² L. Marinković, *Migranti i Srbija: Mitovi i zablude o migrantima i izbeglicama*, BBC News, 18.12.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-50834778> [05.11.2020].

¹³ K. Pawłowski, *Serbia: wprowadzenie stanu wyjątkowego w ramach walki z pandemią koronawirusa (COVID-19)*, "Komentarze IEŚ", 2020, no. 154, 27.03.2020, <https://ies.lublin.pl/pub/publikacje/komentarze/ies-komentarze-154-57-2020.pdf> [05.11.2020].

¹⁴ L. Marinković, *„Naseljavanje migranata u Srbiji” i korona virus: Kako epidemija utiče na širenje lažnih vesti i antimigrantskih stavova*, BBC News, 07.05.2020, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-52524776> [13.11.2020].

much higher. Eventually, many of them still lived under the open sky and the Serbs, embittered by the autocratic decisions of the authorities, regretted that the immigrants enjoyed greater freedom than they.

“You will not replace us”

The attitude of Serbian society towards newcomers also began to change. In 2015 most Serbs sympathized with them, and people spontaneously provided support – e.g. a German journalist marvelled at the fact that a nation labelled as chauvinistic in the 1990s, in 2015 presented itself as peaceful and helpful.¹⁵ As time passed, however, negative attitudes began to spread. One could risk a statement that while the Serbs showed compassion and solidarity during the first stage of the migration crisis, prejudices grew gradually during the second stage. The third wave is accompanied by an escalation of the increasingly declared aversion to strangers.

This aversion is not limited only to ascribing negative stereotypes and to seeing immigrants through the prism of negative oriental stereotypes, such as a tendency to violence, rape, or a lower level of civilization development. It also manifests through the growing phenomenon of generating collective fear, spreading conspiracy theories and fake news, the other side of which is spreading and strengthening the aversion to strangers.

Conspiracy theories are based on statements by A. Vučić and other politicians of the ruling camp who have suggested

¹⁵ M. Martens, *Europäischer als einige Mitgliedstaaten*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 05.09.2015, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/serbien-erntet-lob-fuer-seine-fluechtlingspolitik-13785941.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2 [13.11.2020].

in recent years that migrants could fill in a demographic gap in a country that is constantly depopulating. These populist statements, on the one hand, branded by intellectuals as contemptuous of the poor who do not see a future for themselves in a situation of permanent crisis and hopelessness, became the basis for national chauvinists to propagate stories about alleged plans for the colonization of Serbia by Muslims. In addition, it was affirmed by Vučić's declaration expressed during his visit to Athens in December 2019 that Serbia is ready to accept a certain number of immigrant orphans,¹⁶ presented by the far right as an announcement of the colonization process. These statements have been repeated in recent months, elaborated on and supplemented with new content. According to the theory, Serbian authorities take part in the global conspiracy to Islamize Serbia, receiving money from abroad, which, given the level of their corruption, sounds all the more likely. One of the most popular narratives is that Serbia signed a secret agreement with Germany and Austria to resettle one million refugees in its territory (according to other story variants, 1.2 million or even 2 million) in the next 20 years.¹⁷

While a large proportion of Serbs live in poverty, rumours are circulating around the country about the amounts of money allocated to help immigrants and the high welfare and subsidies given to refugees. Meanwhile, Belgrade re-

¹⁶ *Dveri prikupljaju peticiju protiv naseljavanja migranata u Čačku*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 16.12.2019, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30328211.html> [13.11.2020].

¹⁷ M. Tašković, *KAKO SE SRBIJOM ŠIRE TEORIJE ZAVERE i zašto smo odjednom poverovali u laži o tajnom ugovoru Srbije, Nemačke i Austrije i "MIGRANTSKOJ PRETNJI"*, Blic, 11.06.2020, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/kako-se-srbijom-sire-teorije-zavere-i-zasto-smo-od-jednom-poverovali-u-lazi-o-tajnom/kgx6ymq> [13.11.2020].

ceives grants to help the immigrants from outside, mainly from the United Nations and the European Union.¹⁸ Whether it really goes to those in need, or whether some of it disappears along the way to line the pockets of the corrupt elite remains a mystery. There are also accusations that immigrants have brought the coronavirus with them and are constantly spreading it.

Hatred towards newcomers from the Middle East has become the foundation of the rhetoric of far-right politicians, especially during the election campaign before the parliamentary and local elections.¹⁹

In February 2020, the far-right *Dveri* movement, which finally boycotted the elections, launched an anti-immigrant offensive, and the statements of its leader, Boško Obradović, were clearly assessed as racist and xenophobic.²⁰ Obradović sharply criticized the ruling camp for the situation. He called for the deployment of the army and police to state borders in order to fully seal them. The group even began collecting signatures on a petition to stop accepting refugees.

Similar views are expressed by another far-right movement, *Levijatan*, which since its inception has declared itself to be an animal activist movement. But the profile of its activists does not fit the image of a spokesman for the weak and defenceless. Until now, public opinion associated them

¹⁸ A. Jagiełło-Szostak, *Serbia wobec kryzysu migracyjnego – najdłuższy odcinek szlaku bałkańskiego*, [in:] K. Cebul, R. Zenderowski (eds.), *Państwa Europy Środkowej i Bałkanów wobec kryzysu migracyjnego*, Warszawa 2020, pp. 122-126.

¹⁹ The elections were originally scheduled for April 26, but due to the pandemic, they were postponed to June 21, 2020.

²⁰ I. Petrović, *Srbijanski desničari vode kampanju preko leđa migranata*, DW, 21.02.2020, <https://www.dw.com/hr/srbijanski-desnici%C4%8Ddari-vode-kampanju-preko-le%C4%91a-migranata/a-52459617> [13.11.2020].

with hooligans, brutal people who would not abstain from forms of extortion and violence.²¹ Recently, the group has also started articulating xenophobic slogans against immigrants. In May, there was a lot of media coverage in Serbia about an incident involving one of the *Levijatan*'s members who drove a car into the Obrenovec refugee camp and later alleged animal rights activists organized a protest at its gate.²² *Levijatan*, unlike *Dveri*, decided to take part in the June elections, receiving 0.7% of votes.

One could say that in Serbia, where the political scene is dominated by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS),²³ the far right is in minority or that such groups also exist in consolidated Western democracies, like the Alternative for Germany (AfD) in Germany, for example. However, it should be remembered that the SNS is a party of power²⁴ that is voted for not necessarily for ideological reasons. Meanwhile, the growth of prejudice against immigrants is becoming more and more pronounced and slogans have started to be voiced by numerous extremist movements, so far known mainly for speeches against the Roma and the LGBT community while referring to traditional values.

According to research from June 2020, 40% of Serbs declare a negative attitude towards refugees from the Middle East, and the same number believe in conspiracy theories about them, while 18% of Serbs believe that the country's

²¹ *Beograd: Uhapšeno šest članova desničarske grupe 'Levijatan'*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 14.10.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30893320.html> [13.11.2020].

²² *Ibidem*.

²³ In the elections on June 21, 2020, SNS was the main pillar of the coalition *Aleksandar Vučić – Za našu decu* coalition obtained 60.65% of the votes.

²⁴ M. Słowikowski, *Jedna Rosja w systemie politycznym Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Łódź 2018, pp. 43-47.

borders should be completely closed to them, and 19% would participate in protest against the presence of immigrants.²⁵ While 40% of the percentage of people declaring aversion to immigrants does not differ significantly from the data collected during the polls in previous years,²⁶ what is new is the scale on which xenophobic slogans are expressed.

On March 8, an anti-immigrant march passed through the streets of Belgrade, the participants of which carried banners with the slogans “Terrorists not welcome” or “You will not replace us,” “Serbia for Serbs,” as well as Chetniks’ flags. Similar initiatives, albeit on a much smaller scale, took place in other Serbian cities. It is significant that the final route of the Belgrade march led through the Savamala railway station district, where immigrants reside.²⁷ The protest was attended by, among others, activists of the so-called national patrols, identified primarily with the *Nema predaje Kosova and Metohije* organization, who since February 2020 have tried to remove refugees from public space. Initially, they limited themselves to handing out leaflets to newcomers (in Serbian, English, and Arabic) “encouraging” them not to leave the camps between 10 pm and 6 am and warning them of possible acts of violence.²⁸ In October, the

²⁵ *Stavovi prema migrantima i izbeglicama u Srbiji – istraživački izveštaj jun 2020*, pp. 22–23, https://psychosocialinnovation.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Stavovi-prema-izbeglicama-i-migrantima_2020.pdf [18.11.2020].

²⁶ UNDP Serbia, *Stavovi građana prema uticaju izbegličke i migracione krize u 19 jedinica lokalne samouprave Srbije*, p. 10, https://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/sr/home/library/poverty/stavovi-gra_ana-prema-uticaju-izbeglike-i-migracione-krize-u-19-.html [18.11.2020].

²⁷ *Marš desničara protiv migranata u Beogradu*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 08.03.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/fotogalerija-desnicari-protiv-migranata/30476294.html> [14.11.2020].

²⁸ *Narodne patrolne u centru Beograda – pogledajte njihov razgovor sa emigrantima*, СРБИН. инфо, 22.02.2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4P_l6pvUmA [13.11.2020].

group launched an initiative on the Internet to “clean up” the park next to the Faculty of Economics, located in the immediate vicinity of the Belgrade railway station, where groups of refugees have been camping since 2015. The idea was not realized due to the fast reaction of human rights organizations and the police,²⁹ but many Serbs were terrified with the act of treating people like garbage that needed to be removed as part of a social clean-up action. Other extremist organizations, such as the *Živim za Srbiju* movement, previously known primarily for anti-vaccination campaigns, also joined the national patrols, which were called a civic initiative. Even if each of the aforementioned groups seems marginal, they together seem to constitute a considerable force, especially if the slogans they proclaim are vividly reproduced in collective spaces.

Experts from the *Vojvođanski istraživačko-analitički centar*, VOICE, counted around 20 websites and groups on social networks promoting hatred against immigrants. The largest of them is the Facebook group *Pokret STOP Naseljavanju migranata*, established in March 2020, with almost 325,000 members at the time of writing this text (November 2020). It published posts with false content about the alleged behavior of migrants and the acts of violence committed by them. Fake news also concerns the imaginary wealth of immigrants, their money, and the most modern multimedia devices. Moreover, one can find information about the shameful behaviour of Muslims in the West, breaking the

²⁹ “Narodne patrolne” zovu na “čišćenje” parka kod Ekonomskog; NVO: “Čistite deponije” FOTO, b92, 21.10.2020, https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=10&d=21&nav_id=1751166 [13.11.2020].

law and ruthlessly imposing Sharia law on Germans, French, and Swedes. A quick look at the group's profile leaves no doubt that the information posted cannot be true, and the photos are an obvious photomontage, such as the one from November 15, 2020 showing a Muslim with a beard in a traditional robe riding a donkey through the streets of Paris. Meanwhile, comments on the posts allow us to assume that many Internet users not only believe them but, what is worse, call for "solving the problem" by means of violence. False reports from the West, combined with rumours of an alleged plan to colonize Serbia by immigrants from the Middle East, reinforce the atmosphere of collective fear of strangers.

Structural weaknesses

The hate campaign raises serious concerns among intellectuals and human rights defenders, who point out that the negative associations projected about immigrants, already dangerous in themselves, may seem all the more dangerous as they can easily be turned into hatred towards other marginalized groups: Gypsies, Albanians, LGBT communities.³⁰ Some, such as the psychologist Jovan Bjekić, explain that in difficult times of a pandemic, people need to accumulate emotions against a common enemy, and aliens are always easy targets.³¹ Others ask themselves whether the right-wing extremists calling for actions to "clean up" Serbia are acting with the quiet consent of the authori-

³⁰ *Linija u pesku – granica između slobode govora i govora mržnje na Internetu*, VOICE, 11.11.2020, <http://voice.org.rs/linija-u-pesku-granica-izmedu-slobode-govora-i-govora-mrznje-na-internetu/> [15.11.2020].

³¹ L. Marinković, „Naseljavanje...”

ties, which officially declare an open attitude towards refugees, or whether the authorities are unable to control the groups inciting violence. If, in fact, the state is unable to pacify them, it seems to prove its weakness.³² It cannot be ruled out that the Serbian authorities tend to turn a blind eye to the activities of the radical right, hoping that in this way immigrants will start to leave Serbia and, for example, move to other Balkan countries. After all, the increasingly visible presence of extremists, who are close to neo-fascism, organizing actions against the community of immigrants from the Middle East would not be possible in a democratic state,³³ and this, in turn, confirms the thesis that Serbia under the rule of A. Vučić is moving further away from democratic standards.

However, this sad reflection on prejudices and the escalation of hate speech against immigrants cannot obscure the contribution of Serbia and Serbs to helping refugees. It is hard not to get the impression that the 5-year migration crisis has made society immune to the poverty of newcomers, that people are not so willing to provide them selfless help as in 2015. Still, many Serbs try to help them in their own way by buying food, organizing collections of clothes, engaging in voluntary work, etc.

Finally, it is worth noting, as Jovan Teokarević did, that refugees are in fact a problem of the European Union, which

³² M. Tašković, *HOĆE LI IH NEKO ZAUSTAVITI? Ekstremisti ponovo divljaju, prete da će PROTERATI MIGRANTE kod Ekonomskog fakulteta i to sramotno opisuju kao "ČIŠĆENJE PARKA"*, Blic, 21.10.2020, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/hoce-li-ih-neko-zaustaviti-ekstremisti-ponovo-divljaju-prete-da-ce-proterati-migrante/1mvw4yk> [18.11.2020].

³³ N. Jakovlević, *Lažne vesti o migrantima svakodnevne, među građanima raste mržnja prema njima*, Slobodna reč, 29.10.2020, <https://slobodnarec.rs/2020/10/29/lazne-vesti-o-migrantima-svakodnevne-medju-gradjanima-raste-mrznja-prema-njima/> [18.11.2020].

has pushed them to the Balkans. After all, refugees from the Middle East are trying to get from Greece to other EU countries, and their route only accidentally leads through South-Eastern Europe. Seen from this perspective, Serbia and other countries in the region are paying the price for the lack of solidarity within the Union itself.³⁴ If there are many problems in Serbia today, some of which are outlined in the texts included in this collection, refugees pose another serious challenge of a political, economic, social and, perhaps above all, security nature.

Conclusions

If in 2015 the Serbs showed compassion and solidarity towards immigrants, over time their radical moods and fears have gotten stronger. Strong anti-immigration campaign and hate speech are visible mainly in virtual space. Social media and internet forums reproduce conglomerates of fake news which lead to protests against foreigners or the organization of so-called national patrols. Meanwhile, there are more and more immigrants each day and the people – additionally frustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic – become vulnerable to right-wing extremism. In fact, Serbian authorities do nothing to appease the public discourse. It can even be assumed that they tend to turn a blind eye to the activities of the radicals, hoping that in this way immigrants will start to leave Serbia and, for example, move to other Balkan countries.

³⁴ J. Teokarević, *Western Balkans between Deep Crises and Uncertain Perspectives*, Beograd 2019, p. 16.



Konrad Pawłowski

The question of the ‘unfinished past’: the problem of Kosovo in Serbia’s policy after Milošević

Introduction

Despite all of the political changes which took place in Serbia after the fall of the Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević, the Kosovo question constantly returns in domestic political debates, significantly complicates the process of Serbia’s accession to the EU, and politically ties Serbia with Russia, which remains Belgrade’s key ally at the international level regarding the Kosovo’s issue.¹ As Boško Jakšić claims, the prolonged crisis over Kosovo represents “[...] the Alpha and Omega of Serbian internal and foreign policies.”²

¹ J. Batt, *The question of Serbia*, “Chaillot Paper”, 2005, no. 81, pp. 33-53, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cpo81-English.pdf> [20.03.2021].

² І. Федик, Бошко Якшич: «Росія сприймається в Сербії, як «священний захисник» і за це отримує все», CACDS, 22.03.2019, <https://cacds.org.ua/en/?p=6327> [21.05.2020].

The myth and the trauma: Kosovo in the Serbian collective memory

It is certainly obvious to say that Kosovo occupies a special place in the historiography, political discourse, culture, and collective memory of the Serbian people. This importance is reflected by the almost mystical image of Kosovo, perceived as a "Serbian Jerusalem," "heart of Serbia," and the "cradle" of Serbian medieval statehood.³ The abovementioned deeply emotional perspective and understanding of the history of the Serbdom is expressed by Vuk Drašković, who states that Kosovo is "[...] the foundation of the nation and the state, the source and symbol of everything that makes us Serbs and Christians."⁴

The power of the Kosovo Myth together with the historical and contemporary traumas of the Serbian people results in the fact that more than twenty years after the war in Kosovo (1998-1999), the question of the international legal subjectivity of Kosovo continues to arouse serious emotions in Serbia and constantly returns in domestic debates and Serbia's foreign policy.⁵

Most Serbs, all major political parties, the Serbian Orthodox Church, many intellectuals, and media outlets reject Kosovo's declaration of independence (2008), define it as a contrary to international law, and claim that Kosovo

³ M. A. Sells, *Vuk's Knife: Kosovo, the Serbian Golgotha, and the Radicalization of Serbian Society*, [in:] *Kosovo. Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions*, W. J. Buckley (ed.), Cambridge 2000, pp. 134-135; I. Čolović, *Balkany – terror kultury*, Wołowiec 2007, p. 24; S. Grahovac, *Srpska drama. Politička i moralna raskršća*, Beograd 2010, pp. 303-304.

⁴ V. Drašković, *Kosovo and Us*, [in:] *Kosovo. Contending Voices...*, p. 201.

⁵ J. Batt, op. cit., pp. 33, 65-72.

remains a constituent part of the state without which Serbia simply cannot exist.⁶

Serbia's policy on Kosovo: towards functional normalization

Despite declarations by successive Serbian governments that its position on the status of Kosovo's territory remains unchanged, in the past decades Serbia has actually eased its policy towards Kosovo and supports the idea of overall normalization of relations with the authorities in Pristina. Serbia accepts broad Kosovo's autonomy and limited presence at the international level, but still rejects Kosovo's statehood and independence.

This change results from many factors. Among them certainly lies the democratization of political life in Serbia after the overthrow of the FRY President Slobodan Milošević (2000). The next is the realistic and adequate assessment of the political and social reality in Kosovo after the declaration of independence (2008), as well as the obvious and impassable opposition of Kosovo Albanian population to any factual or formal Serbian authority over Kosovo. The serious need for improvement of the existence of Serbs living in Kosovo is also a convincing argument. Last but not least, the overall normalization of relations with Pristina represents a key requirement for Serbia's progress on the European path and its membership at the EU.⁷

⁶ A. Savić, *Studija slučaja: „Nezavisno Kosovo” ili „Evropska Kolumbija”*, [in:] *Kosovska kriza – Srpske opcije. Zbornik radova*, N. Đorđević (ed.), Beograd 2008, pp. 41-49.

⁷ K. Pawłowski, *Państwowość Kosowa. Geneza, uwarunkowania, współczesność*, Lublin 2018, p. 659.

Forward slowly: the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue

The readiness of Serbian authorities to ease its policy on Kosovo took the form of an EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. It is certainly a fact that the acceptance of the bilateral dialogue and its continuation results from incentives and diplomatic pressure from the EU and its member states. It is also clear that the authorities in Belgrade are aware of the need for the dialogue and the importance of the improvement of relations with Pristina, support the stabilization of the inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo, and reject any violent solutions to the dispute over Kosovo's international subjectivity.

The negotiations between the authorities of the Republic of Serbia and the representatives of the Republic of Kosovo started in March 2011. The first rounds of talks were officially "technical." This formula of negotiations was meant to emphasize that the talks – still controversial for many Serbs – focus on practical questions like the border crossings between Serbia and Kosovo, telecommunications, energy, education etc., and would improve the daily existence of the whole of Kosovo's population. Negotiations in Brussels were soon supplemented with "political" dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, which began officially in October 2012 and lasts until today.⁸

⁸ S. Lehne, *Kosovo and Serbia: Toward a Normal Relationship*, "Policy Outlook", March 2012, pp. 8-9, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Kosovo_and_Serbia.pdf [20.03.2021]; Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatische Akademie, Wien, Conference on Multilateral Diplomacy: Opportunities and Challenges for Kosovo's Membership in International Organisations, 24-25 November 2014 at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, in Vienna, Austria*, p. 23, http://www.mfaks.net/ad/repository/docs/20150112140905_20150112_Vienna_Conference_Publication_PDF_compressed.pdf [25.05.2017].

In fact, the talks in Brussels were highly political from the very beginning, as many of the discussed issues were directly or indirectly linked to the sensitive question of Kosovo's international subjectivity. The obvious political nature of the dialogue repeatedly led to prolonged negotiation crises, which were mitigated by the direct involvement and creative mediation of the EU representatives.⁹

Over the past ten years, the ongoing bilateral negotiations between Serbia and Kosovo have led to the conclusion of several dozen formal agreements on many practical issues, which at least partially regulate relations between Belgrade and Pristina. These include *inter alia* the *First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations*, signed on 19 April 2013 in Brussels, sometimes referred to as a "landmark" and "historic" agreement.

The bilateral dialogue in Brussels has been progressing slowly. Due to its political and legal sensitiveness, it lacks transparency. As a result, public opinion in Serbia and Kosovo has little knowledge about the ongoing negotiations, little understanding of what was really agreed upon in Brussels, and how usually ambiguous agreements would be implemented. The implementation of the concluded agreements is generally slow, and the majority of them remain only partially implemented. It is also complicated by different interpretations of the agreed solutions, which results in prolonged polemics and controversies. The pace of the dialogue is additionally reduced by mutual distrust and anxiety between the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina, who in parallel try to avoid accusations for "weakness,"

⁹ S. Lehne, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

“capitulation,” or “treason” of the national interests, principally articulated by domestic opposition at home. Despite high politicization of the talks, unsatisfactory implementation and many delays, the dialogue continues with the substantial support and engagement of the EU institutions.¹⁰

Although the dialogue has not changed the fundamentally opposite views on Kosovo's subjectivity, it alleviated many important problems of the individual and social existence of the inhabitants of Kosovo, allowing them to coexist under the conditions of a frozen political conflict. Moreover, the negotiated agreements create a new political reality in relations between Serbia and Kosovo, giving hope for further normalization, i.e. finding a mutually acceptable political solution regarding the status of Kosovo.¹¹

The controversies and conflicting narratives over the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue

The commencement of the dialogue with Kosovo by the Serbian government, politically dominated by the pro-Europe-

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 8; BIRN Kosovo, Internews Kosova, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC) of North Mitrovica, *BIG DEAL: Split Asunder. Civic Oversight of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreement Implementation*, December 2015, pp. 5-8, [http://www.birn.eu.com/en/file/show/ENG-publikim-BIGDEAL3web\(1\).pdf](http://www.birn.eu.com/en/file/show/ENG-publikim-BIGDEAL3web(1).pdf) [20.09.2018]; D. Emini, I. Stakic, *Belgrade and Pristina: lost in normalisation?*, “EUISS Brief”, 2018, no. 5, pp. 1-8, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%205%20Belgrade%20and%20Pristina.pdf> [20.09.2018].

¹¹ B. Nešović, M. Andrić, *Kosovo Serbs in the Brussels Agreement conundrum – Spectators without participation*, [in:] *Implementation of the Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue: Results, Controversies and Prospects*, A. Orosz (ed.), Budapest 2016, pp. 33-35; Kosova Democratic Institute, *Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue: Challenges and the Way Forward*, “Brief Analysis”, March 2018, pp. 19-21, <http://votaime.org/Public/Article/DownloadFile/1477> [10.10.2018]; *Scenarios for the ‘Grand Finale’ Between Kosovo and Serbia*, “Balkans Policy Research Group”, April 2018, pp. 1-4, <http://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SCENARIOS-FOR-THE-GRAND-FINALE-BETWEEN-KOSOVO-AND-SERBIA.pdf> [25.10.2018].

an and liberal Democratic Party (*Demokratska stranka*, DS), faced criticism from the conservative and radical right-wing opposition parties and far-right organizations. Despite the hopes and expectations of the radicalized political circles of Serbs from North Kosovo, the political change in Serbia in mid-2012, reflected by the electoral victory of the centre-right Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka*, SNS), did not lead to the rejection of Serbia's moderate policy on Kosovo, but actually strengthened it.¹²

The agreements signed in Brussels under the auspices of the EU have faced suspicion or even strong criticism on the part of the political opposition and Serbian society. This reluctance has resulted in highly politicized accusations of the subsequent SNS-led governments. They come down to claims that:

(1) the agreements concluded in Brussels are imposed by the West and are contrary to the interests of Serbia and its citizens,

(2) the EU-mediated agreements are contrary to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, violate legal order of the state, and pose a threat to Serbia's territorial integrity,

(3) the authorities in Belgrade openly ignore the will of the Serbian population in Kosovo and literally force Kosovo Serbs to integrate with the Albanian majority and engage in the functioning of Pristina institutions,

(4) the authorities in Belgrade abandoned ("sold") Kosovo Serbs under pressure from the EU institutions and its member states at the cost of Serbia's membership at the EU,

¹² K. Pawłowski, *Państwowość Kosowa...*, pp. 661-662.

(5) despite continuous declarations on the unchanging nature of Serbia's policy regarding the status of Kosovo, Belgrade's policy actually leads to recognition of Kosovo's statehood. It is therefore argued that:

- by the acceptance of the Brussels agreements and their implementation, the Serbian authorities are in the process of recognizing Kosovo's statehood,
- the authorities are actually preparing for the formal recognition of Kosovo's independence,
- the state's policy represents a slow and quiet recognition of Kosovo's statehood, while the government is intentionally not telling people the truth about the nature and the consequences of the negotiated agreements,
- the authorities deliberately mislead its society with unrealistic claims, such as that it is possible to keep Kosovo and join the EU at the same time because it is clearly visible that most of the EU members are expecting Belgrade to recognize Kosovo's independence before Serbia's accession,
- the EU official neutrality regarding the status of Kosovo is fiction because most of its members recognize Kosovo's independence,
- Serbia is negotiating its membership at the EU under political pressure and is blackmailed by the West, which expects Serbia to accept the loss of the part of its territory,
- credible dialogue with the authorities in Pristina should be conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, not the European Union and Western states, who in fact support Kosovo's independence.

These criticisms were also accompanied with calls for the break of talks in Brussels and withdrawal from the concluded agreements. Moreover, in the intra-Serbian dialogue there were also fierce polemics, discussions, and even open accusations of betraying national interests addressed towards the ruling political elite.¹³

Serbian authorities have consistently rejected those accusations. They have also argued that its policy towards Kosovo remains unchanged. They also claim and stress that:

(1) Kosovo's status is not negotiable: Kosovo is and remains an autonomous province of Serbia,

(2) the agreements do not constitute recognition of Kosovo's independence,

(3) the status of an autonomous Kosovo province agreed upon in Brussels is similar to the status of other territories, not states,

(4) Serbia will never recognize Kosovo's independence, either directly or indirectly,

(5) the agreed to solutions actually strengthen Serbia's statehood in Kosovo,

(6) the dialogue with authorities in Pristina improves the existence of Serbs in Kosovo,

(7) the agreements guarantee the substantial autonomy of the municipalities inhabited by Kosovo Serb populations,

(8) the representation of the Serbian population at the provincial institutions led by Pristina increases the influence of Kosovo Serbs on the functioning of an autonomous province and limits the Albanian separatist claims in Kosovo,

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 662-665.

(9) the announced comprehensive normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia does not mean the recognition of Kosovo's independence,

(10) recognition of Kosovo is not a precondition for Serbia's EU membership.¹⁴

A strategy for (not only) now: normalization without recognition

Serbia recognizes Kosovo as its autonomous province, a constituent part of the territory of the Republic of Serbia. At the same time, Belgrade officially recognizes the administrative distinctiveness of Kosovo's territory as well as its limited international legal subjectivity.

The acceptance of some concessions to the authorities in Pristina over the past decades has not changed Serbia's overall policy on Kosovo, but actually led to its relaxation. As a result, Belgrade's policy represents an interesting mixture of limited change and continuation. This hybrid policy of "conflictual normalization" is *inter alia* represented by:

- the acceptance of Kosovo's administrative autonomy, custom borders, and its limited international personality (although still below the level of independence),
- the recognition of the jurisdiction of the authorities in Pristina at the territory of Kosovo (Belgrade officially sees Kosovo's institutions as the organs of its southern autonomous province),
- the exchange of liaison officers and an ongoing process of the normalization of relations with the authorities in Pristina,

¹⁴ Ibidem.

- the “legalization” of the part of so-called Serbia’s “parallel institutions” into the political, administrative, and legal system of the Republic of Kosovo (which leads to the factual hybridization of the jurisdiction, especially on the territory of North Kosovo),
- exercising some powers of state authority by Serbia over the territory of Kosovo and its Serbian citizens (e.g. issuing identity cards and registration plates for motor vehicles, confirming Serbia’s statehood in Kosovo),
- the implementation of the Brussels agreements in a manner that is maximally neutral with regard to the status of Kosovo,
- the delay or selective implementation of the concluded agreements, a *sui generis* minimal implementation, which allows Serbia to make progress on the path to the EU membership,
- blocking or slowing down the process of the strengthening Kosovo’s statehood in international relations, which results in the blockade of Kosovo’s membership at the United Nations,
- de-recognition campaign led by Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which led to the withdrawal of Kosovo’s recognition by several states.¹⁵

There are many arguments to claim that Serbia’s present policy of limited compromise is aimed at:

- keeping political, administrative, and financial presence of Serbia in the areas dominated by Serbian population, leading to continuation of some elements of

¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 665-667.

Serbia's statehood on the territory of Kosovo despite unfavourable circumstances,

- the guarantee of the maximum level of self-government of the ten Kosovo municipalities inhabited by a Serb majority within the institutional and legal system of Kosovo,
- raising of the standard of living of Kosovo Serbs, tired of the existence in the realities of the frozen political conflict for more than twenty years,
- keeping the administrative and financial autonomy of North Kosovo, which officially falls under the jurisdiction of the Pristina authorities, but in many aspects still functions as a part of Serbia,
- the protection of the Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries and other material monuments of Serbian culture in Kosovo,
- the "de-kosovisation" of the process of Serbia's accession to the EU: the authorities in Belgrade are trying to overcome the problem of Kosovo in the conduct of accession negotiations and join the EU without the need for formal recognition of Kosovo's independence.¹⁶

Serbia's 'Gordian Knot' still in place

The analysis of Serbia's policy towards Kosovo over recent years justifies the opinion that despite traditionally irreconcilable rhetoric, the authorities in Belgrade assess the Kosovo problem realistically and look for a functional, com-

¹⁶ Ibidem; BIRN Kosovo, Internews Kosova, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC) of North Mitrovica, *BIG DEAL: Lost in Stagnation. Civic Oversight of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreement Implementation*, April 2015, pp. 30-34, http://crra.rs/uploads/documents/2015-04-27 10:05:10_a_44_l_en_doc.pdf [15.09.2018].

promise solution, which would take into account the expectations and interests of the Serbian side and allow Serbia to join the EU. Although never officially declared, this compromise solution would likely mean readiness to accept Kosovo's separate existence at the international level under some *sui generis* political and legal formula. However, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić consistently suggests that the acceptable – but still uneasy – win-win formula should leave North Kosovo within the borders of Serbia.¹⁷

The conclusion of such an agreement, however, remains a very difficult task. The complicated question of Kosovo arouses emotions in Serbian society and is constantly present in internal political debates in Serbia. The uneasy compromises made so far by the Serbian authorities in the bilateral dialogue in Brussels lead to misunderstandings, polemics, critical voices, or open accusations from the political opposition and part of the Serbian society. They come down to the abovementioned claims that the authorities in Belgrade – pressured by the EU institutions and its member states – accept harmful solutions that are contrary to the interests of the state and its citizens. What is more, a conservative and pro-Russian part of Serbian society distance themselves from the policy of the state and remain convinced that Russia and President Vladimir Putin protect Serbia's interests better than authorities in Belgrade, who

¹⁷ K. Pawłowski, *Dialog Serbia–Kosowo: w poszukiwaniu formuły porozumienia*, "Komentarze IES", 2019, no. 40, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/dialog-serbia-kosowo-w-poszukiwaniu-formuly-porozumienia-40-40-2019> [16.01.2020].

are allegedly conformist and submissive to foreign pressure and demands of the West.¹⁸

The objective sensitivity of the Kosovo question for Serbian society and its indisputable impact on Serbia's internal politics clearly limit the room to manoeuvre for the authorities in Belgrade. Moreover, keeping in mind the vulnerability of Serbian citizens for gestures and declarations from Moscow, it is possible that the decision-makers in Belgrade would not adopt the final agreement on normalization with Kosovo without the political support ("blessing") from the Kremlin.¹⁹ Meanwhile Russia is not necessarily interested in a fast settlement of the dispute over Kosovo and the subsequent drift of Serbia to the West. There are also many reasons to claim that the Russian principled position on Kosovo is actually conditioned in the first place by Moscow's international interests. As a result, the already complicated problem of Kosovo is even more complex as it represents an instrument of Russia's "brotherly" influence on allied Serbia and an element of Moscow's geopolitical games with the West.

¹⁸ K. Pawłowski, *Partnerstwo strategiczne Serbii i Rosji: uwarunkowania międzynarodowe i wewnętrzne*, "Komentarze IES", 2020, no. 102, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/partnerstwo-strategiczne-serbii-i-rosji-uwarunkowania-miedzynarodowe-i-wewnetrzne-102-5-2020> [20.01.2020].

¹⁹ As Maxim Samorukov writes: "If, inspired by the prospects of joining the EU, Vučić indeed dares to recognize Kosovo without Russia's approval, the Kremlin will easily be able to destroy him as a politician. It can simply declare that as a true ally of the Serbian people rather than the sellout political elite, Russia will continue to defend Serbia's territorial integrity by refusing to recognize Kosovo. Vučić understands this risk perfectly [...]" See: M. Samorukov, *Escaping the Kremlin's Embrace: Why Serbia Has Tired of Russian Support*, Carnegie Moscow Center, 22.01.2019, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/78173> [15.01.2020].

Conclusions

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that despite the visible ease of tensions in relations between Belgrade and Pristina, the political class and society in Serbia are still facing the complicated and traumatic Kosovo issue. For years subsequent governments in Belgrade have been unsuccessfully looking for a functional compromise below formal recognition which would end the political conflict over Kosovo and allow Serbia to join the EU.

There are certainly arguments to say that in relation to the Kosovo question, Serbia is literally trapped by its own national mythology, history, and politics. The reality and complexity of the Kosovo problem is reflected by Timothy G. Ash, who states: "In their hearts, most Serbs know that Kosovo is lost; but almost no one in Serbian politics will acknowledge that publicly. So Kosovo is a festering wound on the Serbian body politic, preventing the country's politicians, officials and journalists from concentrating on the things that really matter for the welfare of their people."²⁰

To sum up, twenty years after the fall of Milošević, Serbia is still struggling with the problem of Kosovo. On the one hand, the ongoing process of normalization between Belgrade and Pristina justifies moderate optimism and claims that a lot has changed. On the other hand, bearing in mind that Serbia still officially recognizes Kosovo as a part of its territory, continues limited presence and jurisdiction at Kosovo's territory, and effectively questions Kosovo's inter-

²⁰ T. G. Ash, *The best answer for Kosovo is EU membership – and for Serbia too*, The Guardian, 06.12.2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/dec/06/balkans.guardiancolumnists> [10.03.2021].

national legal personality, someone could say that not much has changed on the most important matters. In effect, the question of where Serbia and Kosovo actually are two decades after the war still raises serious concerns and doubts. Although the final agreement of the historical dispute between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians seems to be relatively close, the exact political resolution still needs to be found.

Bibliography

Documents

European Commission, *Serbia 2020 Report*, Brussels, 06.10.2020 SWD(2020) 352 final, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Deklaracija o strateškom partnerstvu između Republike Srbije i Ruske Federacije*, 24.05.2013, Arh. broj 9077/13 D-77/13, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/images/stories/bilateral_ugovori/rusija.pdf.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Zajednička izjava Republike Srbije i Narodne Republike Kine o Produbljivanju strateškog partnerstva*, Arh. broj 9119/13 D-119/1, *Međunarodni bilateralni ugovori*, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/images/stories/bilateral_ugovori/kina.pdf.

National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, *Резолуција Народне Скупштине Републике Србије о заштити суверенитета, територијалног интегритета и уставног поретка Србије*, 26.12.2007, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/>.

Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade 2009, <http://www.voa.mod.gov.rs/documents/national-security-strategy-of-the-republic-of-serbia.pdf>.

Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defence, *National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia*, Belgrade 2019, http://www.mod.gov.rs/multimedia/file/staticki_sadrzaj/dokumenta/strategije/2019/Strategy%20of%20National%20Security%20od%20the%20Republic%20of%20Serbia.pdf.

Monographs and articles

Agh A., *The Politics of East-Central Europe*, London 1998.

Bujwid-Kurek E., *Państwa jugosłowiańskie. Szkice politologiczne*, Kraków 2008.

Bujwid-Kurek E., *Serbia w nowej przestrzeni ustrojowej. Dzieje, ustrój, konstytucja*, Kraków 2012.

Čolović I., *Baškany – terror kulture*, Wołowiec 2007.

de Krnjec-Miskovic D., *Serbia's Prudent Revolution*, "Journal of Democracy", 2001, vol. 12, no. 3.

Drašković V., *Iseči vremena*, Beograd 2016.

Drašković V., *Kosovo and Us*, [in:] *Kosovo. Contending Voices on Balkan Interventions*, W. J. Buckley (ed.), Cambridge 2000.

Forca B., *Vojna neutralnost Republike Srbije. Između deklarativnog opredeljenja i postupanja u praksi*, [in:] *Uticaj vojne neutralnosti Srbije na bezbednost i stabilnost u Evropi*, S.T. Korać (ed.), Beograd 2016.

Gallagher T., *The Balkans in the New Millennium*, London – New York 2005.

Goati V., *Izbori u SRJ: od 1990. do 1998.: volja građana ili izborna manipulacija*, Beograd 1999.

Goati V., *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskom razdoblju*, Beograd 2006.

- Grahovac S., *Srpska drama. Politička i moralna raskršća*, Beograd 2010.
- Holmes L., *Post-Communism: An Introduction*, Cambridge – Oxford 1997.
- Ickiewicz-Sawicka M., *Serbsko-albański konflikt o Kosowo. Studium kryminologiczne*, Białystok 2019.
- Ivanović Z., *Zoran Djindjić u mrezi mafije*, Beograd 2004.
- Jagiello-Szostak A., *Serbia wobec kryzysu migracyjnego – najdłuższy odcinek szlaku bałkańskiego*, [in:] K. Cebul, R. Zenderowski (eds.), *Państwa Europy Środkowej i Bałkanów wobec kryzysu migracyjnego*, Warszawa 2020.
- Jelavich B., *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge 1985.
- Judah T., *The Serbs. History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, New Haven – London 1997.
- Kolin M., *This is Serbia calling. Rolenrol radio i Beogradski pokret otpora*, Beograd 2001.
- Korzeniewska-Wisniewska M., *Serbia pod rządami Slobodana Miloševicia: serbska polityka wobec rozpadu Jugosławii w latach dziewięćdziesiątych XX wieku*, Kraków 2008.
- Koseski A., *W bałkańskim tyglu*, Pułtusk 2002.
- LeBor A., *Milosevic: A biography*, London 2002.
- LeBor A., *Milosevic. A Biography*, London 2003.
- Lee Wolff R., *The Balkans in our time*, Cambridge 1956.
- Leszczenko L., Giebień H., Jarząbek J., Jagiello-Szostak A., Szyszlak E., Szyszlak T., *Pogranicza cywilizacji. Wpływ dylematów tożsamościowych na politykę zagraniczną i bezpieczeństwa wybranych państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Warszawa 2019.
- Maršal T., *Igra senki: Petooktobarska smena vlasti u Srbiji*, Beograd 2005.
- Mikucka-Wójtowicz D., *Demokratyczna transformacja w Serbii i Chorwacji w latach 1990-2010*, Kraków 2014.

- Mikucka-Wójtowicz D., *Wpływ nieformalnych sił sprzeciwu na przebieg procesu demokratycznej transformacji w Serbii na przykładzie funkcjonowania służb specjalnych*, "Athenaeum", 2014, vol. 41.
- Nežović B., Andrić M., *Kosovo Serbs in the Brussels Agreement conundrum – Spectators without participation*, [in:] *Implementation of the Belgrade – Prishtina Dialogue: Results, Controversies and Prospects*, A. Orosz (ed.), Budapest 2016.
- Nowak-Bajcar S., *Demokracja w języku prasy serbskiej 1999-2003*, [in:] *W poszukiwaniu nowego kanonu. Reinterpretacje tradycji kulturalnej w krajach postjugosłowiańskich po 1995 roku*, M. Dąbrowska-Partyka (ed.), Kraków 2005.
- Pawłowski K., *Państwowość Kosowa. Geneza, uwarunkowania, współczesność*, Lublin 2018.
- Politics, Power and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, K. Dawisha, B. Parrott (eds.), Cambridge 1997.
- Rekć M., *New Balkan Migration Route and Its Impact on Transit Countries*, "Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe", 2019, vol. 17, no. 4.
- Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatische Akademie, Wien, Conference on Multilateral Diplomacy: Opportunities and Challenges for Kosovo's Membership in International Organisations, 24-25 November 2014 at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, in Vienna, Austria*, http://www.mfaks.net/ad/repository/docs/20150112140905_20150112_Vienna_Conference_Publication_PDF_compressed.pdf.
- Republika Serbii. *Aspekty polityki wewnętrznej i międzynarodowej*, A. Jagiełło-Szostak (ed.), Wrocław 2016.
- Savić A., *Studija slučaja: „Nezavisno Kosovo” ili „Evropska Kolumbija”*, [in:] *Kosovska kriza – Srpske opcije. Zbornik radova*, N. Đorđević (ed.), Beograd 2008.

- Sells M. A., *Vuk's Knife: Kosovo, the Serbian Golgotha, and the Radicalization of Serbian Society*, [in:] *Kosovo. Contending Voices...*, Słowikowski M., *Jedna Rosja w systemie politycznym Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Łódź 2018.
- Stevanović V., *Milošević. Jadan epitaf*, Zagreb 2002.
- Танасковић Д., *Неоосманизам. Доктрина и спојнополитичка пракса. Повратак Турске на Балкан*, Београд 2010.
- Tanty M., *Balkany w XX wieku. Dzieje polityczne*, Warszawa 2003.
- Teokarević J., *Western Balkans between Deep Crises and Uncertain Perspectives*, Beograd 2019.
- Thomas R., *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*, New York 1999.
- Thompson M. R., Kuntz P., *Stolen elections: the case of the Serbian October*, "Journal of Democracy", 2004, vol. 15, no. 4.
- Tismeanu V., *Wizje zbawienia. Demokracja, nacjonalizm i mit w postkomunistycznej Europie*, Warszawa 2000.
- Vladislavljević N., *Competitive authoritarianism and popular protest: Evidence from Serbia under Milošević*, "International Political Science Review", 2016, vol. 37, no. 1.
- Walkiewicz W., *Balkany słowiańskie. Aspiracje-uwikłania-sprzeczności*, Białystok 2016.
- Wojnicki J., *Instytucjonalizacja przemian ustrojowych państw postjugosłowiańskich*, Pułtusk 2007.

Policy papers

- Batt J., *The question of Serbia*, "Chaillot Paper", 2005, no. 81, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cpo81-English.pdf>.
- BIRN Kosovo, Internews Kosova, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC) of North Mitrovica, *BIG DEAL: Lost in Stagnation. Civic Oversight of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreement Implementation*, April 2015, http://crta.rs/uploads/documents/2015-04-2710:05:10_a_44_l_en_doc.pdf.

- BIRN Kosovo, Internews Kosova, Advocacy Center for Democratic Culture (ACDC) of North Mitrovica, *BIG DEAL: Split Asunder. Civic Oversight of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreement Implementation*, December 2015, [http://www.birn.eu.com/en/file/show/ENG-publicim-BIGDEAL3web\(1\).pdf](http://www.birn.eu.com/en/file/show/ENG-publicim-BIGDEAL3web(1).pdf).
- Bujosevic D., Radovanovic I., *The Fall of Milosevic: The October 5th Revolution*, New York – Basingstoke 2003.
- Centar za slobodne izbore i demokratiju (CeSID), *Oko izbora 4: Izveštaj sa parlamentarnih i predsedničkih izbora u SRJ i pokrajinskih izbora u Vojvodini (septembar-oktobar 2000)*, Beograd 2000, <http://www.cesid.rs/pdfovi/OKO%20IZBORA%204.pdf>.
- Conley H. A., Hillman J. E., McCalpin M., Ruy D., *Becoming a Chinese Client State: The Case of Serbia*, csis.org, 24.09.2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/becoming-chinese-client-state-case-serbia>.
- Emini D., Stakic I., *Belgrade and Pristina: lost in normalisation?*, "EUISS Brief", 2018, no. 5, <https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Brief%205%20Belgrade%20and%20Pristina.pdf>.
- Kosova Democratic Institute, *Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue: Challenges and the Way Forward*, "Brief Analysis", March 2018, <http://votaime.org/Public/Article/DownloadFile/1477>.
- Lehne S., *Kosovo and Serbia: Toward a Normal Relationship*, "Policy Outlook", March 2012, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Kosovo_and_Serbia.pdf.
- OSCE, *Republic of Serbia. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Parliamentary Elections 23 December 2000. Final Report*, 20.02.2001, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/2/f/15269.pdf>.
- Pešić V., *Rekonstrukcija petooktobarskih zbivanja na osnovu memoarske i stručne literature*, [in:] *Razvoj demokratskih ustanova u Srbiji – Deset godina posle*, Fondacija Heinrich Böll, Regionalna kancelarija za Jugoistočnu Evropu u Beogradu, Beograd 2010.

- Scenarios for the 'Grand Finale' Between Kosovo and Serbia, "Balkans Policy Research Group", April 2018, <http://balkansgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/SCENARIOS-FOR-THE-GRAND-FINALE-BETWEEN-KOSOVO-AND-SERBIA.pdf>.
- Vejvoda I., *Serbia after four years of transition*, [in:] *The Western Balkans: moving on*, J. Batt (ed.), "Chaillot Paper", 2004, no. 70.
- Vllasi E., *Russian Influence in Kosovo: In the shadows of myth and reality*, "Occasional Paper", 2020, no. 7, [http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report-Russian-Influence-in-Kosovo-English-Version_\(1\)_61417.pdf](http://www.qkss.org/repository/docs/Report-Russian-Influence-in-Kosovo-English-Version_(1)_61417.pdf).
- Yugoslavia's presidential election: the Serbian People's moment of truth, "ICG Balkans Report", 2000, no. 102.

Internet sources

- Ambasada Rosji w Polsce, *Koncepcja polityki zagranicznej Federacji Rosyjskiej*, Poland.mid.ru, https://poland.mid.ru/pl_PL/web/Polska_pl.
- Anđelković N., *Srbija i crkva: Šta znači ozbor Porfirija na mesto patrijarha Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, BBC News, 18.02.2021, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-56116083>.
- Arnautović M., *Ko u BiH krijumčari migrante?*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 18.12.2019, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/ko-krijumcari-migrantima-u-bih/30332426.html>.
- Ash T. G., *The best answer for Kosovo is EU membership – and for Serbia too*, The Guardian, 06.12.2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/dec/06/balkans.guardiancolumnists>.
- Asylum Protection Center/Centar za zaštitu i pomoć tražiocima azila, *Zaštita i prihvati*, <https://www.azilsrbija.rs/zastita-i-prihvat/>.
- Bami X., Ahmeti A., *Serbia accused of playing politics by sending vaccines to Kosovo*, Balkan Insight, 29.12.2020, <https://balkaninsight.com>.

- com/2020/12/29/serbia-accused-of-playing-politics-by-sending-vaccines-to-kosovo/.
- Beograd: *Uhapšeno šest članova desničarske grupe 'Levijatan'*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 14.10.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30893320.html>.
- Bjelotomic S., *Survey: 89% of Serbian citizens against their country-joining NATO*, serbianmonitor.com, 12.06.2019, <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/survey-89-serbian-citizens-against-their-country-joining-nato/>.
- Brnabic: *Serbia will continue its strategic partnership with China*, balkaneu.com, 12.10.2020, <https://balkaneu.com/brnabic-serbia-will-continue-its-strategic-partnership-with-china/>.
- Broj dobijenih mandata – XII saziv Narodne skupštine, Narodna Skupština Republike Srbije, <http://www.parlament.gov.rs/narodna-skupstina-/narodna-skupstina-u-brojkama/narodna-skupstina-u-brojkama.1737.html>.
- Bursać D., *Glasanje u Srbiji: otkud višak u biračkom spisku?*, Talas, 19.01.2021, <https://talas.rs/2021/01/19/glasanje-u-srbiji-otkud-visak-u-birackom-spisku/>.
- Buyuk H. F., *Divide and Rule: The Rise and Rise of a Bosniak Strongman in Serbia*, Balkan Insight, 04.01.2021, <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/04/divide-and-rule-the-rise-and-rise-of-a-bosniak-strongman-in-serbia/>.
- China the most trustworthy friend of Serbia: Serbian president, beltandroad.news, 23.09.2019, <https://www.beltandroad.news/2019/09/23/china-the-most-trustworthy-friend-of-serbia-serbian-president/>.
- Cody J., *Hungary: 151 Migrants Detained for Illegal Border Crossings in Just One Weekend*, <https://rmx.news/article/article/hungary-151-migrants-detained-for-illegal-border-crossings-in-just-one-weekend>.

- COVID-19, Република Србија. Министарство здравља, <https://cov-id19.rs/>.
- Daily new COVID-19 vaccination doses administered per 100 people, Feb 21, 2021, Our World in Data, <https://tiny.pl/9xq4w>.
- Domachowska A., Pawłowski K., *Serbska Cerkiew Prawosławna w żałobie: śmierć metropolity Czarnogóry i Przymorza Amfilohije oraz patriarchy Serbskiej Cerkwi Prawosławnej Irineja*, "Komentarze IEŚ", 2020, no. 296, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/serbska-cerkiew-prawoslawna-w-zalobie-smierc-metropolity-czarnogory-i-przymorza-amfilohije-oraz-patriarchy-serbskiej-cerkwi-prawoslawnej-irineja/>.
- Domaradzki S., *Porozumienie Turcja – UE: skuteczne czy niezbędne?*, Przedstawicielstwo Komisji Europejskiej w Polsce, 12.06.2018, https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/180612_EU_Turkey_migration_pl.
- Dvadeset godina od demokratskih promena u Srbiji, Glas Amerike, 05.10.2020, <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/dvadeset-godina-petog-oktobra/5609034.html>.
- Dveri prikupljaju peticiju protiv naseljavanja migranata u Čačku, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 16.12.2019, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/30328211.html>.
- Elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, OSCE, 24.09.2000, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/1/2/15184.pdf>.
- EU 'Covered Up' Croatia's Failure to Protect Migrants from Border Brutality*, The Guardian, 15.06.2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/15/eu-covered-up-croatias-failure-to-protect-migrants-from-border-brutality>.
- Федик І., Бошко Якшич: «Росія сприймається в Сербії, як «священний захисник» і за це отримує все», CACDS, 22.03.2019, <https://cacds.org.ua/en/?p=6327>.

- Hopkins V., *Serbia cultivates both US and China in Balkans tug of war*, ft.com, 11.10.2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/2ecob093-40d7-461a-a3f5-d31bf45c4b67>.
- Ivković A., *Supporters and opponents of Kosovo-Serbia border change: What do we know so far?*, europeanwesternbalkans.com, 04.09.2018, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/09/04/supporters-opponents-kosovo-serbia-border-change-know-far/>.
- Republika Srbija, Republička izborna komisija, *Izborne liste*, <https://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/tekst/sr/1937/izborne-liste.php>.
- Jakovlević N., *Lažne vesti o migrantima svakodnevne, među građanima raste mržnja prema njima*, Slobodna reč, 29.10.2020, <https://slobodnarec.rs/2020/10/29/lazne-vesti-o-migrantima-svakodnevne-medju-gradjanima-raste-mrznja-prema-njima/>.
- Janković M., Geogievski J., *Zašto je Srbija u vrhu zemalja po broju imunizovanih*, BBC News, 11.02.2021, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-55980819>.
- Jovanović: *DSS raspustio sve stranačke odbore po Srbiji*, Danas, 05.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/jovanovic-dss-raspustio-sve-stranacke-odbore-po-srbiji/>.
- Ključni prioriteti spoljne politike Srbije*, Politika.rs, 11.01.2018, <http://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/396249/Kljucni-prioriteti-spoljne-politike-Srbije>.
- Kokot M., *Putin w Belgradzie. Kremlowska polityka wzniecania chaosu i serbska gra na dwa fronty*, wyborcza.pl, 18.01.2019, <http://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,24375145,kremlowska-polityka-wzniecania-chaosu-i-serbska-gra-na-dwa-fronty.html>.
- Konačni obračun – dokumentarni film o Petom oktobru ili kako je srušen Milošević*, Nedeljnik Vreme, 25.02.2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fTMatYw4SY>.

- Linija u pesku – granica između slobode govora i govora mržnje na Internetu*, VOICE, 11.11.2020, <http://voice.org.rs/linija-u-pesku-granica-između-slobode-govora-i-govora-mrznje-na-internetu/>.
- Maričić S., *5. oktobar, 20 godina kasnije: Dani kad je Srbija stala*, BBC News, 29.09.2020, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-54333180>.
- Marinković L., *Migranti i Srbija: Mitovi i zablude o migrantima i izbeglicama*, BBC News, 18.12.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-50834778>.
- Marinković L., *„Naseljavanje migranata u Srbiji” i korona virus: Kako epidemija utiče na širenje lažnih vesti i antimigrantskih stavova*, BBC News, 07.05.2020, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-52524776>.
- Marš desničara protiv migranata u Beogradu, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 08.03.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/fotogalerija-desnicari-protiv-migranata/30476294.html>.
- Martens M., *Europäischer als einige Mitgliedstaaten*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 05.09.2015, https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/fluechtlingskrise/serbien-erntet-lob-fuer-seine-fluechtlingspolitik-13785941.html?printPagedArticle=true#pageIndex_2.
- Milinković D., *Beograd neće sporazum uz priznavanje: Vučić tokom razgovora s Lajčakom izneo jasnu i nepokolebljivu poziciju naše strane u nastavku dijaloga*, Новости, 05.03.2021, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/971469/beograd-neece-sporazum-priznavanje-vucic-tokom-razgovora-lajcakom-izneo-jasnu-nepokolebljivu-poziciju-nase-strane-nastavku-dijaloga>.
- Milivojević: Ključna je bila uloga Otpora, sad na vlasti strašila iz tog vremena, N1.rs, 05.10.2020, <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a657486-milivojevic-kljucna-je-bila-uloga-otpora-sad-na-vlasti-strasila-iz-tog-vremena/>.

- Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, *President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Inaugurates TİKA Projects in Serbia*, tika.gov.tr, 06.11.2019, https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/president_recep_tayyip_erdogan_inaugurates_tika_projects_in_serbia-54201.
- Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia, *Joint Air Live Firing Exercise "Shabla 2017"*, 13.07.2017, <http://www.mod.gov.rs/eng/11255/zajednicko-bojno-gadjanje-ciljeva-u-vazdusnom-prostoru-sabla-2017-11255>.
- Ministry of European Integration, Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Public opinion Poll*, <https://www.mei.gov.rs/eng/documents/national-documents/public-opinion-poll/>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora of the Republic of Kosovo, *International recognition of the Republic of Kosovo*, <http://www.mfa-ks.net/en/politika/483/njohjet-ndrkombtare-t-republiks-s-kosovs/483>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, *Bilateralni odnosi sa stranim zemljama*, <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/sr/index.php/spoljna-politika/bilateralni-odnosi/117-bilateralni-odnosi/11520-sad?lang=lat>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, *Relations between Turkey and Serbia*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-serbia.en.mfa>.
- Na licu mesta: Budva. Atentat i posledice, Vreme, 24.06.2000, https://www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/494/02.ASP.
- Narodne patrolе u centru Beograda – pogledajte njihov razgovor sa emigrantima, СРБИН.инфо, 22.02.2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4P_l6pvUmA.
- "Narodne patrolе" zovu na "čišćenje" parka kod Ekonomskog; NVO: "Čistite deponije" FOTO, b92, 21.10.2020, https://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2020&mm=10&dd=21&nav_id=1751166.

- Pančić T., *Peti oktobar i poraz sećanja*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 06.10.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/pan%C4%8Di%C4%87-peti-oktobar-i-poraz-se%C4%87anja/30878257.html>.
- Parun N., *Peti oktobar – Ko nam je rekao da smo razočarani?*, Talas.rs, 01.10.2020, <https://talas.rs/2020/10/01/peti-oktobar-ko-nam-je-rekao-da-smo-razocarani/>.
- Pawłowski K., *Dialog Serbia-Kosowo: w poszukiwaniu formuły porozumienia*, "Komentarze IEŚ", 2019, no. 40, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/dialog-serbia-kosowo-w-poszukiwaniu-formuly-porozumienia-40-40-2019>.
- Pawłowski K., *Partnerstwo strategiczne Serbii i Rosji: uwarunkowania międzynarodowe i wewnętrzne*, "Komentarze IEŚ", 2020, no. 102, <https://ies.lublin.pl/komentarze/partnerstwo-strategiczne-serbii-i-rosji-uwarunkowania-miedzynarodowe-i-wewnetrzne-102-5-2020>.
- Pawłowski K., *Serbia: wprowadzenie stanu wyjątkowego w ramach walki z pandemią Koronawirusa (COVID-19)*, "Komentarze IEŚ", 2020, no. 154, <https://ies.lublin.pl/pub/publikacje/komentarze/ies-komentarze-154-57-2020.pdf>.
- „*Peti oktobar je bio naš Berlinski zid*”, RTS.rs, 05.10.2020, <https://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/9/politika/4100928/predrag-markovic-peti-oktobar-20-godina.html>.
- Peti oktobar 20 godina kasnije bez većih obeležavanja*, Radio 021.rs, 04.10.2020, <https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Srbija/254902/Peti-oktobar-20-godina-kasnije-bez-vecih-obelezavanja.html>.
- Petrović I., *Srbijanski desničari vode kampanju preko leđa migranata*, DW, 21.02.2020, <https://www.dw.com/hr/srbijanski-desnici%C4%8Dari-vode-kampanju-preko-le%C4%91a-migranata/a-52459617>.

- Podpuni raspad sistema. Đilas i Jeremić jedan drugom okrenuli leđa*, Republika. Portal srpskog telegrafa, 14.12.2020, <https://www.republika.rs/vesti/srbija/247606/potpuni-raspad-sistema-djilas-jeremic-jedan-drugom-okrenuli-ledja>.
- Popović A., Čongradin S., Miljković M. D., *Šta mladima danas predstavlja Peti oktobar?*, Danas, 05.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/sta-mladima-danas-predstavlja-peti-oktobar/>.
- Psychosocial Innovation Network, *Stavovi prema migrantima i izbeglicama u Srbiji – istraživački izveštaj jun 2020*, https://psychosocialinnovation.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Stavovi-prema-izbeglicama-i-migrantima_2020.pdf.
- Putin warns West on Balkans as Serbia provides lavish welcome, BBC, 17.01.2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46892363>.
- Radić A., *Whom to rely on: Serbia between East and West*, european-westernbalkans.com, 06.12.2017, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/12/06/rely-serbia-east-west/>.
- Radojković V., *Hram Svetog Save otvoren za posetioce: Prelepo, grandiozno, jedinstveno*, RTV.rs, 27.10.2020, https://www.rtv.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/hram-svetog-save-otvoren-za-posetioce-prelepo-grandiozno-jedinstveno_1173788.html.
- Ranković R., *Tribina o 5. oktobru – dve decenije kasnije: Srbija dobila šansu da živi*, Glas Amerike, 05.10.2020, <https://www.glasamerike.net/a/godi%C5%A1njica-demokratskih-promena-u-srbiji-dve-decenije-5-oktobra-srbija-tribina/5609557.html>.
- Ristic M., *Tomislav Nikolic – Stuck Between Brussels and Moscow*, Balkan Insight, 25.05.2012, <https://balkaninsight.com/2012/05/25/tomislav-nikolic-stuck-between-brussels-and-moscow/>.
- Rose J., *Kako djeluju krijumčari u Srbiji i BiH*, DW, 03.08.2018, <https://www.dw.com/bs/kako-djeluju-krijum%C4%8Dari-u-srbiji-i-bih/a-44941382>.

- Rujević N., *Peti oktobar: Rađanje davno zaboravljene nade*, DW, 05.10.2020, <https://www.dw.com/sr/peti-oktobar-ra%C4%91anje-davno-zaboravljene-nade/a-55126168>.
- Samorukov M., *Escaping the Kremlin's Embrace: Why Serbia Has Tired of Russian Support*, Carnegie Moscow Center, 22.01.2019, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/78173>.
- Seputyte M., Filipović G., *Russia's Embrace Sows 'Total Confusion' for Serbia's EU Hopes*, bloomberg.com, 18.08.2018, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-18/russia-s-embrace-sows-total-confusion-for-serbia-s-eu-hopes>.
- Serbia, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2020>.
- Serbia and China sign Belgrade – Budapest loan agreement, railwaypro.com, 17.05.2017, <https://www.railwaypro.com/wp/serbia-china-sign-belgrade-budapest-loan-agreement/>.
- Serbia leads region in Expecting COVID 19 vaccines within days, Balkan Insight, 21.12.2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/12/21/serbia-leads-region-in-expecting-covid-19-vaccines-within-days/>.
- Serbia sets the stage for Beijing's mask diplomacy, Euractiv.com, 02.04.2020, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/china/news/serbia-sets-the-stage-for-beijings-mask-diplomacy/1450727/>.
- Serbia 2000 Election Watch, NDI, 11.09.2000, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/1071_yu_2000electwatch_5.pdf.
- Stojanović B., *Da li je bilo ko pobedio na ovim izborima?*, Talas, 23.06.2020, <https://talas.rs/2020/06/23/da-li-je-bilo-ko-pobedio-na-ovim-izborima/>.
- Stojanović B., *Šta rade vlast i opozicija 18 meseci pred izbore?*, Talas, 20.11.2020, <https://talas.rs/2020/11/20/sta-rade-vlast-i-opozicija-18-meseci-pred-izbore/>.

- Stojanović M., *Putin ne dolazi u oktobru u Beograd*, danas.rs, 14.10.2020, <https://www.danas.rs/politika/putin-ne-dolazi-u-oktobru-u-beograd/>.
- Svi kandidati i rezultati, *Vreme*, 25.01.2017, <https://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=1461219>.
- Szlak bačkański. *Nowe drogi, przemoc i wypadki śmiertelne*, DW, 16.04.2019, <https://www.dw.com/pl/szlak-ba%C5%82ka%C5%84ski-nowe-drogi-przemoc-i-wypadki-%C5%9Bmiertelne/a-48334602>.
- Szpala M., *Taktyczna rezygnacja prezydenta Serbii*, "Analizy OSW", 18.04.2012, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2012-04-18/taktyczna-rezygnacja-prezydenta-serbii>.
- Szpala M., *Wybory w Serbii – manifestacja dominacji Vučića*, "Analizy OSW", 24.06.2020, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2020-06-24/wybory-w-serbii-manifestacja-dominacji-vucicia>.
- Szpala M., *Wybory w Serbii: Pełnia władzy dla Vučića*, "Analizy OSW", 19.03.2014, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2014-03-19/wybory-w-serbii-pelnia-wladzy-dla-vucicia>.
- Tašković M., *HOĆE LI IH NEKO ZAUSTAVITI? Ekstremisti ponovo divljaju, prete da će PROTERATI MIGRANTE kod Ekonomskog fakulteta i to sramotno opisuju kao "ČIŠĆENJE PARKA"*, Blic, 21.10.2020, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/hoce-li-ih-neko-zaustaviti-ekstremisti-ponovo-divljaju-prete-da-ce-proterati-migrante/1mvw4yk>.
- Tašković M., *KAKO SE SRBIJOM ŠIRE TEORIJE ZAVERE i zašto smo od jednom poverovali u laži o tajnom ugovoru Srbije, Nemačke i Austrije i "MIGRANTSKOJ PRETNJI"*, Blic, 11.06.2020, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/kako-se-srbijom-sire-teorije-zavere-i-zasto-smo-odjednom-poverovali-u-lazi-o-tajnom/kgx6ymq>.

- Tatalović Ž., Vučić: Ana Brnabić mandatar za sastav nove Vlade, rekao sam joj dve želje, N1.rs, 05.10.2020, <https://rs.n1info.com/vesti/a657408-vucic-ime-mandatar-a/>.
- The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, *EU Assistance to Serbia*, <https://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/?lang=en>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Agreement on normalisation of economic relations between Belgrade, Pristina signed*, 04.09.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/160635/agreement-on-normalisation-of-economic-relations-between-belgrade-pristina-signed.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Belgrade-Pristina talks continue in Brussels*, 07.09.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/160692/belgrade-pristina-talks-continue-in-brussels.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Continuous support of citizens to Serbia's EU membership*, 22.01.2020, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/149496/continuous-support-of-citizens-to-serbia-eu-membership.php>.
- The President of the Republic of Serbia, *Declaration on strategic partnership between the two countries signed in Greece*, 11.12.2019, <https://www.predsednik.rs/en/press-center/news/declaration-on-strategic-partnership-between-the-two-countries-signed-in-greece>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *No progress in Belgrade-Pristina dialogue*, 21.03.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/127187/no-progress-in-belgrade-pristina-dialogue.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Pristina sole culprit for no dialogue*, 31.10.2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/147132/pristina-sole-culprit-for-no-dialogue.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Strengthening strategic partnership of Serbia, Azerbaijan*, 20.09.2019, <https://www.sr->

- bija.gov.rs/vest/en/145401/strengthening-strategic-partnership-of-serbia-azerbaijan.php.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Support of China in solving situation in Kosovo-Metohija*, 24.11.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/134237/support-of-china-in-solving-situation-in-kosovo-metohija.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Unprincipled attitude of great powers makes Serbia's struggle for Kosovo-Metohija more difficult*, 27.05.2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/141164/unprincipled-attitude-of-great-powers-makes-serbias-struggle-for-kosovo-metohija-more-difficult.php>.
- The Government of the Republic of Serbia, *Vucic, Brnabic meet with Ambassador of Russia*, 23.11.2018, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/134255/vucic-brnabic-meet-with-ambassador-of-russia.php>.
- The state that recognized Kosovo's independence among the first, revoked recognition*, b92, 03.03.2020, https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2020&mm=03&dd=03&nav_id=108047.
- To nie jest obóz uchodźców na Bliskim Wschodzie. To niemal środek Europy. Park w centrum Belgradu stał się przystanią imigrantów*, Gazeta Wyborcza, 27.08.2015, <https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/56,114944,18637913,to-nie-jest-obozy-uchodzcow-na-bliskim-wschodzie-to-niemal-srodek.html>.
- Turkey 'disappointed' by Kosovo's move to recognise Israel*, macaubusiness.com, 06.09.2020, <https://www.macaubusiness.com/turkey-disappointed-by-kosovos-move-to-recognise-israel/>.
- UNDP Serbia, *Stavovi građana prema uticaju izbegličke i migracione krize u 19 jedinica lokalne samouprave Srbije*, 14.10.2019, https://www.rs.undp.org/content/serbia/sr/home/library/poverty/stavovi-gra_ana-prema-uticaju-izbeglike-i-migracione-krize-u-19-.html.

- UNHCR Serbia Monthly Update, August 2020, ReliefWeb, 04.09.2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/serbia/unhcr-serbia-monthly-update-august-2020>.
- U.S. Embassy in Serbia, *US & Serbia Relations*, <https://rs.usembassy.gov/our-relationship/policy-history/us-country-relations/>.
- Utasak nedelje: Boris Tadić, Teofil Pančić i Predrag Voštinčić, NOVA S, 10.06.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBA9m26T1Xo>.
- Velebit V., *Koliko je Srbija zalutala na evropskom putu tokom 2020. godine?*, Talas, <https://talas.rs/2020/12/29/koliko-je-srbija-zalutala-na-evropskom-putu-tokom-2020-godine/>.
- Vladimir Bilčik: *Nastavak međupartijskog dijaloga u Srbiji 1. marta. Ključni cilj mi je da na narednim izborima učestvuju oni koji su bojkotovali prošle izbore*, Nova srpska politička misao, 25.02.2021, <http://www.nspm.rs/hronika/vladimir-bilcik-nastavak-medju-partijskog-dijaloga-u-srbiji-uz-posredstvo-evropskih-parlamentaraca-pocece-1.-marta.html?alphabet=l>.
- Вучић А., АУТОРСКИ ТЕКСТ ПРЕДСЕДНИКА СРБИЈЕ ЗА „ПОЛИТИКУ“, *Елита и плебс*, Политика, 10.07.2019, <http://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/433411/Elita-i-plebs>.
- Vučić: *do izbora 2022. neće biti priznanja Kosova, posle narod odlučuje*, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 18.12.2020, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/31008258.html>.
- Vučić grmeo: *otkrivamo šta se dešavalo iza zatvorenih vrata na sednici Predsedništva SNS*, Новости, 25.02.2021, <https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/politika/968616/vucic-grmeo-otkrivamo-sta-desavalo-iza-zatvorenih-vrata-sednici-predsednistva-sns>.
- Vučić: *Na novi peti oktobar pozivaju oni koji su ga obrukali*, Studio B, 01.10.2020, <https://studiob.rs/vucic-na-novi-peti-oktobar-pozivaju-oni-koji-su-ga-obrukali/>.
- Vukadinović Đ., *Najzainteresovaniji za ime opozicionog kandydata je naravno, režim – da big a mogli blagovremeno oblatiti i demonizo-*

- vati, Nova srpska politička misao, 12.01.2021, <http://91.222.7.144/politicki-zivot/najzainteresovaniji-za-ime-opozicionog-kandidata-je-naravno-rezim-%E2%80%93-da-bi-ga-mogli-blagovremeno-oblatiti-i-demonizovati.html?alphabet=l>.
- Wallis E., *Numbers of Migrants in Serbia Hoping to Cross Borders Increasing*, InfoMigrants, 29.09.2020, <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/27630/numbers-of-migrants-in-serbia-hoping-to-cross-borders-increasing>.
- Western Balkans Polls show strong support for EU, iri.org, 02.06.2020, <https://www.iri.org/resource/western-balkans-poll-shows-strong-support-eu>.
- Yugoslavia: Opposition Leader Says He Survived Assassination Attempt, Radio Free Europe, 09.10.1999, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1092308.html>.
- Żaba N., *Serbia i Kosowo godzą się w białym domu*, gazetaprawna.pl, 07.09.2020, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1490196-serbia-kosowo-pokoj-usa.html>.

Press

- Głębocki B., *Serbia bez Miłoszewicia*, "Przegląd", 10.10.2000.
- Głogowski M., *Belgrad jak Sarajewo*, "Przegląd", 23.03.2003.
- Karolkiewicz M., *Rozwiane nadzieje Serbów*, "Przegląd", 07.10.2002.
- Kęciek K., *Czy Jugosławia przetrwa?*, "Przegląd", 23.04.2001.
- Kęciek K., *Gangsterzy i spiski*, "Przegląd", 25.05.2003.
- Lovšin P., *Kodo tihotapi migrante v Slovenijo*, "Dnevnik", 25.05.2019.
- Piaseczny J., *Czarnogóra niepodległa*, "Przegląd", 04.06.2006.
- Piaseczny J., *Serbia bliżej Unii*, "Przegląd", 11.03.2012.
- Piaseczny J., *Serbowie poparli nacjonalistów*, "Przegląd", 11.01.2004.
- Reszczyński Ł., *Belgrad rozlicza historię*, "Przegląd", 9.05.2010.
- Sokołowska P., *Zakładnicy Unii*, "Przegląd", 17.02.2008.



About the Authors

Dr hab. Agata Domachowska, prof. UMK

- Institute of Central Europe
- Faculty of Humanities, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

Prof. dr hab. Jacek Wojnicki

- Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw

Dr hab. Mirella Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska, prof. UJ

- Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Dr Anna Jagiełło-Szostak

- Institute of International Studies, University of Wrocław

Dr hab. Magdalena Rekść

- Faculty of International and Political Studies, University of Łódź

Dr hab. Konrad Pawłowski

- Institute of Central Europe
- Faculty of Political Science and Journalism, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

IES

3/2021

POLICY
PAPERS

IES
POLICY
PAPERS

2021

- On October 5, 2000, about 1 million Serbs protested in Belgrade against the falsified results of the elections for the office of president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the regime of the incumbent FR Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milošević. The protests symbolically and effectively ended the authoritarian and anti-democratic regime of President Milošević, a politician who for over a decade dominated the political scene of Serbia and Yugoslavia.
- Although after October 5, Serbia had certainly entered the path of democratic transformation and modernization, the nature and scale of the negative burden of the Milošević era would have a negative impact on any further development of the country, the pace of internal reforms, and Serbia's relations with its neighbours. As a result, Serbia's symbolic and factual "return to Europe," modelled on the path of other post-communist Central European countries, turned out to be more difficult, complicated, and longer than initially expected.
- Today, over twenty years after the fall of President Milošević, Serbian authorities and society still face severe challenges and problems, both internal and international. Many of them actually represent the political legacy of the Milošević era.

ISBN 978-83-66413-50-4



www.ies.lublin.pl