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**THE EURO - ATLANTIC VALUES
IN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES**

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Dear,

The topic of the International Scientific Conference in Ohrid 2020 should create assumptions through scientific articles and through debate to offer answers about the situation with the implementation of Euro-Atlantic values of the Balkan countries. This is important because there are three European Union member states (Greece, Bulgaria and Croatia) in this area, which are also members of the NATO Alliance (Northern Macedonia joins this group, Albania and Montenegro), and other countries (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia) are outside these structures.

This position of the countries in relation to the Euro-Atlantic integration causes numerous interactions and relations, which in many ways are specific, both for the relations between the Balkan countries and in terms of the application of criteria and values in the relations between the countries separately. The conflicting historical past has created the impression that "the Balkans are a powder keg", which is causing turmoil in politics, not only in Europe but also beyond. In that sense, it is good to create space, the academic community of the Balkan countries and beyond to try through the analysis of practices from the application of Euro-Atlantic values to offer new insights that will serve to strengthen the idea of Europe as a common home.

The conference will present papers on the following topics:

- ❖ ▪ Democracy, rule of law, human rights, their promotion and forms of protection
- ❖ ▪ International Standards for the Protection of Human and Citizen's Freedoms and Rights and the Policies of the Balkan States
- ❖ ▪ Forms of protection of freedoms and rights - experiences and perspectives
- ❖ ▪ Strengthening the rule of law and accountability of institutions
- ❖ ▪ Democracy, forms of democratic participation in government and governance
- ❖ ▪ Contemporary Criminal Theories and Crime Management
- ❖ ▪ Elections, Election Models, Electoral Participation, Election Campaigns, Free, Fair, Democratic Elections
- ❖ ▪ Accountability, transparency, control and accountability of public officials and entities exercising public authority

- ❖ ▪ Peace, non-violence and respect for the identity of man and citizen
- ❖ ▪ Freedom and equality, equality between nations, right to self-determination, national identity and dignity
- ❖ ▪ Respect for the freedoms and rights of the individual and citizen
- ❖ ▪ Individual freedoms
- ❖ ▪ Economic Freedoms and Rights
- ❖ ▪ Civil and Political Freedoms and Rights
- ❖ ▪ Equality, individual and collective, gender equality
- ❖ ▪ Solidarity, support for others, tolerance, respect for other cultures
- ❖ ▪ Religion and attitude towards traditional and other values
- ❖ ▪ Non-violence, peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation, arbitration, democratic dialogue
- ❖ ▪ How to deal with violence and terrorism
- ❖ ▪ Relation to nature and its sustainability
- ❖ ▪ Euro-Atlantic values and contemporary challenges, risks and threats
- ❖ ▪ Strategic Security Documents and Their Importance for realization of the Security Policies
- ❖ ▪ Security research approaches and methods
- ❖ ▪ Security neutrality versus Euro-Atlantic integration
- ❖ ▪ The concept of securitization
- ❖ ▪ The place and role of the intelligence and counterintelligence services
- ❖ ▪ Parliamentary control over the security system
- ❖ ▪ Safety law
- ❖ ▪ Energy security in Southeast Europe
- ❖ ▪ Practical police reform policies
- ❖ ▪ Education systems and the profile of the police profession in the Balkan countries
- ❖ ▪ Forms of bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the areas of crime, human trafficking, narcotics and psychotropic substances
- ❖ ▪ Approaches to cases of domestic violence
- ❖ ▪ Cooperation between business entities between legal certainty and security threats and risks
- ❖ ▪ Regional cooperation and regional economic policies
- ❖ ▪ The Role of International Organizations in Promoting and Implementing International Norms for the Protection of Human Rights in the Balkans

- ❖ ▪ Contemporary forms of crime and ways of overcoming them
- ❖ ▪ Contemporary forms of cybercrime (electronic: fraud, fraud, threats, theft of personal data and other forms of electronic fraud and crime)
- ❖ ▪ Forms of crime related to internet and cyber services and how they are discovered
- ❖ ▪ Criminalistic experiences, achievements, methods, means and means of combating modern forms of crime.
- ❖ ▪ Comparative experiences and the latest anti-corruption mechanisms
- ❖ ▪ The types of corruption in the security system and the judiciary

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Scientific Conference**

**THE EURO-ATLANTIC VALUES IN
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HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE OF THE INTEGRATION IN NATO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

Andrej Iliev, PhD

Anita Ilieva Nikolovska, PhD

Emilija Petrova, MA

Abstract

The historical determination of the Republic of North Macedonia for integration into the collective systems, NATO and European Union is the highest national goal with strategic importance which lasts for about three decades. This paper aims to provide a detailed historical overview of our country's NATO integration path from becoming a part of Partnership for Peace to full membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO, which will happen earliest at the forthcoming meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of NATO in Brussels on 02nd and 03rd April 2020. Besides analyzing the work of NATO done so far and the forthcoming NATO activities in the field of dealing with military and non-military security threats and providing suggestions and methods for more effective dealing with the above mentioned modern security threats, one of the main point will be the implementation of a full membership of the Republic of North Macedonia as 30th NATO member state.

The main hypothesis and also the focus of our paper will be: "*Analysis of the integration path of our country in the European Union*". This will be based on an analysis of the documents from strategic importance of the European Union and an analysis of the forthcoming new methodology for admission and status for becoming a full member state of the European Union. Our aim is to make a historical and comparative analysis of the European Union members from the region of Southeast Europe (the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia), with the countries which are currently in process of launching accession negotiations with the European Union such as the Republic of North Macedonia and also with integration

process in EU of Southeast European countries, some of which already have candidate status (Albania, Montenegro, and Serbia).

The final goal of this paper, based on an analysis from the reports of the European institutions and agencies, will give an overview of the possible dates on which the accession of the above-mentioned countries from the region of Southeast Europe to the EU will be realized, if they carry out all necessary reforms on the basis with forthcoming new methodology for accession to the European Union and given timeframe from the European Commission for implementing all necessary reforms for each Southeast European country aspiring for membership in the EU.

Keywords: *historical retrospective, integration, the Republic of North Macedonia, NATO, European Union*

INTRODUCTION

The basic motive for political and military determination of the Republic of North Macedonia for membership in NATO, as well as other aspirant countries from the region of Southeast Europe, stems from the assessment that in this way we achieve better security of our country as well as the region of Europe. From a security point of view, the Republic of North Macedonia has a partially favorable geographical position in the frame of Southeast Europe because it is at the crossroads of main roads leading from Europe to Asia and Africa. As a result, there are real opportunities for numerous threats to the security of the Republic of North Macedonia, such as: terrorism, proliferation of weapons for mass destruction, interethnic conflicts, crime, drug trafficking, people and weapons, mass migrations, etc.¹ Cooperation of the Republic of North Macedonia with the international security structures enables its active participation in the creation of a global defense policy and enhancement of national capabilities to deal with new security threats. Without a full Euro-Atlantic integration of all democratic countries in the region of Southeast Europe, including the Republic of North Macedonia, it cannot be a question of fulfilling the widely-known vision of unifying the European peoples (United Europe) into a free and democratic community. The defense policy of the Republic of North Macedonia, within the framework of the national security system is aimed for meeting the

¹ Стратегија за одбрана на Република Македонија (СВ на РМ, 30/10), 2-3.

requirements and set obligations for its restructuring and preparation for NATO membership².

The overall assessment for accession of SEE countries in NATO is made from the analysis of political, economic, and military criteria fulfillment. According to this, the final grades for overall assessment for the Republic of North Macedonia 3.3-3.4³ and Bosnia and Herzegovina 2.3⁴. For the Republic of Serbia till 2016 the conditions for NATO accession according to TNS Medium Gallup 2014 - 2015, EU official analyzer of public opinion, said that more than a 70% of the Serbian citizens are against their country's accession in NATO. Most of the public opinion in the Republic of Serbia expresses strong negative feelings about NATO bombing in Serbia from 1999 and the Kosovo independence⁵. But after 4 years, in 2020 this image is a little bit different, and the public opinion with negative impact on NATO integration of the Republic Serbia is about 55%.

INTEGRATION PROGRESS OF NORTH MACEDONIA IN NATO

The accession of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO is not only a benefit for a higher level of security for the citizens, but in general the security of the country under the defense "umbrella" of this political and security system, which means accelerating the country's economic progress by creating favorable working conditions and increasing foreign direct investments as well as the opportunity to share and implement democratic values and principles⁶. Current development of events will strengthen the role of a credible state and partner of the Republic of North Macedonia in the eyes

² Национална концепција за безбедност и одбрана, 9-10.
http://morm.gov.mk/?attachment_id=39383

³ Andrej Ilijev, Zlatko Stojovski. Analysis of military-economic reforms on Republic of North Macedonia with SEE countries as a precondition for NATO accession, Contemporary Macedonian defense, 2019, 103.

⁴ Andrej Ilijev, Zlatko Stojovski, Drage Petreski. Status and challenges of defense reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina for NATO integration, Proceedings of International conference of Faculty for security, 2018, 137.

⁵ Andrej Ilijev, Drage Petreski, Aco Velkovski. Status and challenges of defense reforms in Republic of Serbia for Euro-Atlantic integration, Proceedings of International conference of Faculty for security, 2016, 21-22.

⁶ Andrej Ilijev, Zlatko Stojovski. Analysis of military-economic reforms on Republic of North Macedonia with South-East European countries as a precondition for NATO accession, Contemporary Macedonian defense journal, 2019, 95-111.

of other European democratic countries and this will speed up the path towards integration into the European Union.

Sending an invitation to the Republic of North Macedonia for starting the process of membership in the Alliance during the last NATO summit in Brussels is a confirmation of the progress made on the path to NATO⁷. Nevertheless, admission of the Republic of North Macedonia as the 30th member of NATO is conditioned by the finalization and full implementation of the Prespa agreement. Considering the complexity of the social and political relations, the strategic interest and the permanent commitments of the Republic of North Macedonia, it is easy to conclude that in this moment the country has no other viable alternative than joining NATO⁸. In the period that follows, the Republic of North Macedonia needs to undertake measures and activities to create all the conditions for its final admission to NATO, as follows:

- ❖ Continuation and consistent implementation of the reform process in all spheres of North Macedonian society for NATO membership;
- ❖ Overcoming the essential differences and assuming responsibility and concrete steps by all political entities in the country in order to implement the undertaken obligations from the signed agreement with Greece for resolving the name dispute. Everything else implies further deterioration of the North Macedonian positions in the negotiations and indefinite delays in the Euro-Atlantic integration process;
- ❖ Maintain good neighborly relations between Republic of North Macedonia and all neighboring countries on the basis of mutual trust and cooperation;
- ❖ Promoting democratic processes and achieving high standards in respecting citizens' political rights and freedoms, including the rights of minorities;
- ❖ Consistent implementation of reforms in defense and achieving full compatibility of the armed forces of the Republic of North Macedonia with NATO allies;

⁷ Annual National Program of the Republic of North Macedonia for membership in NATO (2014/2015). Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, 35-37. <http://arhiva.vlada.mk/register/?q=node/474>

⁸ Република Македонија - Влада на РМ, МАНУ. Република Македонија на патот кон Европската унија (2020) - искуства, предизвици и перспективи, Скопје, 2016, 257-262.

- ❖ Actively contributing with its own forces and assets in operations and missions led by NATO, EU or UN, as well as finding means and capabilities to develop capacities for their full logistical support outside the country;
- ❖ Strengthening the available capacities of the Republic of North Macedonia in support of the international efforts to deal with modern security challenges, such as: terrorism, cybercrime, proliferation of weapons for mass destruction, illegal migration, human trafficking, etc.
- ❖ Implementation of the undertaken obligations and provisions of the Ohrid Framework Agreement as an issue of essential importance for maintenance of interethnic relations in the Republic of North Macedonia.
- ❖ Continuing commenced economic reforms, establishing and maintaining fair and competitive working conditions for all economic entities, improving the business climate and attracting foreign investments, maintaining economic growth and undertaking effective measures for reducing the high unemployment rate.
- ❖ Improving the management of public finances and preventing further borrowing and increasing the total public debt on Republic of North Macedonia⁹.

Scientific researches conclude that over 60% of Macedonian citizens oppose the change of the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia as the last condition for full membership in NATO. It is interesting that the research was conducted in three phases in the period from 2016 to 2018, which clearly concludes that almost 70% of the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia, irrespective of the ethnic and religious determination are for admission of our country in NATO under the temporary reference FYROM even to become the permanent name of our country¹⁰. In all of aforementioned researches, Macedonian ethnic Albanians do not set any conditions on the name of our country and regardless on the change of our

⁹ Mulchinock Niall. NATO and Western Balkans: From neutral spectator to proactive peacemaker. Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, 239-241.

¹⁰ Braw, Elisabeth. "Greek troubles prompt Macedonia NATO push". *www.politico.eu. Politico*. Retrieved 27 January 2019.

state name, they strongly support the integration process of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO¹¹.

INTEGRATION PROGRESS IN EU OF SEE COUNTRIES

Numerous human and material losses during the Second World War represented constant threat and confrontation on the East and West side. After the war, the Franco-German reconciliation had become a top priority. The decision to pool the coal and steel industries of six European countries brought into force by Paris Treaty in 1951, marked the first step towards European integration. Rome Treaty from 1957 strengthened the foundations of this integration in common future for the six European countries. The six founding countries were: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Netherlands¹².

The Copenhagen criteria speeded up the process for integration of candidate countries in EU. In the Annex III of the Copenhagen criteria, EU gave high support for ending the war in Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹³. With the previous enlargement of EU in: 1999, 2004, 2007 and final in 2013, the EU member states reached the number of 28-th member states.

THE INTEGRATION PROGRESS TO EU OF NORTH MACEDONIA

North Macedonia has been participating in the Stabilization and Association process since 1999¹⁴. The Stabilization and Association Committee was held in June 2018 followed by the Stabilization and Association Council meeting in July 2018¹⁵. The Stabilization and Association Council was held in March 2019. Discussions focused on the

¹¹ Bechev Dimitar. What next after the failed Macedonian referendum?". *www.aljazeera.com*. *Aljazeera*. Retrieved 4 October 2018. "Albanian community, which is traditionally strongly pro-NATO and EU."

¹² European Parliament. The historical development of European integration, European union, 2018, 3-4.

¹³ EU commission. Copenhagen criteria, Copenhagen, 1993, Annex III.

¹⁴ Република Македонија - Влада на РМ, МАНУ. Република Македонија на патот кон Европската унија (2020) - искуства, предизвици и перспективи, Скопје, 2016, 308-310.

¹⁵ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report. European Commission, Strasbourg, 17.4.2018 SWD (2018) 154 final. 5-7. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-report.pdf>

progress made to advance the EU reforms, in particular in the areas identified by June 2018 Council Conclusions and the strengthening of good neighbor relations. The country continued to implement its commitments under the SAA. Programs under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for 2007-2013 (IPA I) have been progressively implemented and finalized. By the end of 2018, 62.7% of all funds allocated for the country under IPA I have been paid. A revised Indicative Strategy Paper was adopted in August 2018, enhancing the response to new challenges such as migration, terrorism and violent extremism, climate change and economic governance. The main risk factor impeding the swift implementation of IPA pre-accession funds remains the limited administrative capacity of the national authorities to prepare mature projects and insufficient commitment to ensure sustainability of project results. Urgent measures are needed to improve the planning, programming and management capacities in the national IPA structures, particularly with respect to managing large infrastructure projects. The national authorities need to better promote the sound financial management and control system established within the national IPA structures across the whole of the public administration, thus contributing to the public administration reform itself¹⁶. The EU supports the participation of the country in 12 EU programs with EUR 57.7 million. To make the most of this investment, the national authorities need to enhance the participation in the EU programs by better promoting funding opportunities, supporting preparation of projects, as well as maximizing the results of funded projects¹⁷.

THE INTEGRATION PROGRESS TO EU OF SERBIA

Serbia continued to build a track record in implementing the obligations of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)¹⁸. Some restrictions to free movement of capital were lifted in 2018. In 2018, Serbia also removed the export ban on non-hazardous waste and free trade was

¹⁶ Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report. European Commission, Strasbourg, 17.4.2018 SWD (2018) 154 final. 7-8. <https://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-report.pdf>

¹⁷ European commission. Final commission staff working document North Macedonia 2019 report on EU enlargement policy, 29.05.2019 year, Brussels, 98-99.

¹⁸ White book of Defense of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Defense, Sector for Defense Policy, Direction for Strategic Planning, Belgrade, 2012, 10-14.

restored. Compliance issues remain in the area of state aid and fiscal discrimination on alcohol. Restrictions on the acquisition of real estate also remain. In June 2018, Serbia introduced new restricting rules – regarding the issuance of payment cards by banks – that are not in line with the EU acquis and the SAA. Finally, as regards public procurement, inter-governmental agreements concluded with third countries and their implementation should follow the EU principles of equal treatment, transparency, non-discrimination and competition. This has also the effect of preventing EU companies from participating in large-scale infrastructure projects implemented in the country. Regular political and economic dialogue between the EU and Serbia continued. The Stabilization and Association Council meeting took place in December 2018. Sub-committee meetings were held, together with a meeting of a special group on the public administration reform. The Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee met in June and October 2018, and March 2019. Serbia continues to participate in the multilateral economic dialogue with the Commission and EU Member States to prepare for participation in multilateral surveillance and the EU economic policy coordination. As part of the new approach to economic governance, Serbia adopted its fifth economic reform program and is implementing reforms recommended by the Economic and Financial Affairs Council. Further efforts are needed to improve the capacity for economic planning, inter-ministerial coordination and implementation. Visa-free travel for citizens of Serbia travelling to the Schengen area has been in force since December 2009. A readmission agreement between the European Union and Serbia has been in force since 2008¹⁹. As part of the visa suspension mechanism report, the Commission is monitoring and reporting on the continuous fulfillment of the visa liberalization benchmarks. The mechanism enables the EU, under certain conditions, to temporarily suspend visa-free travel for nationals of a certain country in case of a substantial increase of migratory or security risk as well as in case of non-fulfillment of visa liberalization. The second monitoring report under the suspension mechanism was adopted on 19 December 2018. Under IPA II, Serbia continues to benefit from pre-accession assistance with a total indicative allocation of EUR1.5 billion for the period 2014-2020. The revised indicative strategy paper was adopted in August 2018, enhancing the

¹⁹ European commission. Commission staff working document -Serbia 2015 Report, EU enlargement strategy, Brussels, 10.11.2015, 74-76

response to new challenges such as migration, terrorism and violent extremism, climate change and economic governance. The IPA National Program 2014-2020 amounts to EUR 179 million overall, with most of the funding supporting alignment with the EU acquis, environment, competitiveness and social inclusion. An additional EUR 30 million have been allocated to the IPA Rural Development program 98 (IPARD). The EU has continued to support Serbia in border and migration management following the refugee crisis of 2015-2016. In addition, Serbia is benefiting from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Serbia continues to actively participate in EU programs, including Horizon 2020; COSME; Customs and Fiscals 2020; Erasmus+ and Creative Europe; Europe for Citizens; Employment and Social Innovation²⁰.

THE INTEGRATION PROGRESS TO EU OF ALBANIA

Stabilization and Association Agreement between Albania and the EU came into force in April 2009²¹. Albania presented its application for membership of the European Union on 28 April 2009. The European Council of June 2014 endorsed the decision of the General Affairs Council granting Albania candidate status. In November 2016 in view of the progress in meeting the five key priorities, the Commission recommended opening accession negotiations with Albania subject to credible and tangible progress in the implementation of the justice reform, in particular the re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors (vetting). In April 2018, having positively assessed the additional progress, the Commission then recommended unconditionally that the Council decides that accession negotiations should be opened with Albania, at the same time encouraging Albania to maintain and deepen the reform momentum in the key field of the rule of law. In the reporting period, Albania has implemented smoothly its obligations under the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Regular political and economic dialogue between the EU and Albania has continued through the relevant structures under the SAA. The ninth meeting of the SAA Committee was held in

²⁰ European commission. Final commission staff working document Serbia 2019 report on EU enlargement policy, 29.05.2019 year, Brussels, 97-98.

²¹ European commission. EU Enlargement Process and External Dimension of EU JHA Policy, Brussels, 2009, 165-167.

October 2018 in Tirana. The SAA Council gathered in November 2018 in Brussels. Meetings of subcommittees and of the special group on public administration reform were also regularly held. The Stabilization and Association Parliamentary Committee gathered in Tirana in February 2018 and in Brussels in November 2018. Visa liberalization for citizens of Albania travelling to the Schengen area has been in force since December 2010. As part of the monitoring mechanism in place since visa liberalization, the Commission has been regularly assessing the progress made by the country in implementing reforms introduced under the visa roadmap. The monitoring mechanism also includes an alert mechanism to prevent abuses, coordinated by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA). A readmission agreement between the EU and Albania has been in force since 2006. On 1st May 2019 the status agreement for operational cooperation with EBCGA has entered into force; this will enable the deployment of EBCG teams on the Albanian territory and ensure a better management of irregular migration. In March 2019, Albania signed a working arrangement with the EMCDDA, which will facilitate information exchange between the EU and Albania, the implementation of capacity building activities, and the development of data collection and reporting related to drugs. The EU provided financial assistance to Albania under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA I) in 2007 - 2013 with a total allocation of EUR 594 million. Albania benefits from support under the IPA multi-country program and it participates in five cross-border cooperation programs with neighboring Western Balkan countries and Member States, as well as in transnational cooperation programs under the European Regional Development Fund and the IPA Adriatic cross-border program. Albania participates with IPA support in the EU programs Erasmus+, Creative Europe (Culture and Media strands), Employment and Social Innovation, Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, Fiscals 2020, Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Program (COSME) and Europe for Citizens²².

²² European commission. Final commission staff working document Albania 2019 report on EU enlargement policy, 29.05.2019 year, Brussels, 101-102.

MONTENEGRO'S INTEGRATION PROGRESS TO EU

Regular political and economic dialogue between the EU and Montenegro has continued through the SAA structures. The Stabilization and Association Council held in June 2018 and the Stabilization and Association Committee in December 2018. Montenegro participates in the ministerial dialogue between the economic and finance ministers of the EU and the candidate countries, which aims at helping the latter gradually meet the economic accession criteria and be better prepared in terms of economic reforms, competitiveness and job creation. The most recent meeting was held on 17 May 2019, where joint recommendations were adopted. Visa liberalization for citizens of Montenegro travelling to the Schengen area has been in force since 2009. Montenegro is currently benefitting from EU financial assistance under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) with an indicative allocation of EUR 279.5 million for the period 2014 - 2020, out of which almost EUR 197 million was already programmed in the period 2014 - 2018 based on the priorities set out in the Indicative Strategy Paper²³. The 2018 action program provided EUR 28.2 million for reforms and investments in the area of the rule of law and fundamental rights, agriculture and rural development. In 2018, Montenegro benefited from additional EUR 8 million, following the performance reward exercise undertaken in the framework of the mid-term review of the Indicative Strategy Paper. These additional funds were allocated to the social sectors, with a specific focus on the health sector²⁴. Montenegro continues to benefit from support under the IPA multi-country and regional programs. It continues to participate in four cross-border cooperation programs with neighboring Western Balkan countries and in transnational cooperation programs with Member States under the European Regional Development Fund and the IPA Adriatic cross-border program. Montenegro continues to benefit from participation in the following EU programs, with IPA support: Erasmus+, Creative Europe (Culture and Media strands), Employment and Social Innovation, Horizon 2020, Customs 2020, Fiscals 2020, Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

²³ Strategic overview of Defense of Montenegro, Podgorica, 2013, 24-27.

²⁴ European commission. Final commission staff working document Montenegro 2019 report on EU enlargement policy, 29.05.2019, Brussels, 97-98.

Program (COSME). Montenegro also participates with own funds in the EU Justice Program²⁵.

Legend

Evaluation grade	Meaning in EU official report
1	No progress
2	Early stage
3	Some level of preparation / limited progress
4	Moderately prepared
5	Good progress/ good level of preparation

EU chapters/ Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
North Macedonia	3	2	4	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	4	5	3	3
Serbia	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	3	4	3	3	4	3	3
Albania	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	2	3
Montenegro	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	2	3

Table 1: EU chapters evaluation 1-14²⁶

²⁵ European commission. Final commission staff working document Montenegro 2019 report on EU enlargement policy, 29.05.2019, Brussels, 97-98.

²⁶ Table 2: EU chapters evaluation 1-14, presents statistical analysis made it from the authors of this paper according to results from EU national reports on the progress of the given countries in Chapters 1-14 and in accordance with the European Union national reports for this countries from 29.05.2019.

EU chapters/ Evaluation	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
North Macedonia	4	3	4	4	3	3	5	3	3	3	5	3	3	3
Serbia	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	5	5	3	4
Albania	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	4	3	2
Montenegro	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	3	3	4	5	5	3	4

Table 2: EU chapters evaluation 15-28²⁷

EU chapters/ Evaluation	29	30	31	32	33	Total	Average grade
North Macedonia	5	3	3	3	2	111	3,36
Serbia	5	4	4	4	3	122	3,70
Albania	4	4	5	4	3	115	3,48
Montenegro	4	5	5	4	2	127	3,85

Table 3: EU chapters evaluation 29-33 and Average grades²⁸

²⁷ Table 3: EU chapters evaluation 15-28, presents statistical analysis made it from the authors of this paper according to results from EU national reports on the progress of the given countries in Chapters 15-28 and in accordance with the European Union national reports for this countries from 29.05.2019.

The final analysis presented in Table 3 were estimated according the latest National reports for SEE countries given by the European Union from 2019 as follows: Montenegro 3.85; Republic of Serbia 3.70; Republic of Albania 3.48 and Republic of Macedonia 3.36. The final grades are not so bad, but what is worrying is the time frame for EU chapters being closed by candidate countries. The Republic of Serbia and Montenegro have both opened about half of the chapters, (17-18) chapters, but they have officially closed 3 (three) chapters. Republic of Albania in this process is even further from these two countries. Republic of North Macedonia is in the process of gaining candidate status and starting to work on the chapters.

CONCLUSION

The new methodology for the integration process in the European Union is a little bit different from the previous. This new methodology is also applied for the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE). The Member States of EU have constantly improved the methodology for EU integration of candidate countries aspiring to EU membership, since Feira and Thessaloniki Summits in 2000 and 2003 expressed their support for the European perspective of SEE. The European Council in its conclusions adopted at the European General Affairs Council in June 2019 reaffirmed "*its commitment to enlargement process in EU*", which finished with concrete key policy for integration in EU, approved by European Council on 14 and 15 December 2006. In November 2019 the European council came to common conclusion about creating "*New methodology for enlargement policy of EU*", which became more effective in the negotiation process, speeding up the whole process of EU aspirant countries for their faster EU integration²⁹. The last NATO summit took place at 3 and 4-th December 2019 in London, United Kingdom, because London is the seat of NATO's main headquarters since its inception in 1949 year and this year's NATO summit was planned here because of the jubilee "*70 years since establishment of NATO*". In addition to the comprehensive agenda of the upcoming challenges and threats for the

²⁸ Table 4 and Legend are made from the authors of this paper on the same way as Table 2 and 3.

²⁹ European commission. Enhancing the accession process - A credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, Brussels, 5.2.2020. 1-2.

functioning of NATO as a military-political alliance, this summit emphasized the commitment of the Republic of North Macedonia and Greece in overcoming nearly three decade name dispute for meeting all necessary conditions for admission of the Republic of North Macedonia as 30th full member state of NATO.

In the 5-th paragraph of the NATO summit conclusion remarks was said: *"We are committed to NATO's Open-Door policy, which strengthens the Alliance and has brought security to millions of Europeans. North Macedonia is here with us today and will soon be our newest Ally"*³⁰. According to everything we have noted in this paper, through accurate evaluations and indicators from relevant international organizations for assessment of the overall validity in fulfilling the conditions of the Republic of North Macedonia for integration in NATO and having in mind the pace of ratification of the NATO membership protocol by member states at the end of 2019, the protocol for full membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO was signed from almost all NATO member states, except Spain because in that period and even the first couple of months from 2020 Spain was in election process for new Government.³¹ According to Spanish sources, the parliament is expected to hold a ratification vote for North Macedonia accession in NATO in March 2020.

On the other hand, having in mind that in order to complete all administrative procedures for full membership of the Republic of North Macedonia in NATO, a longer period of time is needed for full membership of our country with the right to vote and all this will be finished earliest during 2nd and 3rd April 2020, at the Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers of NATO in Brussels, only if NATO accession protocol for North Macedonia will be signed from Spain. On the other hand, following the integration process of Montenegro for example, after completing the ratification of the protocols by 28-th member states in May 2016, Montenegro's full membership in NATO happened on the next NATO summit on 07th June 2017. According to this, Republic of North Macedonia becomes the 30th full

³⁰ NATO summit 03-04.12.2019. London Declaration, paragraph 5. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

³¹ Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia". *Treaty Base*. Retrieved 11 February 2019.

member state of NATO, earliest during 3rd April 2020 or lately during the next NATO summit which will be held in second half of 2021³².

According to the European commission, the new methodology for accession in EU of SEE countries have technical annex which is consist from 6 (six) clusters for negotiating of candidate countries of SEE with EU.

The first cluster *1. Fundamentals* is consisted of the following chapters: 23 - Judiciary and fundamental rights; 24 - Justice, Freedom and Security; Economic criteria, Functioning of democratic institutions Public administration reform; 5 - Public procurement; 18 - Statistics and 32 - Financial control. Second cluster *2. Internal Market* is consisted of the following chapters: 1 - Free movement of goods; 2 - Freedom of movement for workers; 3 - Right of establishment and freedom to provide services; 4 - Free movement of capital; 6 - Company law; 7 - Intellectual property law; 8 - Competition policy; 9 - Financial services and 28 - Consumer and health protection.

Third cluster *3. Competitiveness and inclusive growth* is consisted of the following chapters: 10 -Information society and media; 16 - Taxation; 17- Economic and monetary policy; 19- Social policy and employment; 20- Enterprise and industrial policy; 25 - Science and research; 26 - Education and culture and 29 - Customs union.

Fourth cluster *4. Green agenda and sustainable connectivity* is consisted of the following chapters: 14- Transport policy, 15- Energy, 21- Trans-European networks and 27- Environment and climate change.

Fifth cluster *5. Resources, agriculture and cohesion* is consisted of the following chapters: 11- Agriculture and rural development; 12 - Food safety, veterinary and sanitary policy; 13 - Fisheries; 22 - Regional policy & coordination of structural instruments and 33 - Financial & budgetary provisions.

The last sixth cluster *6. External relations* is consisted of the following chapters: 30 - External relations and 31 - Foreign, security & defense policy³³.

Republic of North Macedonia on 4th December 2018 with support of the European Council adopted the decision on passage to stage II of the SAA,

³² <https://1tv.ge/en/news/next-nato-summit-to-be-held-in-2021/>

³³ European commission. European economic and social committee of regions for enhancing accession process - a credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans, Brussels, 5.2.2020, 7-8.

based on the Commission's 2009 proposal. The implementation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II for 2014-2020 (IPA II) is underway. By the end of 2018, programs total EUR 395 million have been adopted, out of which EUR 151 million have been already contracted. Significant progress was made on a sector-based programming involving all stakeholders.

In the Republic of Serbia within the framework of accession negotiations, sixteen chapters have been opened (5 – public procurement; 6 – company law; 7 – intellectual property law; 13 – fisheries; 17 – economic and monetary policy; 18 – statistics; 20 – enterprise and industrial policy; 23 – judiciary and fundamental rights; 24 – justice, freedom, security; 25 – science and research; 26 – education and culture; 29 – customs union; 30 – external relations; 32 – financial control; 33 – financial and budgetary provisions; 35 – normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo), two of the chapters were provisionally closed (chapters 25 and 26). Serbia tabled its negotiating positions on chapters 2, 4, 9, and 21. Serbia was also invited to table its negotiating positions on chapters 3, 10, 14, 27 and 28. Serbia is participating in the Stabilization and Association Process.

Republic of Albania under IPA II (2014-2020) benefits in line with the priorities set out in the indicative strategy paper, from pre-accession assistance with a total indicative allocation of EUR 649.4 million. The Framework Agreement for IPA II entered into force in April 2015. The 2014 - 2017 action programs for Albania provided EUR 170 million to promote reforms in the key sectors such as democracy, governance, the rule of law and fundamental rights and provided EUR 113 million to invest in competitiveness and growth. For the 2018 action program for Albania, EUR 64 million for rule of law and justice reform, and EUR 30 million for environment protection and economic development have been earmarked. They include budget support operations for public finance management, public administration and justice reform, employment and vocational education 102 and training, home affairs and transport as well as an EU integration facility. Final, in Montenegro within the framework of accession negotiations, by May 2019, 32 chapter, including chapters 23 and 24 on the rule of law, have been opened, three of them such as science and research, education and culture and external relations, were provisionally closed. Montenegro is participating in the Stabilization and Association Process.

Overall, Montenegro continued to broadly implement its obligations under the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA).

If we compare the situation of preparation and negotiation of the above mentioned countries from SEE with the status for negotiation and preparation of SEE countries which already are full members of EU such as the Republic of Slovenia from 01st of May 2004 and the Republic of Croatia from 01st July 2013, we will get this overall results from the comprehensive analysis³⁴: Republic of Slovenia has taken its national role very seriously in the area of active cooperation, support and active role of European Commission for Enlargement of European Union and European Council in area of reforms for closure of 35 EU chapters as a necessary condition for candidate status, obtained during 1998 to full membership on 1st May 2004.³⁵ Analyzing the way of European integration of the Republic of Slovenia, we, as authors of this paper came to following conclusion: the process of reform on national and private institutions according to the 35 chapters of European Union took almost 5 years, which means that every year from 1998 to 2003, the Republic of Slovenia closed 7 (seven) chapters each year or all 35 chapters as a condition for EU membership in five years.

The situation is similar in the Republic of Croatia, which starting with reforms for NATO accession in 2004 and full membership in NATO since 2009, the process of closure of chapters for EU membership, were actual in period from 2005 until the end of 2011, when Croatia closes the last chapters and on 1st July 2013 became European Union member. It should be noted that the final scores of all 35 closed chapters of EU membership for Republic of Slovenia and Croatia were range from 4.1-4.3.

With new EU methodology from 2019, the total number of EU chapters are 33, divided in 6 clusters. The last two chapters are the task for EU evaluation and final closure of chapters. According to dynamics, the task of following SEE countries is not taken seriously in Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia, especially in the part of opening and closing the EU chapters. The process of their EU integration will be very long, if it

³⁴ EUROPEAID. Evaluation of PHARE [EU pre-accession] financial assistance to Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia Final Evaluation Report, issued on 19/01/2015 Page 1 Final Evaluation Report Issued on 19/01/2015, 8-12.

³⁵ Sodobni vojaski izzivi. Ministrstvo za obrambo, Znanstveno-strokovna publikacija Slovenske vojske, 2017,30-35.

goes with dynamics like in the last decade 2010-2020. The earliest EU membership can be expected in 6-7 years for Republic of Montenegro and Serbia, while the second wave would cover Republic of Albania and North Macedonia which would become EU members in 8-10 years or by 2030.

Bearing in mind that EU is vulnerable of ongoing migrant crisis and accordingly to this, wants to satisfy the quota of 1-2% of the total population in the EU countries and partner countries to be filled with permanent migrants. The European Commission for EU Enlargement will significantly help to SEE countries to speed up the process of opening and closing EU chapters, which means that the SEE countries' integration process will be speeding up in about two years. If the momentum goes according to this plan, then the expectation is that Montenegro and Serbia will become EU members in 4-5 years, or by 2025, while the Republic of Albania and North Macedonia by the end of 2027.

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