

EUROPEAN UNION PROCLAIMED HARMONY AND DISHARMONY OF THE WESTERN BALKANS*

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ОБЈАВЕНАТА ХАРМОНИЈА НА ЕВРОПЕЈСКИЈА СЪЈОЗ И ДИСХАРМОНИЈАТА НА ЗАПАДНИТЕ БАЛКАНИ

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Abstract: *European Union represents multiethnic, multicultural, religion-neutral, but also an essential multi-confessional, international organization sui generis with international recognition according to international law. Also, the EU represents society of the citizens of its full member-states. In the center of the EU political system is the process of harmonization with *acquis communautaire*, as a political and law process with continuity. Regardless of the fact that the decisions in Brussels are achieved through the principle of consensus, opposite to the practice in Strasbourg, after the referendum in the United Kingdom, the open question is whether Brussels will also turn to majority decision principles. Yet one more open question is whether common foreign, defense and security policy will remain common and centralized, or the EU will take new steps that lead toward decentralization, so that foreign defense and security policy will be reoriented to national level. At last, without European integration of Western Balkan states, so typical of the EU harmonization in all (its) aspects (from/in any perspective) will not be comprehensive and complete (will be incomplete and incomplete (at all).*

Key words: *European Union, Western Balkans, Region of South-East Europe, harmonization, consensus, disharmony, majority-decision, BREXIT.*

Introductory remarks

The question of harmony and disharmony is essential for everyone, any man, nation and even the modern humanity. As the universe is in harmony, and nature and earth are in balance, that is also the eternal human endeavor to achieve harmony in life. Beginning with harmony as a universal phenomenon, there were many efforts of people to convey the harmony of the universe and realize it in the society and the country, as well as in the international organizations. Such is the case in the contemporary international relations with one of the largest and most successful international organization *sui generis* on the European continent – the European Union (EU). In this regard, the Balkans² is an important

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historical and cultural region, especially the Western Balkans as a part of the European civilization.

Harmonisation of the national laws of the full members and others who are in the process of the accession with the *Acquis communautaire*³, i.e. Community Law is the essence of the EU. Nevertheless, the current EU officials are faced with many problems and with the open crisis of the project. The reasons for this are many challenges, such as:

1. Islamic terrorism that is unnecessary, violent, inhuman, and anti-civilisational;
2. migrant crisis and the complex handling of the FRONTEX officers, the EU's external borders in the Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, as a result of wars and post-war economic crisis, economic recession and the enormous poverty in the African and Asian continent;
3. Referendum about staying or leaving the EU of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that resulted in BREXIT;
4. Greek economic crisis and the crisis of the Eurozone;
5. The rise of euro-skepticism and the right-wing violent extremism in countries which are full members of the EU, and
6. bureaucracy, dysfunction and complexity of existing institutions and organizations in the political system of the EU.

However, what should be our response to these challenges?

All above-mentioned challenges are certainly an opportunity to create a new superstate – the United States of Europe. The existing EU, as an international organization with international legal personality, should be transformed and modified into a new and harmonious state because the way it is now, it does not have a good, harmonious and sustainable perspective. Different and better EU than this is possible, and as such, it is our reforming inevitability. However, we will come to this later.

1. From the EU proclaimed harmony and disharmony of the Western Balkans

From the history of Europe and the world, we know as an undeniable fact that all the violent unification projects of states and international organizations were unsuccessful in most cases. In contrast, even at the time of the Roman Empire, there was the idea of a united Europe. Given the fact that it broke-up violently, later emerged some ideas about a possible harmony of Europe on the

¹ European Union. // https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en, 24.09.2016.

² Petrović, D. Historical and Cultural Importance of Balkans for Forming of European Civilization. // Petrović, P., M. Radaković, eds. National and European Identity in the Process of European Integration. – Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, 2012, p. 317.

³ *Acquis communautaire*. // <http://en.euabc.com/word/12>, 25.09.2016; For the EU law See Horspool, M., M. Humphreys Mbe, M. Wells-Greco. European Union Law. – Oxford, 2016.

principles of national states that were in most cases unrealisable because the boundaries of the empire and the states in relation to the dominant ethnic concentration were not matched with the interests of unification and prosperity.

However, there were some different ideas, initiatives and visions of peace, harmony, progress with the integration of the international principles, interests and values that have become increasingly influential and widespread among the intellectual aristocracy, the nobles, lords, barons, business elite and rulers in palaces in Europe. They were, among others, prominent and progressive intellectuals, philosophers, writers, artists, composers, politicians, monarchs and statesmen.

After the feudal slavery with frequent rebellions and wars in the Middle Ages, on the European continent at the dawn of the modern era of humanity, enlightenment and Renaissance, the famous German poet Johann Christoph Friedrich Schiller in 1785, in honor of the ideas of brotherhood among people and the unity of mankind, wrote a poem *Ode to Joy* (*Ode an die Freude*). The poem *Ode to Joy* in addition to the harmonious efforts, gained a hymn-like character and treatment⁴. In fact, keeping in focus the history of an idea of peace, longing for brotherhood and for equality among nations and rulers on the European continent, appeared among others, the idea of the United States of Europe, following the model of the United States of America⁵.

In 1923, the Austrian Count Richard Nikolaus Koudenhove-Kalergi mentioned for the first time the United States of Europe during the formation of the international non-governmental organizations the Pan-Europe⁶ (germ. Paneuropa) in Vienna. *Europe as a political concept does not exist. This part of the world includes nations and states installed in the chaos, and a barrel of gunpowder of international conflicts, in a field of future conflicts. This is the European Question: the mutual hate of the Europeans that poisons the atmosphere. (...) The European Question will only be solved by means of the union of Europe's nations. (...) The biggest obstacle to the accomplishment of the United States of Europe is the one thousand years old rivalry between the two most populated nations of Pan-Europe: Germany and France ...*⁷. After Koudenhove-Kalergi, the French Prime Minister Aristide Briand at the session of the General Assembly of the League of Nations held on 5 September 1929 in Geneva, expressed in his speech, the need

⁴ Composition the *Ode to Joy* in a wonderful musical adaptation of Herbert von Karajan (one of the famous German composers and conductor of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra), was adopted as the anthem of the Council of Europe (the oldest international political organization) in 1972. Shortly afterwards, in 1986, the composition of the *Ode to Joy*, declared the anthem of the European Economic Community, later of the European Community to today's of the European Union-27, if the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, after a BREXIT.

⁵ Hewitson, M., M. D'Auria. *Europe in Crisis: Intellectuals and the European Idea, 1917-1957*. – New York, Oxford: Berghang Books, 2012, p. 94.

⁶ Paneuropa. // <http://www.paneuropa.org/>, 27.09.2016.

⁷ The History of the European Union: The European Citizens. // <http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/antecedentes.htm>, 24.09.2016.

for the formation of the federation⁸ of European states in the interest of economic progress, political and social cooperation. The following year, the Prime Minister of the French Third Republic Edouard Herriot⁹ published the book – *The United States of Europe*. The inevitability of the formation of the United States of Europe was prevented by the Fuhrer Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in the Third Reich in Germany with its fascists.

The idea of the United States of Europe and the vision of the European unity of Koudenhove-Kalergi, Briand and Herriot, will be thematized, reactivated and actualized after World War II by Winston Churchill in his famous speech on 19 September 1946 at the University of Zurich. During that speech, among other things, he said: *Under and within that world concept, we must re-create the European family in a regional structure called, it may be, the United States of Europe.*¹⁰

The EU is undeniably the most important attainment of people on the European continent, concerning the peace, development and history. This is not a result of Eurocentrism, but of awareness of the common progress and development in peace, freedom and equality.

Its historical and international political background, the current EU embodies in ideas and intellectual initiatives of Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet, Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer and Walter Hallstein, whose dedication resulted in the Treaty of Paris (contracting states are: the Republic of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Kingdom of Belgium, Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Republic of Italy). The Treaty of Paris was signed on 18 April 1951. The Treaty started to apply on 25 July 1952. With the same Treaty was also established the European Coal and Steel Community – the ECSC. The Treaty of Rome was signed on March 25, 1957, starting to have effect from 1 January 1958. With this Treaty were established EURATOM – the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community – the EEC. For the EEC, we can say that it was established in the interest of performing the common tasks that did not fall within the scope of competence and powers of the ECSC and the EURATOM. Until the first half of 1967, the three aforementioned communities were separated, but from 1 July of the same year, they consolidated into one – the EEC. "In the first wave of enlargement in 1973, the EEC was joined by Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom. The first extension would probably come earlier, but France on the De Gaulle's (De Gaulle) initiative vetoed the entry of Britain into the Union on two occasions, in 1961 and 1967. After his departure from the political scene, the entering of Britain was possible.¹¹ The next enlargement of the EEC happened in 1981, when it received into a full membership the Republic of Greece and in 1986 were included the Kingdom of

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Herriot, E. *The United States of Europe*. – New York: Viking Press, 1930.

¹⁰ Mr Winston Churchill speaking in Zurich 19th September 1946. // <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/astonish.html>, 25.09.2016.

¹¹ Prokopijević, M. *Evropska unija*. // Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2005, p. 11.

Spain and the Republic of Portugal. With the unification of East Germany (German Democratic Republic) with West Germany in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990, was continued the political process of enlargement of the EU. With the formal signing of the Treaty on the EU on 7 February 1992 in the Netherland's city of Maastricht, the aforementioned Treaty began to apply from 1 November 1993. Overall, the proclaimed target of the officials of the full member countries was to achieve harmony.

However, the proclaimed harmony was not accompanied by the harmony of the full member countries, after the BREXIT of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. And not only that. The candidate countries from the Western Balkans in the process of the accession are also in a state of disharmony.

Just five days after BREXIT was announced, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini released a new document¹² *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy*. At the beginning of the document is ascertained, *inter alia*, the actual situation of Europe as a continent with a particular attention to the EU.

*We need a stronger Europe. This is what our citizens deserve, this is what the wider world expects. We live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the EU. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned.*¹³

Also in the above-mentioned document is stated the official policy of the EU on the issue of enlargement to the Western Balkans and the Republic of Turkey.

*Under the current EU enlargement policy, a credible accession process grounded in strict and fair conditionality is vital to enhance the resilience of countries in the Western Balkans and of Turkey.*¹⁴

It is obvious that the old tripartite leadership of the EU by the officials of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Republic of France and the Federal Republic of Germany after the referendum¹⁵ and BREXIT- has signifi-

¹² In June 2015, officials of the European Council gave a mandate to Mogherini to create a new document concerning the future of the common foreign and security policy.

¹³ *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, European Union Global Strategy. – Brussels, 2016, p. 7.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

¹⁵ EU referendum results. // <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/find-information-by-subject/elections-and-referendums/upcoming-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/electorate-and-count-information>, 14.07.2016. After the referendum campaign and lobbying to stay against the residue of the United Kingdom in the European Union, however, on 23 June 2016, a referendum was held, when the majority of citizens of the United Kingdom, declared to quit (leave) - 17,410,742 (51.9%) and for a stay (remain) - 16,141,241 (48.1%). It was the first case of a BREXIT that citizens of a Member State a full, free and with the majority decided to leave the EU28. Total number of voters with the right to vote was 46,500,001, while the turnout was 72.2% and the number of invalid ballots 25,359. According to the official, notification and activation of Article 50 of the Consolidated Treaty on European Union - Lisbon Treaty, negotiations on the terms of leaving the United Kingdom will last no longer than two years. After two years, if not reached complete agreement, it is possible

cantly changed. Moreover, it is abandoned. According to protocol and with ceremony, the flag of Great Britain was lowered from metal pillars in front of the building of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers in Brussels and the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, and from all embassies and diplomatic and consular offices around the world, including London.

On the other hand, after the meeting, a very important and the vacant place of the new leadership was taken over by the leader of the Italian Republic. Namely, the mini trilateral summit of leaders of the three most important countries in the EU, held on the island Ventotone¹⁶ near Naples on 22 August 2016, which was convened by the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, was attended by French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. On that occasion, the possibility of preserving the EU and the modalities of its further development were discussed. Later, in Bratislava on 16 September 2016, was held a long-awaited meeting of the Heads of State or governments of the EU27 without the United Kingdom, which was formally in the process of disassociation with the EU, and factually remained a full member state. It was another important opportunity to re-consider the current crisis of the EU as an international organization, but also as the most successful 71-year peace, economic and develop-

extension of negotiations, if such a decision is taken by consensus of all 27 full-fledged EU member state.

The Article 50 of the Consolidated Treaty on European Union, which the United Kingdom confirmed, consists of five points: 1. *Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements;* 2. *A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. That agreement shall be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It shall be concluded on behalf of the Union by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament;* 3. *The Treaties shall cease to apply to the State in question from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification referred to in paragraph 2, unless the European Council, in agreement with the Member State concerned, unanimously decides to extend this period;* 4. *For the purposes of paragraphs 2 and 3, the member of the European Council or of the Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or Council or in decisions concerning it. A qualified majority shall be defined in accordance with Article 238(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;* 5. *If a State which has withdrawn from the Union asks to rejoin, its request shall be subject to the procedure referred to in Article 49.* See Consolidated Texts of the EU Treaties as Amended by the Treaty of Lisbon. – London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2008, p. 34.

¹⁶ Otherwise, Matteo Renzi chose for the meeting the exotic Ventotene island mainly because of its historic significance as the place where the two famous Italian intellectual Altiero Spinelli and Ernesto Rossi during the Second World War, i.e. in 1941, they wrote an influential manifesto which calls for European political unification *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*. Three leaders were then held a press conference in the Italian aircraft carrier Garibaldi, which is coordinated by the European migrant rescue operations in the Mediterranean Sea.

ment project after World War II. This was an important opportunity to find a new formula for a better future of the full-fledged citizens of the member states, and thus the new harmony of the EU. Many seek this formula, so do we. To this end, the President of the European Commission prepared a working paper for the participants of the first major summit of the EU²⁷. *Yes, we need a vision for the long term. And the Commission will set out such a vision for the future in a White Paper in March 2017, in time for the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. We will address how to strengthen and reform our Economic and Monetary Union. And we will also take into account the political and democratic challenges our Union of 27 will be facing in the future. And of course, the European Parliament will be closely involved in this process, as will national Parliaments*¹⁷.

In the possibilities of war and peace among nations, we need to be for peace among nations. And not only for peace, but also for sustainable development, human rights and freedoms, democracy, stability and security. This is a new formula of harmony that is not complete without a transformation of the existing EU to the United States of Europe, as a European counterpart to the United States of America. With BREXIT, the EU has exhausted its potential. Besides the mutual currency of the euro and the Eurozone, we need a Constitution for the EU, central citizenship, common foreign, defense and security policy, the majority of political decision-making, the government, parliament and independent judiciary and prosecution with the non-governmental III sector of civil society.

It is interesting to note that the last major re-thematization, actualization and interpretation of the concept and project of the United States of Europe¹⁸ were made by former Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Justice, Viviane Redings in 2012. The essence of her proposal is that we should build the United States of Europe with the Commission as a government and the two chambers – the Senate of the member states and the European Parliament. Redings supports the idea of the EU to be transformed into a superstate.

In such a superstate – the United States of Europe, national governments of the full member states and their parliaments would have a minimal political function, as the local councils in the UK have. The Government of the United States of Europe would have the supremacy over national governments, and MEPs in the European Parliament would have greater authority than, for example, members of the House of Lords. In doing so, the national leaders in the European Council would have only an advisory role, as the already mentioned House of Lords has in the political system of Great Britain.

In addition to the search for a new concept, the project of the refounding of the existing EU through the constitution and institutional redesign, the new state – the United States of Europe should also be harmonious. Either way, a full and in-

¹⁷ Juncker, J.-Cl. State of the Union 2016. – Brussels: European Commission, 2016, p. 8.

¹⁸ Ivić, S. European Identity and Citizenship: Between Modernity and Postmodernity. – London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 179.

tegral part of the EU should be, all the remaining countries of the Western Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo (This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence). As a prerequisite for this, it is necessary to achieve harmonization in those countries, as well as the resolution of all outstanding issues between officials of the countries in the Western Balkans in Southeast Europe region.

2. International challenges for harmony and disharmony in the EU and the countries of the Western Balkans

The perspective of the Western Balkans countries that are still in candidate status in relation to the EU, is daily faced with increasingly serious challenges in the political process of the European integration. The criteria that should be met are increased based on the experience of the EU enlargements from the previous period. The EU is facing substantial challenges in its framework, and based on that, the enlargement process itself is not questionable, but the evaluation process of accession candidate countries is becoming more stringent and demanding. Additional unknown is a new position and the role the officials of Great Britain will have towards both, the EU and the expected support for the officials from the Western Balkans. Another problem also complicating the accelerated accession process is a pervasive economic and financial crisis of the Eurozone, but also the signs of recovery after the global financial crisis and economic recession. In this context, the economic problems the member states have faced, with special emphasis on the Greece, the Republic of Italy and the Kingdom of Spain, are another indirect barrier in the processes of horizontal integration. In such conditions, the themes and issues concerning the Western Balkans are less and less on Brussels's agenda. The problems within the EU have led to the fact that the integration of the Western Balkans, including Kosovo, is ranked as secondary in Brussels. The more problems within the EU¹⁹ there are, the more is the question of enlargement lower on their list of priorities.

Such a course of events cannot be in favor of candidate countries from the Western Balkans. However, this does not have to mean the start of a single reversible process in these countries, which would substantially affect the process of European integration.

In the last two years, in a certain way, the European government officials observed the importance of the integration of the Western Balkans. The migrant crisis that arose as a result of the war in the Arab Republic of Syria, has affected the re-intensification of relations between the European Union and the candidate states. Federal Republic of Germany and Austria are the leaders in the process of

¹⁹ Stevanović, V. EU i Balkan nakon Bregzita. // <http://rs.n1info.com/a169347/Vesti/Vesti/Uticaj-problema-EU-na-zapadni-Balkan.html>, 24.09.2016.

preserving Europe's external borders. In this crisis, the Western Balkan candidate countries are a typical external barrier of the European Union from a massive influx of migrants into the countries of the European Union. In the past two years, numerous meetings were held between senior representatives of the Union and officials from the countries of the Western Balkans. At these summits of officials was adopted an action plan of 17 points for solving the crisis that involves a better exchange of information, stronger border control, establishing control of the Croatian-Serbian border, together with Frontex and setting the listing and identification places for migrants²⁰. Also, in Vienna, on 24 September 2016, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the heads of government of eight Balkan countries and Hungary, have reached an agreement on the fact that Europe needs tighter control of external borders, greater involvement in the protection against illegal crossing, and investing in those countries from which migrants come.

The region of Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans was indicated as important partners of the EU in solving the migrant crisis, it was said at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans, which was held on March 30 and 31 in Durres. Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov said that Macedonia is directly bearing the brunt of migrant crisis and that it was put in a situation to defend the EU from itself²¹. Ivanov pointed out that Europe, so far, has not revealed awareness for the trouble-shooting migrant crisis, including the fact that it failed to integrate the Balkans²². Leaders from the Western Balkan countries consider that the European Union had again failed, during the current migrant crisis, to provide sufficient support to these countries. Despite numerous actions to achieve a common and comprehensive solution, some EU member states, on the issue of migrant crisis began to lead an independent policy in relation to the guidelines from Brussels.

Such a course of events led to the establishment of the walls between the individual member states of the European Union and Western Balkan candidate countries. The President of the Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, gave an important note on this occasion. *In a united Europe today there are more walls than divided Europe had during the 'Cold War'. As Greece faces the risk of a humanitarian crisis, on the borders of the Balkans are deployed armies that are standing by*²³.

In the EU, the officials of the Visegrad Group are also very interested in a comprehensive European integration of the Western Balkans. It should be noted that the full member state officials are constantly engaged in order to streamline

²⁰ Blagojević, Dr. Dogovor o saradnji EU i Zapadnog Balkana u izbegličkoj krizi. // <http://www.euractiv.rs/eu-i-zapadni-balkan/9274-dogovor-o-saradnji-eu-i-zapadnog-balkana-u-izbeglickoj-krizi->, 30.09.2016.

²⁰ Ivanov: Makedonija brani EU od EU. // <http://rs.n1info.com/a140884/Svet/Region/Ivanov-o-izbeglickoj-krizi.html>, 30.09.2016.

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Ibidem.

²³ Ibidem.

the European integration of the countries in the Western Balkans. However, did the candidate countries recognize that in the right way?²⁴ The officials that belong to the so-called informal Visegrad Group point out the priority of its experience in the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration of the member states. They endeavored based on their experience to assist the officials of the countries of the Western Balkans to overcome the existing obstacles and to become the full EU member states. Formation of the Balkan Solidarity Fund, a permanent coordination with the Western governments regarding the current migrant crisis and direct defense and security assistance on the Balkan migrant route, is only a part of the direct presence of the Visegrad Group in the economic, security and political processes in the countries of the Western Balkans²⁵. The above-mentioned countries from the Visegrad Group are constantly working to accelerate the process of the European integration of the Western Balkans. They emphasize the importance of regional cooperation and integration as essential for achieving the ultimate goal, i.e. a full membership. Constantly stressing on their experiences in the European Union, they provide a direct support. They point the necessity of leading the regional policy of predictability and achieving the trust, which would mean in the case of the Western Balkans the conducting of a parallel process of resolving contentious bilateral outstanding issues and disputes, but also a shared and cohesive strategy for full membership in the EU. Based on their experience, this would constitute the only viable solution that will allow all the countries that are in candidate status to speed up their integration and to remove any barriers.

3. The internal causes of disharmony in the countries of the Western Balkans and the exit strategy for achieving harmony

On the European path of the candidate countries from the Western Balkans, we cannot ignore the internal challenges they have to face. If we take the Copenhagen criteria as a measure for meeting the criteria required by Brussels officials, we will notice a number of deficiencies in internal institutional infrastructures of the political systems of these countries. The legal systems in the countries of the Western Balkans are still exposed to high levels of corruption and polarization. The political system is also a subject of constant destabilization. Economic systems are facing numerous problems in the field of finance. Party officials are still illegally using government resources to satisfy narrow party interests. We can observe harmony between the legal systems of these countries and the European Union only on the formal or legislative level. National parliaments adopted a number of legislative measures and regulations that are in line with

²⁴ Arnaudov, M. Iskustva Višegradske četvorke. // http://www.danas.rs/licni_stavovi/licni_stavovi.1148.html?news_id=325148&title=Iskustva%20Vi%C5%A1egradske%20C4%8Detvorka, 30.09.2016.

²⁵ Ibidem.

European legislation, but their implementation is still not at a satisfactory level. There is no clear and comprehensive agreement on the European integration process among the political elite in these countries. There are still politicians in parties and movements that are expressively against joining the European Union and for cooperation with the countries of the Russian Federation, which is seen as an alternative. Most of the countries on the periphery of the EU, i.e. Western Balkans, are looking for a new model of economic development.

However, there are also the countries of the BRICS²⁶. There are also the Eurasian Economic Union²⁷, the Republic of Turkey, People's Republic of China and the Republic of India and other newly industrialized countries, primarily in Asia. They are the center of attention of state officials across Southeast Europe as trade and investment partners, and thus *de facto* as political partners. At the same time, officials from Moscow, Ankara and Beijing have a strategic interest in expanding their political presence in the region of Southeast Europe, particularly the Western Balkans so that this region would not be entirely left to the hegemony of officials from the states in the West. This situation was further complicated due to the so-called BREXIT phenomenon. Politicians together with the intellectual and financial elite, who are openly against full membership in the European Union, see the exit of Great Britain as a chance to slow down European integration in the Western Balkans. They justify this by the will of the British electorate that on the referendum ballot expressed distrust in relation to the stand on migrants and the continuation of the political processes of the European institutions and the candidate countries and others who are in the process of accession. Also, the economic crisis in the Republic of Croatia, as the newest member of the European Union, was recorded as an additional fact in their strategies that lead the Western Balkan candidates in the opposite direction from the European integration. With such troubles on the inner basis, it is very difficult to maintain a stable rate in the direction to European integration. Internal troubles on the political and security level further complicate the regional stabilization of the Western Balkans. Some officials from the ruling political elites continue to use dangerous and conflicting rhetoric, known from the time of the wars in the nineties of the 21st century, to animate the members of their political parties as voters and mobilize additional sympathizers to support them. In the countries of the Western Balkans, regional integration is seen as a political process that is at the end of the priority list, while the neighbouring countries are treated as a threat or potential enemies.

These circumstances on the domestic, regional and European level, not only slow down the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU, but also question the existence of real possibilities for the continuation of the political process

²⁶ Vasić, N. Changes in International Relations and the Order of the European Union. // Dimitrijević, D., ed. The Old and the New World Order – between European Integration and the Historical Burdens: Prospects and Challenges for Europe of 21st Century. – Belgrade: Institute of International Politics and Economics, 2014, p. 114.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 115.

of integration in the near future. Influential politicians in the European Union demand the expanding policy to be reconsidered. And, that is all right. Nevertheless, it is also all right to rapidly continue the political integration process of candidate countries from the Western Balkans. Although there are official proposals for suspension of the integration processes and membership of the Western Balkan countries, as Turkey's blockade, there is also a proposal for establishing a category of an associate membership, apart from the group of EU countries which are in the Eurozone and which are not.

After the decision of the citizens of Great Britain to withdraw from the Union, a slowdown in the political process of enlargement can be expected. However, the policy of enlargement should be led in the way that will accelerate the process of nomination, negotiation and integration to a full membership.

The current situation in the European Union, as well as the political and security conditions in the western Balkan region, led us to the conclusion that the process of European integration is not suspended, but does not promise rapid integration in the near future. A lot of things should be done to achieve the internal stabilization in the European Union and the stabilization in the security, political and economic processes of progress and prosperity in the Western Balkans, in order to re-initiate a political process of accelerated European integration in accordance with the Thessaloniki Agenda of the European Union and officials from the Western Balkans from 2003.

However, there was no harmony among the countries of the Western Balkans, but neither in the European Union. Due to the fact that the EU has exhausted its potential, and the Western Balkans is obstructed with internal problems and contradictions, as well as with the legacy of the past and international global challenges, we believe that this is the exit strategy for all of us:

1. an accelerated continuation of the European integration of the countries of the Western Balkans

2. an accelerated reform and transformation of the EU from international organization *sui generis* into a new superstate – the United States of Europe.

We need so little to accomplish a greater good, and that can be done soon. One thing is completely beyond doubt, and that is the fact that we have a hard job in front of us. To begin with, the most important fact is that we know where we are and what we are, in comparison to what we do not want.

Concluding Remarks

The European Union is a multiethnic, multicultural, religiously neutral, but in essence multiconfessional international organization *sui generis* with international legal personality. Also, the current EU27 and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are the communities of citizens (nationals) of the full member states. In the center of the political system of the EU is a full-fledged harmonization of the laws of the member states with the *acquis communautaire*, i.e. Community law, as a continuous legal and political process. No matter that the

majority of decisions in Brussels are delivered by consensus as opposed to Strasbourg, after BREXIT there remains an open question whether to move to the majority decision-making. However, it remains an open question whether the common foreign, defense and security policy will continue to be shared and centralized, or be de-centralized back to the full member states. We all need a new superstate – the United States of Europe, in contrast to the existing European Union that has met its maximum with BREXIT. Finally, there is no doubt that without, de-balkanization, Europeanization and the full integration of the Western Balkan countries in the SEE region into full membership in the EU, its harmonization is not and will not be complete. Therefore, the Western Balkans will become history and the region of Southeast Europe our desired and a new harmonic reality as a part of the United States of Europe.

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