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POSSIBILITIES FOR PROMOTING INTERCONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES¹

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Abstract: Since the end of the cold war, during the last two decades of the Twentieth century, became obvious European Union's intention to overcome the image of the political dwarf and economic giant. One could come to conclusion that the EU was successful in that intention: its borders were spread, number of member countries reached 28, its market enlarged, population as well, even the policies for far away neighbours has been created. But, surprisingly or not, although the Union has almost succeeded in weakening the influence that Russia once had over the socialist countries, the European Union is now faced with another challenge. This challenge came with the emergence of the new strategy that was born in China, "One Road, One Belt" aiming to gather all European countries in order to secure better perspective for each. Unlikely most of the European initiatives or policies, this strategy is not based on conditionality. It is based on equality and openness without any hidden intentions. In this analysis, the authors, from the perspective of the non-EU country (although the candidate country for the EU membership), will give an insight into the possibilities for promoting interconnectivity between China and Central and Eastern European countries.

Key words: European Union, European policies, China, Serbia, "One Road, One Belt Strategy", Central and Eastern European Countries

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INTRODUCTION

At the time when the forerunner of the European Union, the European Economic Community was formed, it was very likely that none of its founding fathers were far sighted to tell how bright future their “child” would have. Telling the truth, one could object that they neither were assured for how long that originally peace project would last. Indeed, at that moment the most important was to eliminate the possibility of emerging of a new war on the European soil. The main idea was to direct all resources – human, financial, technological – aiming to create stable economies at the territories of member states for the benefit of their citizens.

Through the following decades, such a goal proved to be achievable. The European Economic Community gradually changed along with the new circumstances and overwhelming need to introduce new institutional bodies that will address the best interests of its new members. Parallel with this process, among the European leaders, at the margins of their summits, more and more frequently could be heard the opinions of introducing a new dimension of cooperation, political one that will follow the existing economic. Somehow, the fact that the economy and politics could not stay separate as they used to be, became obvious. That is why during the eighties (of the XX century), step by step, Europe (meaning the EEC at the beginning, then the EU) started to add new value to its functioning. The European Union’s determination to stop being recognized as an “economic giant, political dwarf and military worm” became conducted during the time of collapsing of the Eastern Bloc and defragmentation of federal communist and socialist states (Statement of then Belgian Foreign Minister, Mark Eyskens, conceded a few days before the Persian Gulf War started). Necessary changes of the Founding Treaties have been made and while the EEC transformed into the European Union, member states were able to start cooperation in the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy. From the EU’s perspective, its position of a reliable USA partner was secured. Along with the new role of the main player on the European ground, EU designed programme for gathering former socialist countries, promising them prosperity and building the new states with economies ruled by the market demands and democratic societies based on the rule of law, justice and equality. Some of the former socialist countries succeed in realizing of the so-called European dream, but many not. This group of countries and Serbia is among them, became conscious of double standards policies and permanent politics of conditionality. Unfortunately, the time of Non-alignment movement has expired and cooperation with the EU for these countries turns out to be not recommended, but necessary, otherwise they would exclude themselves and become marginalized.

In such climate, Chinese government decision to renew the One Belt One Road strategy appeared as a new opportunity for CEE countries. At a first glance, it seemed as a perspective for creating relations based on pursuing mutual interests,

relations that will bring prosperity to all partners involved and above all relations which speed and scope of development is not, unlikely the most of the EU's policies, based on conditionality.

As one might presume correctly, the EU did not perceive revival of an old/new strategy as an advantage but more like a treat that impose the need to rethink current relations with China.

CHINA EU RELATIONS – ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT: FROM DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS TO STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Immediately after its proclamation, People's Republic of China has started to build an image of a friendly nation by setting up diplomatic relations worldwide. Among those countries were also the member states of the then European Economic Community (Great Britain 1950, France 1964, the remaining four in 1975). Relations with the EEC were established in 1975. In that year, the first Chinese ambassador was accredited to the EEC. Very soon, in 1983, the mission of Chinese ambassador was extended to European Steel and Coal Community (ECSC) and EURATOM.

That moment stands for cornerstone for developing relations and cooperation between China and then European Community. In the same year, the Commission and the Chinese authorities agreed to hold regular ministerial-level meetings to discuss all aspects of EEC-China relations (Babić, 2010, p. 431). Moreover, ministerial-level consultations between the Chinese authorities and the Community in the context of political cooperation started in 1984. Contractual links in the shape of a trade agreement were established in April 1978 and then strengthened in 1985 with the signing of the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement. The agreement was initially concluded for five years and with possibility to be automatically renewed on an annual basis.

This agreement, by its type, can be considered “an open agreement which does not exclude any form of economic cooperation falling within the Communities sphere of competence. Sectors covered in the initial stage include industry, mining, agriculture, science and technology, energy, transport and communications, environmental protection and cooperation in other countries. Proposed cooperation activities include joint ventures, the exchange of economic information, contacts between business people, seminars, technical assistance and investment promotion” (Development of EEC-China relations).

Along with the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement, in order to make such agreement operative a specific body was founded – the Joint Committee. This Committee was entitled to meet once a year with a task to overview development

of all aspects of economic relations and other relations that are envisaged in the framework of cooperation programme.

Finally, on October 5 1988, the Commission formally opened its office in Beijing. This act can be seen not solely as the readiness of the European Community to foster further economic development in China under its development programme or confirmation of its willingness to look at the possibility of increasing and diversifying such operations, but even more as the intention to make the Joint Committee functional.

Ministerial-level consultations in the context of political cooperation in 1994 have been transformed into a political dialogue. In that course since 1997, annual summits have been organized alternately in Brussels and Beijing.

In the forthcoming period from 1995 until nowadays, the EU has adopted acts on a phased strategy towards China. Among those acts, it is not easy to decide which was the most significant. With the first one from 1995, “long term relationship” was introduced, in 1998 “a comprehensive partnership” was presented, then the time has come for “a maturing partnership” (2003), to be followed by “a strategic and enduring relationship” (2005) (Xiudian Dai, 2006). At that point, relation that had begun as purely diplomatic grew to the highest point, to strategic partnership.

Considering decades of mutually satisfying cooperation, this outcome of a maturing partnership that incorporates “shared interests and challenges” could hardly surprise anyone. Each partner recognizes long-term interests and decided to nourish them.

At the same time, both partners are aware of their significant differences. In spite of globalization and its driven forces, China is persistent in maintaining international system of the United Nations based on respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty, while the EU does not hesitate to neglect those principles in favor of, often very controversial, protection of human rights. So far, EU politicians acted with wisdom in relations with China and put aside certain human rights issues.

Of course, within the EU borders, there are also those who strongly oppose to partnership with China. Their main argument is that China is not strategic partner, but “strategic competitor” which is syntax of George W. Bush, for whom EU ties with China seems to be “naive and non-realistic” (Xiudian Dai, 2006). It is very likely that George W. Bush did not get a completely wrong impression marking China as a competitor, but referring to China – EU relations as naive and non-realistic is problematic. Position and importance that China has in contemporary international relations is such that bilateral agreements with this country ought to be considered only as an advantage.

Nevertheless, China is important for the EU and its tendency is to develop cooperation both in the fields of economy, trade and politics. One of the signals of such tendency is EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation.

That importance is based on several facts.

First, China approved to be the second largest economy and now also the world's biggest trading nation. China's growth in 2013 was 7.7 %, and that data gave an impetus to predictions that China may become the world's biggest economy within the next 10 years, with an internal market of 1.39 billion potential consumers by the end of 2015 (Facts and figures on EU-China trade , European Commission).

Second, two decades ago, trade between China and the EU worth almost null, but today they are trading more than €1 billion every day and thus form the second-largest economic cooperation in the world (Facts and figures on EU-China trade, European Commission).

Third, "China has become one of the fastest growing markets for European exports. In 2013 EU exports to China increased by 2.9% to reach a record € 148.1 billion. EU exports have nearly doubled in the past five years, contributing to rebalancing the relationship" (Facts and figures on EU-China trade, European Commission).

From the other hand, China is the EU's biggest supplier, with € 279.9 billion worth of imported goods in 2013 (down by 4% or 11.7 billion compared to 2012). The result of this is a trade deficit of €131.8 billion with China in the same year, down by 10.7% compared to 2012, and down by 22.5% compared to the 2010 record of €170.1 billion (Facts and figures on EU-China trade, European Commission).

In the long term, China's importance as a strategic market for the EU can only increase and therefore deepening of their cooperation is inevitable.

THE REVIVAL OF THE SILK ROAD STRATEGY

It seems that, so called, right moment for revival of an old strategy was the breakup of the Soviet Union and the Central Asian countries independence. The reason behind this shift was the logic of few great powers and their need for logistic support of several countries. In 1995, the European Union launched its own plan based on the United Nations one for the International Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), which was supposed to connect Europe, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. TRACECA represents a complex multi-modal transport system in countries of the region aiming "to develop economic and trade relations and transportation links between countries and regions that is a significant contribution to the revival of one of the most famous historical routes of the Silk Road." Like the "ancestor", new Silk Road also tends to connect different parts and far away regions through a network of roads. The research was mainly funded by the European Union together with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Islamic Development Bank. The plan skirted Russia and Iran, and made a direct connection

between the European Union and Central Asia with the aim of integrating the railway that was supposed to go from eastern to western Kazakhstan (Zuokui Liu, 2014). In 1999, that plan was followed by another plan for constructing the railway line China-Kyrgyzstan, which supposed to be integrated with the railway network of TRACECA in Xinjiang. According to experts, that line represented the optimum economic line, but Russia and the United States were the main reasons why it was not realized (Zhiping, 2014). However, project 'Silk Wind', which was initiated in the framework of TRACECA in November 2012 in Izmir, had a better chance of success because it went hand in hand with the American initiative for a 'New Silk Road'. Its main objective is to complete the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway line which realization moved to the end of 2015.

The new plan for the Silk Road renewal was started in 1998 by the International Road Transport Union, and then the UN got involved with its first (2000) and second (2005) Silk Road Regional Project. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nation Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) also released their own plans (Zuokui Liu, 2014). Another country that has initiated its own version of the Silk Road was Turkey. Turkey's Ministry of Customs and Trade has made public its goal of transport simplification, enhanced security, logistics and customs capacities as well as the renewal of the ancient Silk Road as a link between European and Asian Market at the 2008 International Forum on the Role of Customs Administrations on facilitating and Promoting Trade among the Silk Road Countries in Antalya. It has established cooperation between this project and the TRACECA at the forum in Batumi, Georgia. On that occasion, the participating forum states that were not members of this European initiative are invited to become that by signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

The Russian idea for a modern Silk Road is contained within the Eurasian Economic Union. On 18 November 2011, the presidents of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an agreement that led to the creation of economic and political union on 1 January 2015, putting communication and transport infrastructure into the focus. A day later, on 2 January, Armenia joined, and Kyrgyzstan will become a full member in May 2015, after the ratification of the Accession Treaty.

In July 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton introduced the US 'New Silk Road' plan in New Delhi during her stay at the second India-US Strategic Dialogue. This comprehensive strategy includes Afghanistan, Central and South Asia and its implementation requires constructing a trade and energy corridor linking Europe, the Indian Subcontinent and South Asia. Washington's intention is to dominate the development process of South, Central and West Asia, i.e. to maintain and intensify its influence in these regions after the withdrawal of the army from Afghanistan in 2014, in order to bypass Iran, and to reduce Chinese and Russian influence.

The latest initiative ‘One Belt, One Road’ proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 was an extension of sporadic smaller projects which China implemented along the ancient Silk Road route in the previous period. This ambitious plan consists of land and maritime routes that start at Central and Eastern China and end in Venice, passing through Asia, Africa and Europe and all the seas and ocean along the way. The financing of the project would be entrusted to new institutions – the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund, as well as through a new mechanism about to be established, and which will be supervised by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

As one could assume, this initiative caused different reactions. Some of them were positive, estimating that this could enable the economic progress of countries on the route of the road, while others were negative. Behind such perception was the fear that China’s enormous economic development, accompanied with enormous military budget, could create a kind of security dilemma. There are lots of them who believe that behind the promotion of this project lay hidden motives aimed to turn China into the main super power.

EUROPEAN LEADERS ON ONE BELT, ONE ROAD STRATEGY

The European Union led by strong political personalities never was too fond to bring China closer. The reasons for such opinion are multi-layered. First, the European Union cannot compare with China neither in territorial nor in the demographical sense. Such vast territory at the same time means a huge wealth in various natural resources that build the solid ground for the productive economy. Even more, this populated country has enough qualified workers that can compete with workers all around the world. And here we come to the point that bothers the Europe the most – much lower prices of goods fabricated in China attract buyers while, at the same time, make European products less competitive. Besides that, Chinese capital offered to be invested in Europe also is not very welcomed because of the fear that Chinese enterprises might take over even traditional European production lines.

Apart from these economic reasons for not fostering cooperation with China, those of political origin also play an important role. Namely, while the European Union can be sure about the support of so-called old member states, the same could not be said for “new member states”. It is well known that quite a number of these countries are far from being satisfied with gains of their long desired EU membership. In general, ordinary people are disappointed because their life standard does not improve as much as expected. Even more, some of them lost “privileges” that had for decades – full health security, fair wages and working conditions. Disappointment is even bigger after realizing that while proclaiming “unite through

diversity” Europe constantly pushes ideas that very often confronts with traditional values of former socialist societies. In that sense, Europe is not keen to welcome political rival within its borders, especially not the rival with a word “communist” in its title.

But, due to the economic crisis that exploded in 2008 and whose consequences still exist, surprisingly or not, such perception of China starts to shift. It was inevitable, having in mind growing of the unemployment rate, downfall of GDP, public debt almost uncontrolled growth, constantly decreasing of market demand.... European economics desperately needed fresh capital, which was difficult to secure.

In such climate, revival of the One Belt One Road strategy suddenly got a new value. It became an opportunity to give an impetus to downsized European economics and possibility to refresh European capacities both in political and economic manner. At the same time, European leaders bear in mind necessity not to lose its influence towards its new members, mainly Central and Eastern European countries in which China is particularly interested. In other words, cooperation could not be avoided but should be kept controlled.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PROMOTING INTERCONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

For the past few years, China could be considered as one of the biggest investors in the world, which coincides with the results of its ‘going out’ policy. Based on the assessment of ‘The Financial Times’, in 2009 and 2010, Exim Bank and China Development Bank have approved at least 110 billion dollars of loans to governments and companies in developing countries, which is more than total loans of the World Bank in the same period, and this amount has increased in the last few years (Dyer, Andrelini, Sender, 2011). On the one hand, Africa, Asia and Latin America are interesting areas for Chinese investment while on the other, key markets, where the investments doubled, are predominantly found in the European Union. Driving conclusion based on the statements of some Chinese officials, one could perceive that Europe became more significant for China, and that especially the strengthening of cooperation with the countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe stands for an important component of Chinese economic policy.

As mentioned before, with the economic and financial crisis that gripped the European Union, more Chinese capital goes to European countries. In order to counter China’s trade and economic offensive, the U.S. offered the project of forming a single transpacific economic zone to this supranational international organization (Zhang Bin, 2011). However, China’s financial support to the European Union provides a solid trading and financial partner. There is an active Chinese support to

Eurozone through the European Financial Stability Fund and the European stabilization mechanism. China has provided assistance of 43 billion dollars through the IMF. Billions of Chinese foreign exchange reserves are invested in European bonds, especially of those countries whose indebtedness is threatening the survival of Euro - Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain (Chen, 2015). Also, China has increased imports from Europe, making contracts in Germany, Britain and Spain worth more than 15 billion euros. Trade with the EU reached 560 billion dollars, which is a fourfold increase compared with the situation ten years ago (Chen Xin, 2014).

The primary European region in which China wants to expand its influence is Central and Eastern Europe, whose part is the Republic of Serbia.

At the opening of the Mechanism of Cooperation with Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), the 16+ group, in April 2012 in Warsaw, the prime minister Wen Jiabao announced that China has earmarked 10 billion dollars for this region. The basic intention was to envisage fund through which China will lend capital on preferential terms and, at the same time, support the development of energy infrastructure in the region. Besides that, cooperation will be also pursued in other fields such as tourism, agriculture, education, science and culture. In order to maintain the continuity it was decided to arrange meetings of heads of the states and/or Prime Ministers of the CEE countries with the Chinese Prime Minister on annual base. The second meeting was held a year later, in 2013 in Bucharest. The Chinese Prime Minister, Li Keqiang met with the prime ministers of sixteen Central and Eastern European Countries to review the investment of previously approved 10 billion dollars. For this purpose, a Development Fund was established for individual participation of each country. The Republic of Serbia at that time has already delivered 56 projects to the Secretariat of the Mechanism. China granted one third of the loans of the total amount on favorable terms, which means a longer repayment period and lower interest rate than the market rates (the example of such practice is implementation of projects of construction the bridge over the Danube and Kostolac Plant). The beneficiary state, Serbia in these particular cases, is obliged to fulfil certain conditions: not to receive developmental help in the form of concession credits, or if it does that they are in some small amount, to be able to service its public debt, its GDP per capita must be lower than the Chinese (the exception are the countries of higher political importance). Beside the credit line, the Fund for investment cooperation was established in order to collect 500 million dollars. Shortly after Bucharest Summit, in the beginning of December 2013, at the first Sino-Serbian business forum held in Belgrade, the economic attaché of the Embassy of PR China in Serbia Julian Chi pointed out that there is a great chance of increasing the authorized amount from 10 to 100 billion dollars, if the previous money was spent and if there were enough projects.

Serbia is attractive for investments being rich in unexploited stocks of coal, hydro potential and renewable energy sources. There is also the benefit that, with

realization of large infrastructure projects, serves to adjust the Chinese model of operation to the European market, rules and regulations, and to the Chinese managers to learn to understand the rules of operation of local markets. Especially after the failure of China Overseas Engineering Group company (COVEC) to build a highway from Warsaw to Berlin, since most of the states from this region are moving towards the European Union, but are not full members yet.

Strategic Partnership Agreement with the Republic of Serbia in 2009 pointed to China's intention to expand its influence to the Balkans and Serbia, as a key country in the region, and possibility to counteract the influence of the U.S. and other western countries. It gave a framework in which the relations between two countries should develop upwards in the coming period. Except economic, it included the political and security cooperation. Thanks to this, existing cooperation between two countries rose to a higher level, which is especially important because in a time of the lingering impact of the financial crisis that shook the planet, economic cooperation with one of the world's leading economic powers - China, is opening up new perspectives. For Serbia, whose economy is still recovering from the effects of the crisis, the most important is economic cooperation, but no less important are the other two dimensions - political and security cooperation.

Explaining the reasons which led Beijing to establish a strategic partnership, former Chinese Ambassador in Serbia Zhang Wanxue emphasized the similar historical experiences, the complementarity of economic and trade cooperation, common views on many international and territorial issues and opposition to the interference of other countries in domestic politics. According to him, Serbia is a very important Western Balkans country, with significant regional impact on the political, economic, diplomatic and other areas. Promoting continuous development of Chinese - Serbian strategic partnership is not only for the benefit of Sino - Serbian relations, but also for the world peace, development and cooperation. According to him, Serbia has the distinct advantage of geographical position. In addition, acceleration of the process of accession to the European Union and economic development will lead to growing demands for infrastructure construction. The reform and modernization of the industrial structure will also gain traction. According to data of Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 2012 trade between Serbia and China amounted to 1.294 billion dollars, of which exports from Serbia were mere 18.4 million dollars. In the first eleven months of 2013, the exchange of goods amounted to 1.39 billion dollars, of which exports from Serbia was 20 million dollars. It is obvious that strategic partnership has not helped to reduce the existing large disproportion in trade between the two countries. Still, comparing the size and number of population of two countries, one should not be surprised by this data. What is far more important is that in December 2014 Belgrade hosted the summit of 16+1 that was highly evaluated by all participants. At the opening ceremony, Serbian Prime Minister described Summit as "a place where economies of East and West meet" and added that it is "the core of this Forum – to

create relations between China and this region” (Nikolić, 2014). Li Keqiang pointed out that entrepreneurs should see “the great potential in China-CEEC cooperation, hold firm to confidence in the market, seize the opportunities and ride on the momentum, working together to promote the bilateral cooperation to a new level.”

In his address to the participants, Prime Minister Keqiang particularly underlined that the construction of infrastructure connectivity contains huge potentials (ports, for instance), industrial cooperation with equipment as the key has a promising future, the establishment of the new investment and financing cooperation framework to provide service for the economic entity has broad prospects and that there is still a large space in promoting the bilateral trade. Each of these points should be addressed carefully in order to succeed in securing successful and mutually beneficial cooperation within the frame of 16+. At that summit, Chinese and Serbian parties concluded several very important agreements related to investment and construction in Serbian infrastructure.

Last year’s summit was convened in Suzhou under the theme of “New Starting Point, New Fields and New Vision” (Zhang Lirong, 2015). During the meeting, Premier Li proposed to set up a “one goal plus six priorities” framework for China-CEEC cooperation, “calling for joint efforts to realize the shared goal of building a new type of open, inclusive and win-win partnership and press ahead with the six prioritized fields for cooperation - defining the roadmap for fostering cooperation, promoting synergy in development strategies, setting up new models of production capacity cooperation, innovating investment and finance cooperation, boosting trade and investment as well as expanding people-to-people exchanges” (Zhang Lirong, 2015). As a result of this summit, two documents were adopted. The first is The Mid-term Plan on China-CEEC Cooperation while the second is The Suzhou Guidelines for China-CEEC Cooperation. Both of these documents are of the highest importance because they were adopted, upon the implementation of Belgrade guidelines for cooperation between China and CEE countries. Suzhou Summit along with its documents created a new milestone in the development of the China-CEEC relationship because of achieving “the important agreement between the Chinese and EU leaders on establishing the China-EU Connectivity Platform, as well as on developing synergies between the Belt and Road initiative of China and the Investment Plan for Europe, and between 16+1 cooperation and China-EU relations”. These documents called upon for the acceleration of connectivity projects to link regional transportation and Internet infrastructure development, but also to expand people to people and cultural exchanges with the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. Of course, time will tell if plans will be realized as planned. As Prime Minister Keqiang said, finances are the weakest links in the current structure. In order to secure win-win outcome, all parties should “keep looking for new ways for investments and financing cooperation”.

CONCLUSION

One of the pillars on which Serbian foreign policy is based is dedicated to cooperation with China. Unlike the vast majority of countries “seduced” by globalization that impose new trend in international relations, based on neglecting the principles of international law, Serbia and China remains faithful to the UN Charter and principles of nurturing good relations and pursuing peace politics.

New One Belt, One Road strategy offers the possibility to expand traditionally good relations to the economic sphere and for the mutual benefit of both countries. China is proven not to be a country that exports revolutions or country that pursues conditionality-based policy and therefore represents the first choice for Serbia, eager to heal its economy and keep traditional values. This goal is of the national interest and therefore Serbian government should put all efforts in engaging leading experts to design projects that will attract necessary green investments. It is not bad to have favourable credit lines for infrastructure projects, but that credit lines will not improve overwhelming economic climate, neither will create new working places, nor raise the ordinary people life standard.

One should be aware that this region, of which Serbia is a part, serves as a form of preparatory or practice field for Chinese companies, where they are gaining the maturity of industrial and technological sophistication required for entry to western markets. Therefore, the Chinese are trying to complete the development of the Balkan energy projects in consistency with the standards prescribed for the countries of the region because they expect that the whole Balkan region will be part of the European Union one day. Also, they expect that these funds will be operational in the energy market because of the liberalization of the entire Balkan market and its integration within the Union. In addition, low taxes, skilled workforce with low salary and direct access to the EU market are additional reasons for cooperation. Serbia is particularly significant for China for having signed a free trade agreement with CEFTA and EFTA countries, Turkey, the Customs Union comprising Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as the trade agreement with the EU, which indirectly provides duty-free access to the market with over a billion people. Through such channel, China could easily enter into all these markets.

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MOGUĆNOSTI ZA UNAPREĐENJE MEĐUPOVEZANOSTI KINE I ZEMALJA CENTRALNE I ISTOČNE EVROPE

Apstrakt: Tokom poslednje dve decenije XX veka, u vreme okončanja hladnog rata, došla je do izražaja namera Evropske unije da izađe iz okvira imidža političkog džina, a ekonomskog patuljka. Moglo bi se zaključiti da je u toj nameri uspela: proširila je granice, broj članica se uvećao na 28, povećalo se tržište, broj stanovnika takođe, stvorene su čak i politike za odnose sa dalekim susedima. Ali, iznenađujuće ili ne, iako je uspela u nameri da oslabi uticaj Rusije u bivšim socijalističkim zemljama, Evropska unija se sada suočava sa novim izazovom. Ovaj izazov se pojavio uporedo sa pojavom nove strategije “Jedan pojas, jedan put”, nastale u Kini, namenjene evropskim državama sa ciljem da svima pruži bolju perspektivu. Za razliku od većine evropskih inicijativa i politika, ova strategija nije zasnovana na uslovljavanjima. Zasnovana je na jednakosti i otvorenosti, bez skrivenih namera. Autori ove analize će, iz perspektive ne-EU članice (iako države kandidata), dati svoje viđenje mogućnosti promovisanja međupovezanosti Kine i zemalja Centralne i Istočne Evrope.

Ključne reči: Evropska unija, evropske politike, Kina, Srbija, strategija “Jedan pojas, jedan put”, zemlje Centralne i Istočne Evrope.

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