

THE IMPACT OF EUROSCEPTICISM ON THE EU ENLARGEMENT POLICY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Tetiana SYDORUK

Professor, Faculty of International Relations, The National University
of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine
E-mail: tetiana.sydoruk@oa.edu.ua

Maryna YAKYMCHUK

PhD student, Faculty of International Relations, The National
University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine
E-mail: maryna.yakymchuk@oa.edu.ua

Mariia AVHUSTIUK

Associate Professor, Faculty of International Relations, The National
University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine
E-mail: mariia.avgustiuk@oa.edu.ua

Abstract

The paper examines the approaches of Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament and the Western Balkans on the EU enlargement policy, studies the level of their influence on decision-making in the European Parliament and the candidate states, and analyzes public opinion and attitudes towards the EU enlargement in the member states and the Western Balkan states. It is argued that party-based Euroscepticism does not have a significant impact on the enlargement policy due to the lack of attention to this area of EU activity of most Eurosceptic parties in the member states and the indecisive influence of such parties on political processes in the candidate states. At the same time, public Euroscepticism on the issue of further enlargement, which tends to increase in both the member states and most of the candidate states in the Western Balkans, can be a restrictive or a limiting factor in the accession of the Western Balkan states to the EU.

Keywords: *Euroscepticism, Eurosceptic parties, enlargement, the Western Balkans, public opinion.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the phenomenon of Euroscepticism has become a fairly common issue for political science research. Numerous theses and papers highlight the causes and manifestations of Euroscepticism in the EU member states, offering models and typologies of this phenomenon (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2002; Vasilopoulou, 2009; Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010). However, some issues still need thorough research, and one of them is the attitude of Eurosceptics to the specific EU policies and the impact of Euroscepticism on their implementation. This applies in particular to the important EU policy of enlargement.

It is acknowledged that there is no single approach among Eurosceptic parties to the issues of further EU enlargement. It is widely alleged that Eurosceptic political powers, which oppose most common EU policies, support the enlargement, as an increase in the number of member states of the integration project will dilute it and lessen its effectiveness, as well as hinder further process of integration (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2002). This approach was indeed typical of some states, such as the United Kingdom, which supported the enlargement but opposed further EU integration (Lubbers, Scheepers, 2010). However, it does not mean that all Eurosceptics from other EU states support expansion.

At the same time, we agree with Paul Taggart and Alex Szczerbiak that opposition to EU enlargement is not an indicator of party-based Euroscepticism (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008), and there are still pro-European parties that do not support further enlargement of the Union. Regarding the political parties in the candidate states, including the Western Balkans, the opposition to the EU accession is one of the significant characteristics of the Eurosceptic parties.

The decision of the European Union at the Thessaloniki Summit in 2003 to give membership to the states of the Western Balkans (WB) initially gained indisputable support among both political elites and societies in the region. Recently, however, public opinion on the EU membership in a number of the WB states has been marked by growing tendencies towards Euroscepticism, and, correspondingly, the influence of the Eurosceptic parties is growing, especially in Serbia and Montenegro.

Due to these issues, there is a lack of research to analyze the impact of Euroscepticism on the EU enlargement policy in the WB, both in terms of public opinion and the development of party-based Euroscepticism in the EU and the candidate states. One of the few studies that provide a comparative view of Euroscepticism in the WB states comes from Robert Belloni (Belloni, 2016). The utilitarian, political, and sociocultural factors that influence the spread of Euroscepticism in the WB states have been studied by Ivan Damjanovski, Marco Lavrič, and Andrey Naterer (Damjanovski, Lavrič, Naterer, 2020). However, their analysis is limited to the 2017 data and does not show the dynamics of Euroscepticism. Party Euroscepticism on the EU enlargement policy in the European Parliament (EP) was studied by Petr Kaniok and Vit Hlousek, who concluded that Eurosceptic parties have diverged on these issues

(Kaniok, Hlousek, 2019). Their study concerned the previous cadence of the EP before 2016.

The aim of the paper is to highlight the positions of Eurosceptic parties of the EU member states and the WB candidate states on the EU enlargement policy in this region, and to understand to what extent the activities of Eurosceptic parties influence decision-making on the enlargement, and how public opinion and attitudes towards the EU enlargement policy in the member states and the candidate states correlate with the development of party-based Euroscepticism. In the first part of the paper we analyze the programs of the Eurosceptic political parties, which are presented in the EP of the current body, after the 2019 elections, on the issue of further EU enlargement. We also study the real behavior of the Eurosceptic political parties in the EP, particularly the results of the vote on the progress reports of the candidate states in the WB region in the Foreign Affairs Committee and the final decisions on these issues. Moreover, we try to provide a comparative analysis of public opinion on the enlargement in the EU member states and compare it to the behavior of the Eurosceptic political powers of the corresponding states in the EP.

In the second part of the paper we examine trends in the party politics of Euroscepticism in the six WB states, as well as a comparative analysis of public opinion on the prospects of the EU accession in Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), North Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. We complete the paper by framing the main conclusions of the study.

PARTY-BASED AND SOCIAL EUROSCEPTICISM IN THE EU: APPROACHES TO THE EU ENLARGEMENT POLICY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Unlike the accession of the Central and Eastern Europe (the CEE) states, marked by rapid economic and political transformations in the candidate states for a return to Europe, the transformation processes in the Western Balkans subregion overshadowed the negative effects of the 1990s wars and numerous ethnic conflicts. Since the prospects for the WB accession were formed in the Stabilization and Association Process in the early 2000s and first enshrined in the conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council in 2003 (The Presidency Conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council, 2003), the accession process of the WB states has proceeded much more slowly than in the CEE. Thus, only one state, Croatia, has managed to join the EU. Montenegro (since 2012) and Serbia (since 2014) have been negotiating the EU accession, North Macedonia and Albania are currently the candidate states for which the pre-accession talks were decided in March 2020 (Council Conclusion of Enlargement and Stabilisation and Association Process the Republic of North Macedonia and The Republic of Albania, 2020), and BiH and Kosovo are potential candidates for admission. On 11 May, 2021, the EU Council approved a new enlargement methodology for Montenegro and Serbia (Enlargement: new enlargement methodology will be applied to Montenegro and Serbia, 2021).

Despite the intensification of the accession process of the Western Balkan states in recent years, there is a significant level of opposition in the EU to further enlargement. Economic and cultural factors can be considered the main reasons why a number of the member states do not support the EU enlargement policy. The states are anxious that the accession of new members will provoke a new wave of migration, which/ in turn, will weaken the economic situation of the member states. The member states are also wary of Islamization and cultural differences (Belloni, 2016). The Eurosceptics are most often opposed to the accession of new members, although there are opponents of further EU enlargement among those that are quite in favor of the idea of the European integration in general.

In order to identify those that oppose to the idea of further EU enlargement to the Balkans, we will use Paul Taggart and Alex Szczerbiak's division of the Euroscepticism into two types: social Euroscepticism and party-based Euroscepticism (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008). Ease of use has made this classification one of the most frequently mentioned in the study. Public Euroscepticism is determined in the process of elections, referendums, opinion polls, and evaluations. The second type, party-based Euroscepticism, concerns the sphere of activity of political parties, which in democratic systems are the means to express the mood of society. Moreover, the most effective classification of party-based Euroscepticism is also due to its division into hard, implying a principled rejection of the European integration, and soft, implying opposition to or disagreement with one or more EU policies (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008).

In this part of the paper we analyze the importance of the issue of further EU enlargement for the Eurosceptic political parties represented in the current composition of the EP, and highlight their positions and specific activities on this issue. We have considered the party programs of 45 Eurosceptic parties, which have at least one member of the EP as per 2021 data. Based on the analysis of a large number of studies of party-based Euroscepticism, we classified them according to the above-mentioned classification into soft or hard. In addition, we took into account their left or right ideological positioning and belonging to the EP groups (Table 1).

Table 1: *Eurosceptic Parties in European Parliament*

Party name	State	Group	the ME Ps	Left/ Right	Eurosc epticism	Position on the enlargem ent policy
Freedom Party of Austria	Austria	Identit y and Democra	3 / 19	Right	Soft	Against

The impact of euroscepticism on the EU enlargement policy in ...

		cy (ID)				
Flemish Interest	Belgium	ID	3 / 21	Right	Soft	Against
Freedom and Direct Democracy	Czech Republic	ID	2 / 21	Right	Hard	No position
Danish People's Party	Denmark	None	1 / 14	Right	Hard	Against
Conservative People's Party of Estonia	Estonia	ID	1 / 7	Right	Soft	No position
Finns Party	Finland	None	2 / 14	Right	Hard	Against
National Rally	France	ID	23 / 79	Right	Soft	Against
Alternative for Germany	Germany	None	10 / 96	Right	Soft	Against
League	Italy	ID	25 / 76	Right	Soft	Against
Party for Freedom	Netherlands	None	1 / 29	Right	Hard	No position
Civic Democratic Party	Czech Republic	European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	4 / 21	Right	Hard	In favor
Liberal Conservative Reformers	Germany	ECR	1 / 96	Right	Soft	No position
Greek Solution	Greece	ECR	1 / 21	Right	Hard	No position
Brothers of Italy	Italy	None	8 / 76	Right	Soft	Against
National Alliance	Latvia	ECR	2 / 8	Right	Soft	In favor
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance	Lithuania	ECR	1 / 11	Right	Soft	In favor

Right Answer 2021	Netherlands	ECR	3 / 29	Right	Hard	No position
Reformed Political Party	Netherlands	ECR	21 / 29	Right	Hard	Against
Law and Justice	Poland	ECR	24 / 52	Right	Soft	In favor
United Poland (United Right)	Poland	ECR	2 / 52	Right	Soft	No position
The Republicans	Poland	ECR	1 / 52	Right	Soft	No position
Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party	Romania	ECR	1 / 33	Right	Soft	In favor
Freedom and Solidarity	Slovakia	ECR	1 / 14	Right	Hard	No position
Vox	Spain	ECR	4 / 59	Right	Soft	No position
Sweden Democrats	Sweden	ECR	3 / 21	Right	Hard	No position
Workers' Party of Belgium	Belgium	None	1 / 21	Left	Soft	No position
Progressive Party of Working People	Cyprus	The Left in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL (GUE-NGL)	2 / 6	Left	Soft	No position
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	Czech Republic	GUE-NGL	1 / 21	Left	Hard	In favor
Red-Green Alliance	Denmark	GUE-NGL	1 / 14	Left	Hard	No position
Left Alliance	Finland	GUE-NGL	1 / 14	Left	Hard	No position
The Left	Germany	GUE-NGL	5 / 96	Left	Soft	In favor

The impact of euroscepticism on the EU enlargement policy in ...

Syriza	Greece	GUE-NGL	6 / 21	Left	Soft	No position
Sinn Fin	Ireland	None	1 / 13	Left	Soft	No position
Party for the Animals	Netherlands	GUE-NGL	1 / 29	Left	Hard	No position
Left Bloc	Portugal	GUE-NGL	2 / 21	Left	Soft	No position
Portuguese Communist Party	Portugal	None	2 / 21	Left	Hard	No position
Podemos	Portugal	GUE-NGL	3 / 59	Left	Soft	No position
United Left	Spain	GUE-NGL	2 / 59	Left	Soft	No position
Basque State Unite	Spain	Greens-EFA	1 / 59	Left	Soft	No position
Left Party	Sweden	GUE-NGL	1 / 21	Left	Hard	No position
Human Shield	Croatia	None	1 / 12	-----	Hard	No position
Kotleba	Slovakia	None	1 / 14	Right	Hard	No position
Fidesz	Hungary	None	12 / 21	Right	Soft	No position
Jobbik	Hungary	None	1 / 21	Right	Hard	No position
Five Star Movement	Italy	None	8 / 76	Right	Soft	No position

Source: compiled by the authors according to the data: European Parliament, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/political-groups>

The analysis shows that most Eurosceptic parties (29) do not pay attention to the enlargement issues and do not declare a clear position on this in their party programs. Thus, the enlargement is not seen by most Eurosceptic parties as a challenge or threat to the national interests of their states of origin. Among such parties we can highlight the left and the right ones, which represent both the soft and hard Euroscepticism issues.

Only 16 parties have expressed a clear position on further EU enlargement: 7 of them support the enlargement and 9 oppose it. Among the parties that support further EU enlargement, there are predominantly the soft Eurosceptic right-

wing parties, such as Czech Civic Democratic Party, Latvian National Alliance, Lithuanian Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance, and Romanian Christian Democratic National Peasants’ Party, that belong to the ECR Group known for its commitment to the admission of new members to the EU (ECR Group welcome new members, 2020). All these parties come from the new member states of the CEE region. The expansion is also supported by two far-left parties, The Left from Germany, and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia from the Czech Republic (Leonard, Puglierin, 2021). Nine parties do not support further EU enlargement. They all belong to the Western or Northern European countries that represent both soft and hard Euroscepticism. They are the Austrian Freedom Party of Austria, the Belgian Flemish Interest, the Danish People’s Party, the Finnish Finns Party, the French National Rally, the German Alternative for Germany, the Italian League and Brothers of Italy, and the Dutch Reformed Political Party. The Finns Party program states that it opposes to EU enlargement to the East, and in particular Turkey’s membership in the EU (The right-wing Finns Party does well in Finland’s election, 2019). And the Brothers of Italy opposes the EU enlargement due to a possible increase in the number of migrants from the Muslim states. In particular, the party opposes Albania’s accession because of the large proportion of the Muslims in the state (De Feo, 2014). A number of parties opposing to the EU enlargement belong to the ID group, which, according to its statute, categorically does not support Turkey’s accession to the Union; the probable accession of other states is not mentioned in the statute (Statutes of the Identity and Democracy (ID) Group in the European Parliament, 2019).

Consequently, most Eurosceptic parties do not declare a clear position on further EU enlargement in their party programs. The reason for this is most likely that the accession of new members is not a hot topic, due to the slowdown in the process of the accession of the WB states to the EU. At the same time, a number of influential Western European Eurosceptic parties categorically oppose to enlargement, but this does not have a significant impact on decision-making in the EP, which invariably supports the movement towards the accession of the WB states to the EU. Thus, at the EP meeting on March 25, 2021, the MPs by a majority of more than 500 votes (Table 2.) supported four reports of the European Commission on the progress of the candidates and the potential candidates for the EU membership. The MEPs reaffirmed that Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia and Serbia have every chance of a European future and called for early accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania (Enlargement reports: MEPs fully support Western Balkans’ European future, 2021). On May 19 and June 26, 2021, the EP approved progress reports to Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, respectively, welcoming their desire to move forward on the path to the EU, but calling for further substantial reforms. The 2021 reports of the Albania and Macedonia decrees of 19 May 2022 confirm some progress, although not as significant as last year. (Table 2).

Table 2: *Voting in the European Parliament for the Support of the European Commission Reports on the Western Balkans*

Report	In favor	Against	Abstained
Report on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on North Macedonia	368	178	50
Report on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on Albania	389	57	151
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission reports on Serbia	538	69	79
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Kosovo	471	109	104
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Montenegro	595	66	34
Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina	483	73	133

Source: compiled by the authors according to the data: European Parliament, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/PV-9-2022-05-19-RCV_FR.pdf

However, during the vote in the EP's Foreign Affairs Committee to approve these reports, it was the majority of the Eurosceptic groups that voted against it. In particular, When approving the report on Serbia, three deputies from the ID group voted against its adoption in the Foreign Affairs Committee. Representatives of this group, including the leader of the group, M. Zanni, were also among those who abstained. The representatives from the GUE-NGL and the ECR groups also abstained, but the report was adopted by 57 deputies out of 70 (Report on the 2019-2020 Commission reports on Serbia²⁰²¹). Report on Kosovo was not supported by any of the ID and the GUE-NGL representatives. The judgments of the deputies from the ECR group were divided, most of whom supported the report, while a smaller number abstained it. As a result, the report was approved by 50 deputies (Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Kosovo²⁰²¹).

The report on Montenegro was not supported by any representative from the ID and GUE-NGL groups, but was supported by all the representatives from the ECR group. Members of the ID group voted against or abstained, the GUE-NGL group abstained. As a result, the report was supported by 58 members of the Committee, four voted against and nine abstained (Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Montenegro, 2021). The report on Bosnia and Herzegovina was supported by 50 members of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Eight representatives from the Eurosceptic and pro-European groups, including the ID group, voted against. The representatives of the Eurosceptic groups

abstained: the ECR, the ID and the GUE / the NGL (Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina²⁰²¹).

Considering the Reports on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on Albania in the Foreign Affairs Committee, it was supported by 66 deputies, 4 voted against and 3 deputies abstained. Mostly representatives of the ID group did not support the document (Report on the 2021 Commission Report on Albania). During the consideration of the Report on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on North Macedonia, three deputies from the ID group voted against and two for. From the GUE-NGL group two voted against, while three deputies supported the report (Report on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on North Macedonia, 2022). The new reports on the 2020-2021 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro consideration in the European Parliament and voting is planned in the near future.

Thus, although most Eurosceptic parties in their party programs do not declare a clear position on the EU enlargement policy, the MEPs of the ID and the GUE / the NGL groups are more likely to oppose the EU enlargement, while most Eurosceptic supporters of the EU enlargement belong to the ECR group. In general, the Eurosceptic opponents of the EU enlargement remain in the minority, and the EP is in favor of further EU enlargement and supports solutions of such an allowance.

When deciding on the further enlargement of the Union, politicians and government officials take into account the opinions of the citizens of the member states. According to the latest Eurobarometer data for 2021, 46% of the EU citizens support further enlargement of the Union, and 43% oppose to it. Though, the sociological data of individual states differ significantly (Table 3).

Table 3: *Results of the Opinion Polls on Further EU Enlargement Policy (2021)*

State	In favor	Against	Refusal	Don't know
European Union	46	43	3	8
Belgium	34	66	0	0
Bulgaria	53	23	4	20
Czech Republic	50	44	2	4
Denmark	37	55	1	7
Germany	32	57	3	8
Estonia	55	45	0	0
Ireland	58	42	0	0
Greece	50	39	5	6
Spain	67	17	3	13
France	30	56	2	12
Croatia	69	25	2	4

The impact of euroscepticism on the EU enlargement policy in ...

Italy	51	38	4	7
Republic of Cyprus	54	33	5	8
Latvia	58	35	1	6
Republic of Lithuania	78	22	0	0
Luxemburg	32	61	2	5
Hungary	71	21	3	5
Malta	54	17	13	16
The Netherlands	30	67	1	2
Austria	29	61	5	5
Poland	62	26	4	8
Portugal	49	40	3	8
Romania	59	30	3	8
Slovenia	68	28	1	3
Slovakia	55	34	3	8
Finland	29	71	0	0
Sweden	36	63	0	1

Source: compiled by the authors according to the data: "Standard Eurobarometer 95. Public opinion in the European Union," European Commission, accessed September 2021, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2532>

The lowest level of support for the enlargement (from 29 to 37%) was found in the Western and Northern Europe, (France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark), with the exception of Ireland with 58% support for the enlargement. The first five of these states are the founding members of the European Communities, the rest are distinguished by their neutral status in EU foreign policy and defense, which is likely to affect the attitude to the enlargement. As shown above, all Eurosceptic EP parties that do not support the EU enlargement policy come from the same list of the states.

The highest level of support for the enlargement is inherent in the new member states from the CEE and the Baltic regions, especially Lithuania, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, and Poland (from 78 to 62%). The same high level of support is shown by Spain (67%). Most Eurosceptic parties that support the enlargement also come from the Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics.

The rest of the states, mainly in the southern Europe, found themselves between these two poles with the support for the enlargement at 49-59%.

In general, these statistical data show a high level of correlation between public opinion and party-based Euroscepticism in the enlargement issues. The parties from the states where the support for the enlargement is lower can follow the views of their citizens.

The lower level of the support of the EU citizens for the accession of new members is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the EU transformation force in

the WB region. The aspirations of the WB member states to join the EU are met with unfavorable public opinion in the EU member states and, as a consequence, the reluctance of the governments of some member states to fully support the policy of the EU enlargement towards the region. A vivid example is the recent position of France and the Netherlands to block the start of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, which has threatened the integrity of the EU enlargement process in the region (Germany rejects idea of redrawing Western Balkans borders, 2021).

EUROSCEPTICISM IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Currently Serbia and Montenegro are the closest to EU membership, as they have been in pre-accession negotiations for a while. Nevertheless, both states have faced a common problem in recent years, the rise of Euroscepticism. The reasons for this phenomenon in the states of the region are similar, but with their own peculiarities. Ivan Damjanovski, Marco Lavrič, and Andrey Naterer singled out three factors for the rise of Euroscepticism in the Western Balkans: 1) utilitarian, 2) political, and 3) identity / cultural, arguing that the latter is most influential (Damjanovski, Lavrič, Naterer, 2020).

In our opinion, the growth of opposition to the EU in a number of the WB states was caused by both external and internal factors. On the one hand, the candidate states in the region lag far behind the EU states in their democratic and economic development. They are among the poorest states in Europe, have a weak administrative capacity to adapt to the EU standards, so their accession to the EU is a faces long odds. The internal costs of implementing the necessary reforms are significant. On the other hand, the formation of the EU's enlargement strategy to the Balkans took place in an atmosphere of fatigue from the previous major eastward enlargement and growing internal problems within the EU itself, so the EU set much stricter conditions of the enlargement than previously. In 2011, the European Commission proposed a new and more rigorous approach, focusing on the reform of the rule of law and good governance, which was seen as a key target for assessing overall progress in the accession process (Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2011-2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 2011). The consolidation of the EU's focus on the criteria of the rule of law, independent judiciary, good governance, the fight against organized crime and corruption, the development of civil society and media freedom has been noticeable since the accession of Croatia. However, this new strategy was first formally approved in June 2012 for negotiations with Montenegro, which provided for Chapter 23 ("Judiciary and Fundamental Rights") and Chapter 24 ("Justice, Freedom and Security") to be started in the early stages of negotiations and closed only at the very end of the process. The same approach was then fully integrated into the EU's negotiations with Serbia, which began in January 2014.

In addition to stricter principles in the pre-accession process, the EU has put forward a number of sensitive political conditions for the states in the region,

such as: full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, regional co-operation and reconciliation, and resolving bilateral conflicts between Greece and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on the name of the latter, and recognition of the independence of Kosovo by Serbia. These complex issues negatively affect the unity of societies and political elites and raise sentiments against the EU.

In conclusion, the societies of the WB states are among the most traditionalist and conservative in Europe, which also contributes to the development of Euroscepticism, as Damjanovski et al. emphasized (Damjanovski, Lavrič, Naterer, 2020). Undeniably, there are also differences between the states of the Balkan region, which can be significant reinforcers of Euroscepticism. These include ethnic homogeneity or heterogeneity, and religious affiliation, and the presence or absence of disputes with neighbors, as well as specific conditions from the EU, as the Kosovo issue for Serbia, and the influence of third parties such as Russia and China.

Serbia

With Serbia, which has been conducting pre-accession negotiations since 2014, 18 out of 35 chapters have been opened today, two of which are provisionally closed (Serbia 2021 Report, 2021). Obstacles to speeding up the negotiation process are the status of Kosovo, the dispute with Croatia, and Serbia's refusal to tighten sanctions on Russia. In addition, according to the Freedom House report, there has been a decline in the level of freedom in Serbia in recent years (Freedom in the world 2019, 2019).

Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising that there is a growing trend of party Euroscepticism in Serbia. In particular, the representatives of solid Euroscepticism include the following parties in Serbia: Serbian Radical Party, Democratic Party of Serbia and Serbian Movement "Dveri". Having won only 2% of the vote, the Serbian Radical Party did not make it into parliament in 2020. It has ties with the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, the National Rally of France, as well as with the far-right Golden Dawn in Greece (Stojic, 2011). The Democratic Party of Serbia received 2.2% of the vote and also failed to enter parliament in 2020. According to its program, the party supports Serbia's participation in the European organizations that do not threaten the state's sovereignty, as well as strengthening relations with Russia (Програм Демократска странка Србије, 2021). The first two parties have been operating since the 1990s, but the Serbian Movement "Dveri" was founded in 2015, after the start of negotiations on Serbia's accession to the EU. Serbian Movement "Dveri" did not participate in the 2020 parliamentary elections, boycotting them. According to the program, the Party proposes to terminate all of Serbia's agreements with the EU (Програм Двери²⁰²¹). A less radical position on Serbia's integration into the EU is supported by the Enough is Enough Party, which is a representative of soft Euroscepticism. The Party received 2.3% of the vote and did not enter parliament in 2020. According to its program, the Party opposes Serbia's accession to NATO. The program does not mention

relations with the EU, but the Party's economic policies run counter to EU economic principles (Програм Доста је било, 2019).

The parties that were the part of the Serbian Parliament in 2020 are the Serbian Progressive Party, the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Democratic Party, and the Social Democratic Party of Serbia are all, according to their programs, pro-European. Two of them, the Serbian Progressive Party and the Socialist Party of Serbia, were founded in 2008, after the completion of the territorial division of the former Yugoslavia. The Serbian Progressive Party, which enlists 158 of the 250 seats in the Parliament and heads the coalition, is defending Serbia's EU membership, but is not ready to compromise in the negotiations. The Party upholds close relations with some Eurosceptic parties: the Hungarian Fidesz, the Freedom Party of Austria and the Russian United Russia. The opposition in the Serbian Parliament (data of 2020) is also represented by the pro-European Socialist Party of Serbia, but formerly it was a communist party that was just trying to outline its ideology by constantly updating it (Визија Србије, 2020). As for public opinion on the issue of Serbia's accession to the EU, the level of support for the EU membership among the citizens is falling (Table 4).

Table 4: *Support the Membership of Serbia in the EU*

Year	For	Against	Don't know
2009	76	19	5
2010	70	24	5
2011	69	27	4
2012	61	34	6
2014	68	29	2
2015	54	42	4
2016	49	44	7
2018	50	27	22
2020	50	28	21

Source: compiled by the authors according to the data: Survey of Serbian Public Opinion. International Republican Institute, https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/final_wb_poll_for_publishing_6.9.2020.pdf

The highest level of public support for the EU membership took place before the start of the pre-accession negotiations in 2014, after which it decreased significantly, which can probably be explained by unjustified mutual expectations, a slow down in the pre-accession process and the conserving effect. But this also coincided with the effects of the debt crisis in the Eurozone, the migration crisis in the EU, Brexit and the rise of Euroscepticism in the EU as a whole, which could also affect Serbian citizens' support for the EU membership.

In conclusion, there is a growing anti-Europeanism in the state. The euphoria of a possible swift entry into the the EU by the Serbs is diminishing, politicians are drifting towards authoritarianism, the EU is not yielding to Serbia's proposals to ease conditions, and no real steps to solve the existing problems are being undertaken.

Montenegro

The reasons for the rise of the Euroscepticism in Montenegro are similar to those in Serbia. Three of 33 negotiation chapters have conditionally been closed (Montenegro 2021 Report, 2021). Filip Vujanovic, who was the president until 2018, supported Montenegro's pro-Western course and made many efforts for the peaceful disintegration of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as recognizing Kosovo's independence (Montenegro. European Party Monitor²⁰²⁰). In 2018, Milo Đukanović became the new president. Although he supports Montenegro's integration into the EU, the adoption of a compromising law on religion and participation in corruption scandals (Person of the Year 2015: Milo Djukanovic 2015 Man of the Year in Organized Crime and Corruption, 2020), which have sparked protests to remove him from power, deteriorated Montenegro's pro-European course.

Filip Vujanović and Milo Đukanović represent the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro, which, despite its communist past, supports Montenegro's pro-European course. At the same time, the pro-Russian and pro-Serbian Democratic Front, which represents soft Euroscepticism (Seizing the democratic opportunity in Montenegro, 2020), has been gaining in popularity in recent years. There is also growing support for the new Democratic Montenegro Party, which has a rather contradictory and ambiguous ideology. Due to the program, the Party supports Montenegro's accession to the EU (Program. Pobjede, a Ne Podjele, 2019), but it has formed a coalition with the Party of the United Pensioners and the Disabled, which have long been associated with the Communist Party. Montenegro's party system is relatively new, so it takes much longer to understand how it affiliates with the Euroscepticism. Although in recent years there has been a noticeable increase in opposition to the EU.

Similar to Serbia, fewer and fewer Montenegrins are in favor of joining the EU, a sign of growing Euroscepticism. According to opinion polls conducted by the Montenegrin analytical centre, in 2009 more than 76% of all citizens supported joining the EU, in 2010 70% were supporters, and in 2011 the level of support dropped to 62%. After the start of the EU's pre-accession negotiations with Montenegro and during the following years (2012-2018), the level of citizens' support for the membership in the organization ranged from 60% to 65%. In 2019 and 2020, these numbers decreased to 55% and 54% respectively (Political public opinion of Montenegro, 2020). Thus, the level of opposition to the EU in Montenegro, comparable to Serbia, is also growing. Despite the probable prospect of the membership, commitment to the EU is declining, both among the politicians and the citizens.

Albania

Despite the flow of Euroscepticism across the European continent during the last decade, Albania, though currently not a member of the EU, is perhaps the most pro-European state. This is evidenced by officially the pro-European policy of state leaders over the past three decades, the absence of Eurosceptic parties, and a high level of support for joining the EU organization among the people.

Albanian political parties, both coalition and opposition, support European integration. The Socialist Party of Albania, which has formed a coalition with the Socialist Movement for the Integration, has the vast majority of the seats in the national parliament. The opposition includes the Democratic Party of Albania, the Party for Justice, Integration and Unity, and the Republican Party of Albania. Albania state leaders work on the EU integration (Rakipi, 2020). Though obstacles to democratic transformation in Albania's state institutions complicate the dialogue between Albania and the EU. Albania's opposition accused the government of the head Prime Minister of previous electoral fraud and corruption. As a result, opposition parties refused to run in the 2019 parliamentary elections and held protests. The EU has called on the parties to engage in dialogue, as it could suspend the start of membership talks. As a result, the President of Albania cancelled the election not to hinder the negotiation process (Koleka, 2019).

Albanian citizens also almost unanimously support its membership in the EU. The survey by the European Commission showed that this is at least 80% of the population in favour of joining the EU, according to sociological data for 2009-2019. In 2018, 93% of the citizens supported joining the EU. In 2019, it approximated 88% (Public Opinion²⁰²¹). 53% of the Albanians believe that their state is ready to become a member of the EU, and 69% agree that the EU should accept Albania despite its non-compliance with the criteria (Public Opinion²⁰²¹). Due to the statistics, it is evident that the Albanians are positive about further integration into the EU. However, because of the procrastination of the EU with the start of pre-accession negotiations with this state, the situation may change. As the experience of Serbia and Montenegro shows, public opinion is very sensitive to the EU's attitude towards their states.

According to A. Rakipi, the record commitment of the Albanians to the EU is due to the fact that they perceive the processes of democratization and integration as synonyms. The EU is helping to establish institutions and hold fair elections. The results of the European aid are evident (Rakipi, 2020). Damjanovski I., Lavrič M. and Naterer A., who focused on religion as a factor in Euroscepticism, continue to persuade that the low level of Euroscepticism in Albania is most correlated with the Muslim religion (Damjanovski, Lavrič, Naterer, 2020).

North Macedonia

North Macedonia is another Balkan state that is showing some progress on its path to the EU membership, as the name dispute with Greece has finally been resolved. Following the Prespa Agreement, Macedonia was renamed North Macedonia. On March 27, 2020, Macedonia became a member of NATO (North Macedonia joins NATO as 30th Ally, 2020). But the signing of the Prespa agreement did not move the negotiation process with the EU, as Bulgaria blocked it. The official start of negotiations is delayed which has led to some disillusionment with EU policy due to its weak capacity (Sinoruka, 2022).

North Macedonia has chosen a pro-European course with the declaration of independence. For a while, all state leaders tried to support it. Changes in Macedonia's policy took place during the second term of Gjorge Ivanov's presidency (2009-2019), who criticized the EU for low investment and declining interest in integrating the Western Balkans into the EU, which Russia and China use for their own ends (Ivanov: EU's failure in the Balkans is used by Russia and China, 2017). In 2019, the newly elected president was Stevo Pendarovski, who represents the pro-European parties, Social Democratic Union of Macedonia and Democratic Union for Integration (Matamoros, 2019). North Macedonia has continued work on the official start of accession negotiation. And only in May 2022, the European Parliament asks the EU Council to begin negotiations (Albania and North Macedonia: MEPs demand EU starts accession talks, 2022).

Almost all political parties in North Macedonia are pro-European. In the last elections in July 2020, the pro-European Social Democratic Union of Macedonia won the most seats in the Macedonian Parliament (North Macedonia²⁰²¹). In a close second, losing only two seats in the Parliament, was the opposition party Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for the Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE). The party positions itself as nationalist and pro-European, but in recent years it has changed its ideology to be clearly pro-Russian. The party has mostly shifted to the pro-Russian side under the leadership of Ljubco Georgievski and Hristijan Mickoski (Petsinis, 2015). Due to the state's historic past, parties representing ethnic Albanians take a special place in the Macedonian Parliament. These are the pro-European Alliance for the Albanians and the Eurosceptic Democratic Party of the Albanians (Ozturk, 2020).

Public opinion on the issue of North Macedonia's membership in the EU generally shows a high level of public commitment to the idea of joining the EU (Table 5).

Table 5: *Data of North Macedonia Membership in the EU Support*

Year	For	Against	Don't know
2009	95	4	1
2010	92	7	1
2011	87	9	4
2012	84	12	4
2013	76	19	6
2014	76	20	4
2015	80	14	6
2016	76	19	5
2017	72	21	6
2018	69	7	24
2020	74	10	16
2021	71	12	17

Source: compiled by the authors according to the data: Political public opinion of Montenegro, <https://www.cedem.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Pol-Public-Opinion-MNE-Dec-2021.pdf>

However, record support for the membership in 2009-2010 declined somewhat in subsequent years. In 2020, since North Macedonia agreed to start the pre-accession negotiations with the EU, public support for the EU accession has risen to 74%. But due to the blockade of Greece and Bulgaria's accession talks, support for EU accession is weak, as reflected in the 2021 polls. In general, in contrast to Serbia and Montenegro, Albania and North Macedonia have a much higher level of the EU support.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Exhausted by military conflicts and the struggle for independence, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are also claiming the opportunity to become participants in the European integration project. In addition to economic and socio-political issues, the biggest challenge for Bosnia and Herzegovina is that it consists of two autonomous entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, and the Brčko District, which is controlled by the local government. Therefore, the implementation of reforms largely depends not on the central government, but on local authorities, communication between which is rather weak due to the prolonged ethnic

conflicts (Velebit, 2021). Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not only the state of three ethnic groups: Bosnians, Croats and Serbs, but also the state of three religions – Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox. Such ethnic and religious diversity complicates communication between the parties, despite the great desire and potential prospect of the EU membership.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also has a different understanding of the opposition to the EU. In particular, Euroscepticism is understood as the consequences and problems facing the state on the path to European integration (Turčilo, 2013). Considering the manifestations and signs of Euroscepticism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is important to remember that the parliament includes political parties that represent the interests of the three political units. The Croatian part of the state is the most pro-European. In part of Bosnia, no party opposes to the EU membership either, but the nationalist ideology prevails in the rhetoric of the Independent Bloc. The Party does not mention the EU integration in its program, focusing on local issues (Nezavisni blok²⁰²⁰). In the 2018 elections, the Party did not make it to the General Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. If Bosnia's political parties are pro-European, the Serb parties are more nationalist, one of which is the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats that is evidently pro-Russian (Russia: Bosnian Serb PM Visits to Discuss Balkans Energy, 2010), and another, the Serb Democratic Party, that is separatist (Bosnia–Herzegovina, 2021). In its program, the Serb Democratic Party criticizes the EU for excessive interference in the affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and summarizes that, due to the state's difficult political status, it is too early to talk about the EU integration (Програмски принципи СНСД, 2019).

According to the results of the last election, the government and the state are led by pro-European forces, but the current system, including divided ministries and an eight-month presidency rotation between Bosnians, Serbs and Croats, hinders the state's coherent European integration. Moreover, while the Bosnian President Sefik Dzaferovic of the Party of Democratic Action and the Croatian President Zeljko Komsic, who represents the Democratic Front, support the European integration course, the Serb President Milorad Dodik heads the pro-Russian Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (Putin Reportedly Wishes Dodik Success in Bosnia Election, 2018). Such division of the state and the lack of any common vision of its development significantly complicate the acceleration of its integration into the EU.

The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is almost the most multi-ethnic compared to other states in the region. However, despite the historic, cultural and religious differences that led to the protracted bloody wars and the lower level of interaction between the autonomous entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2020 more than 76% of the citizens voted to join the organization, with only 11% not supporting EU integration. In previous years the level of support for the EU accession has not been lower than 75% (Western Balkans Regional Poll, 2020). Thus, the level of Euroscepticism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is relatively low, and citizens support the course of gaining the EU membership. It is difficult to predict whether such high level of support can

be maintained if the EU starts the pre-accession process, which will inevitably be accompanied by strict requirements and regulations.

Kosovo

For Kosovo, joining the EU is probably the most difficult task compared to other states, as it is a partially recognized state with no approved legal status. Moreover, not all EU member states have recognized Kosovo's independence, including Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Romania, making it virtually impossible for Kosovo to join the organization in the near future. There is no party in Kosovo that openly opposes to the EU integration (Kosovo, 2021). All parties that entered parliament in the last elections in 2019 are pro-European, but their ideology differs significantly due to polyethnicity and nationalism. The Self-determination Movement, which ideology is based on the Albanian nationalism, won the most seats. Nationalist parties also include the Serb List, the Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo, and the Vakrat Coalition (Bosnian nationalism). Kosovo's pro-European policy is most supported by the Democratic League of Kosovo, the Democratic Party of Kosovo, and the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo. The President Vjosa Osmani and the Prime Minister Albin Kurti are trying to stabilize relations with Serbia. However, Kosovo's reputation and further co-operation with the EU are negatively affected by former President Hashim Thaci's involvement in organized crime and his relationship with criminal groups (White House talks over Kosovo-Serbia in doubt after war crime charges' 2020).

There is also evident record support for Kosovo's integration into the EU. In particular, more than 93% of the population in 2020 support the EU accession; similar support for integration is observed only in Albania (Western Balkans Regional Poll, 2020). Unlike other states in the region, Kosovo does not have to move to the EU or choose another foreign policy vector. In the global dimension, there are no options in Kosovo, as the cooperation with the EU remains the only possible way out of a difficult situation: the EU integration will help achieve international recognition and economic stabilization. Generally, while Euroscepticism is lowest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, their membership of the EU in the short and medium time frame remains highly tenuous.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, party-based Euroscepticism does not have a serious impact on the EU enlargement policy. Most Eurosceptic parties in the EP do not pay attention to the enlargement issues and do not declare a clear position on this in their party programs. The parties supporting the further enlargement of the EU are dominated by soft Eurosceptic right-wing parties from the new CEE member states belonging to the ECR group, and two far-left parties, The Left from Germany and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia from the Czech Republic. All nine parties that do not support further EU enlargement belong to

Western or Northern European parties, which represent both soft and hard Euroscepticism. In practice, the MEPs in the ID and the GUE-NGL groups are more likely to oppose the EU enlargement, while most Eurosceptic supporters of the EU enlargement belong to the ECR group. In general, Eurosceptic opponents of the EU enlargement remain in the minority. The EP is in favor of further EU enlargement and supports solutions that allow it to move forward. Our study showed a high level of correlation between party-based Euroscepticism and public opinion in the EU on the enlargement issues. The lowest level of support is for the states of Western and Northern Europe (from 29% to 37%), and the highest level is for the new member states from the CEE and Baltic regions (from 78% to 62%). The low level of support of the EU citizens for the accession of new members is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the EU's transformational powers in the WB region. The aspirations of the WB member states to join the EU are met with unfavorable public opinion in many EU member states and, as a result, the reluctance of the governments of some member states to fully support the EU's enlargement policy in the region. In recent years, there has been a rise in party-based Euroscepticism in Serbia and Montenegro, while Albania and Kosovo are among the states where it is absent. Public opinion on the EU membership in the WB states is also marked by growing tendencies towards Euroscepticism. Although the level of support is still high in almost all states, in most cases we can see a process of gradually decreasing positive assessments of the EU membership, with the exception of Albania and Kosovo. Kosovo and Albania have the fewest Eurosceptics, while Serbia has the most. The conclusion that develops from our study is that the closer a state is to the EU membership, the higher the level of Euroscepticism is recorded. Rising public Euroscepticism in both EU Member States and most WB candidate states may be a disincentive or a limiting factor in the accession of the Western Balkans to the EU, as governments will take public opinion into account in their decisions. Prospective topics for further research include the analysis of geographical factors of Euroscepticism in the WB states, in particular how proximity to the border with the EU affects the level of Euroscepticism and the influence of third parties on public opinion on the WB European integration.

REFERENCES

- Albania and North Macedonia: MEPs demand EU starts accession talks. (2022). European Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/pt/press-room/20220517IPR29936/albania-and-north-macedonia-meps-demand-eu-starts-accession-talks>
- Belloni, R. (2016) The European Union Blowback? Euroscepticism and its Consequences in the Western Balkans. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. Vol.34, No.3, 2016, pp. 67-74. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/28195429/The_European_Union_Blowback_Euroscepticism_and_its_Consequences_in_the_Western_Balkans.
- Bosnia–Herzegovina. (2021). Parties and Elections in Europe. Retrieved from: <http://www.parties-and-elections.eu/bosnia-herzegovina.html>.
- Council Conclusion of enlargement and stabilisation and association process the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania. (2020). Council of the European Union. Retrieved from: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7002-2020-INIT/en/pdf>.
- Damjanovski, I., Lavrič, M., Naterer A. (2020). Predictors of Euroscepticism in six Western Balkan countries. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* Vol.20, No.2, 2020, pp. 327-348. DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2020.1744091.
- Demokratskoj Crnoj Gori. Program: Pobjede, a ne podjele [The program Democratic Montenegro: Victories, not divisions]. Montenegro: Democratic Montenegro. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://demokrate.me/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Program-DCG.pdf>.
- ECR group welcome new members. (2020). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://ecrgroup.eu/article/ecr_group_welcome_new_members.
- Enlargement reports: Meps fully support Western Balkans' European future. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210322IPR00528/enlargement-reports-meps-fully-support-western-balkans-european-future>.
- Enlargement strategy and main challenges 2011-2012, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. (2011). European Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=celex:52011DC0666>.
- Enlargement: new enlargement methodology will be applied to Montenegro and Serbia. (2021). Council of the European Union Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/11/enlargement-new-enlargement-methodology-will-be-applied-to-montenegro-and-serbia/>.

- Fabrizio, F. (2014). Fratelli d'Italia attacca: "Ci vuole il coraggio di dire addio all'euro". (*Brothers of Italy attacks: "It takes the courage to say goodbye to the euro"*.) IL Giornale. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/interni/fratelli-ditalia-attacca-ci-vuole-coraggio-dire-addio-999950.html>.
- Freedom in the world 2019. (2019). Freedom House. Retrieved from: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Feb2019_FH_FITW_2019_Report_ForWeb-compressed.pdf.
- Ivanov: EU's failure in the Balkans is used by Russia and China. (2017). European Western Balkans. Retrieved from: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/05/ivanov-eus-failure-balkans-used-russia-china/>.
- Kaniok, P., Hlousek, V. (2019). Slow and Big or Say No to the Devil: Party-based Euroscepticism and the Future of EU Enlargement. Contestation of EU enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy. Actors, Arenas, Arguments, Vol.6, No.12, 2019, pp. 133-158.
- Koleka, B. (2019). Opposition rallies again to get Albanian PM to quit. Reuters. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-albania-protests-idUSKCN1T90SN>
- Kosovo. (2021). Europe Elects. Retrieved from: <https://europeelects.eu/northmacedonia/>.
- Leonard, M., Puglierin J. (2021). How to prevent Germany from becoming Eurosceptic. The European Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: <https://ecfr.eu/publication/how-to-prevent-germany-from-becoming-eurosceptic/>.
- Lubbers, M., Scheepers, P. (2010). Divergent trends of euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union. European Journal of Political Research Vol. 49, No.6, 2010, pp. 787-817.
- Martin, N. (2016). Germany, EU have failed us, Macedonian president says. Deutsche Welle. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-eu-have-failed-us-macedonian-president-says/a-19110117>.
- Matamoros, C. (2019) North Macedonia's new president Stevo Pendarovski takes office. In: Euronews. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/2019/05/12/north-macedonia-s-new-president-stevo-pendarovski-takes-office>.
- Montenegro 2021 Report. (2021). European Commission. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/montenegro-report-2021_en
- Montenegro. European party monitor. (2020). Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. Retrieved from: <https://soc.kuleuven.be/io/english/european-party-monitor/montenegro/party-passport-montenegro.pdf>.
- Nezavisni Blok [Independent Block] (2021). Sarajevo. Bosnia and Herzegovina: Nezavisni Blok. Retrieved from: <https://nezavisniblok.ba/izbori2020/>.
- North Macedonia joins Nato as 30th ally. (2021). Retrieved from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174589.htm.

- North Macedonia. (2021). Europe Elects. Retrieved from: <https://europeelects.eu/northmacedonia/>.
- Ozturk, T. (2020) Ruling party's alliance wins North Macedonia vote. Anadolu Agency. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/ruling-partys-alliance-wins-north-macedonia-vote/1922458>.
- Person of the year 2015: Milo Djukanovic 2015 man of the year in organized crime and corruption. (2020). Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project. [online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.occrp.org/en/poy/2015/>.
- Petsinis, V. (2015). From pro-American to pro-Russian? Nikola Gruevski as a political chameleon. Open Democracy. Retrieved from: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/from-proamerican-to-prorussian-nikola-gruevski-as-political-cha/>.
- Political public opinion of Montenegro. (2020). ICEDEM. Retrieved from: <https://www.cedem.me/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Pol-Public-Opinion-MNE-Dec-2021.pdf>
- Program Prawa I Sprawiedliwości [Program Law and Justice]. (2019). Warsaw, Poland: Law and Justice. Retrieved from: <http://pis.org.pl/dokumenty>.
- Public Opinion. September. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/comfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/3/groupKy/312>.
- Putin reportedly wishes Dodik success in Bosnia election. (2018). Balkan Insight. Retrieved from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/10/01/putin-wished-dodik-success-in-the-bosnian-elections-media-reports-10-01-2018/>.
- Rakipi, A. (2020) Albanian Euroscepticism? The wrong debate in the wrong place at the wrong time. Albanian Institute for International Studies. Vol.2, No.6, 2020.
- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Albania. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0041_EN.html#title3.
- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0185_EN.html#title4.
- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Kosovo. (2021). European Parliament Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0031_EN.html#title4.
- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Montenegro. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0131_EN.html.

- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on North Macedonia. (2021). Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0040_EN.html#title3.
- Report on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Serbia. (2021). European Parliament Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0032_EN.html.
- Report on the 2021 Commission Report on Albania. (2022). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0131_EN.html#title3
- Report on the 2021 Commission Report on North Macedonia. (2022). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2022-0133_EN.html#title3
- Russia: Bosnian Serb PM visits to discuss Balkans energy. (2010). Stratfor. Retrieved from: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/situation-report/russia-bosnian-serb-pm-visits-discuss-balkans-energy>.
- Seizing the democratic opportunity in Montenegro. (2020). European Western Balkans. Retrieved from: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/09/08/seizing-the-democratic-opportunity-in-montenegro/>.
- Serbia Report 2021. (2021). European Commission. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/serbia-report-2021_en#files
- Sinoruka F., Todorov S. (2022). Bulgaria to Maintain Block on North Macedonia's Path to EU: Minister. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network. Retrieved from: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/04/13/bulgaria-to-maintain-block-on-north-macedonias-path-to-eu-minister/>
- Standard Eurobarometer 95. Public Opinion in the European Union. (2021). European Parliament. Retrieved from: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2532>.
- Statutes of the Identity and Democracy (ID) group in the European Parliament. (2019). European Parliament. Retrieved from: https://d3n8a8pro7vnmx.cloudfront.net/kantodev/pages/102/attachments/original/1582196570/EN_Statutes_of_the_ID_Group.pdf?1582196570.
- Stojic, M. (2011). The changing nature of Serbian political parties' attitudes towards Serbian EU Membership. Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex, Vol.122, No.4, 2011. Retrieved from: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=epern-working-paper-24.pdf&site=266>.
- Taggart, P., Szczerbiak, A. (2002). The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Aleks_Szczerbiak/public

- ation/237536121_The_Party_Politics_of_Euroscepticism_in_EU_Member_and_Candidate_States/links/5534fb440cf2df9ea6a4122f/The-Party-Politics-of-Euroscepticism-in-EU-Member-and-Candidate-States.pdf.
- Taggart, P., Szczerbiak, A. (2008). *Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Retrieved from: <https://www.jcer.net/index.php/jcer/article/view/218/218>.
- The Presidency Conclusions of the Thessaloniki European Council. (2003). European Council. Retrieved from: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/76279.pdf.
- The right-wing Finns Party does well in Finland's election. (2019). *The Economist*. Retrieved from: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/04/17/the-right-wing-finns-party-does-well-in-finlands-election>.
- Turčilo, L. (2013). *Bosnia-Herzegovina and the European Union: Strong European Identity in Spite of Scepticism*. Heinrich-Boll-Stiftung European Union. Retrieved from: <https://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2013/12/lejla-turcilo-bosnia-herzegovina-and-the-eu.pdf>.
- Vasilopoulou, S. (2009). Varieties of Euroscepticism: The Case of the European Extreme Right. *Journal of Contemporary European Research* Vol.5, No.1, 2009, pp. 3-23.
- Velebit, V. (2021). What is the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration? (2018). *European Western Balkans*. Retrieved from: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/01/26/state-bosnia-herzegovinas-european-integrations/>.
- Western Balkans Regional Poll. (2020). International Republican Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/final_wb_poll_for_public_shing_6.9.2020.pdf.
- Western Balkans Regional Poll. (2020). International Republican Institute. Retrieved from: https://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/final_wb_poll_for_public_shing_6.9.2020.pdf.
- White House talks over Kosovo-Serbia in doubt after war crime charges. (2020). *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/24/kosovo-s-president-hashim-thaci-indicted-for-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity>.
- Програм Двери [Party Program Dveri]. (2021). Belgrade. Serbia: Party Program Dveri. Retrieved from: <https://dveri.rs/zasto-dveri/program/>.
- Програм Демократска Странка Србије [Program Democratic Party of Serbia]. (2021). Belgrade. Serbia: Democratic Party of Serbia.

Retrieved from: <http://www.dss.rs/srp/o-nama/dss-izbliza/program-stranke/>.

Програм Доста Је Било [The Enough Is Enough Party Program]. (2019). Belgrade. Serbia: Enough Is Enough Party. Retrieved from: <https://dostajebilo.rs/program/>.

Програмски принципи СНСД [SNSD Program Principles]. (2019). Belgrade. Serbia: SNSD Program Principles. Retrieved from: https://snsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Programski_principi_SNSD_6_Sabor.pdf.

