POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
SERBIA IN A BROADER HISTORICAL
 PERSPECTIVE

ASSESSING NORMATIVE OBSTACLES
TO SERBIA’S EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION

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July 2014

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The
Australian National University
STATEMENT

I, Nina Marković, acknowledge that this thesis is in full my own work.

Signature
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the encouragement and patience of all people who have enriched my doctoral research experience. This investigative journey consisted of analysing political and diplomatic relations between the European Union and Serbia from an inter-disciplinary perspective, and across several continents. The research time spent in 2012 at the Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali (LUISS) Guido Carli in Rome, as part of the European Union–Oceania Erasmus Mundus exchange program, was particularly inspiring. I was given the opportunity by Professor Raffaele De Mucci to lecture on modern Balkan political history—for which I am very grateful.

I would like to particularly thank Dr John Besemer for prompting me to explore Yugoslavia’s history and contemporary political discourses on Serbia’s European integration, including through the participant observation method. I am, equally, appreciative of sound academic advice, support and encouragement provided to me by Prof. Jacqueline Lo and Dr Annmarie Elijah. A ‘thank you’ for administrative support goes to Jane Coultas. A ‘thank you’ is also due to Prof. Philo Murray, Prof. Les Holmes, Prof. William Maley and Dr Robert F. Miller, and to all my interviewees for their time. I am grateful to Olga Latinčić and her team from the Historical Archives of Belgrade for their assistance. I would like to acknowledge the proofreading and copyediting support undertaken by Nigel Brew. Finally, I wish to thank my husband Adam, families Marković, Cocić and Khaze, parents Slobodan and Svetlana, uncle Ilija and brother Ilija, ‘adopted parents’ Prof. Samina Yasmeen and Prof. James Trevelyan, as well as close friends and former colleagues for their love and support. A diplomat great-grandfather, Živojin Cocić, has been an inspiration in writing this thesis.
ABSTRACT

This thesis will investigate key trends in the political relationship between the EU and Serbia within a broader historical context. In order to better understand obstacles to EU accession by the remaining non-EU states in the Western Balkans, it is necessary to investigate their normative, or ideational foundations. Serbia is among the last few post-socialist countries from the Western Balkans to negotiate accession conditions with the EU. This is paradoxical in the sense that Serbia is a successor state to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was the first socialist country to successfully conclude a comprehensive trade agreement with the EU in 1970. This thesis holds that normative and domestic political factors have presented, over the years, serious obstacles to Serbia’s European integration process.

There are different views about the nature of the political factors that have caused a delay in Serbia’s adoption of EU standards and norms. A conventional approach to this research question is to examine Serbia’s performance against the strict accession criteria of the EU’s political conditionality. This dissertation, however, embarks on analysing the role of normative factors in the complex and inherently social process that is Serbia’s European integration. These relate to political attitudes espoused by the leading Serbian elites towards the EU, as well as public opinion towards the EU in Serbia and Serbia’s accession in the EU, which influence foreign-policy making of both diplomatic actors. Based on fieldwork interviews with policymakers from Serbia and the EU, this thesis contends that the role of mainstream national discourses, informal institutions and diplomatic practices, and ‘collective memory’ has had a significant influence on Serbia’s adoption of EU standards, directly impacting also on the EU’s conditionality towards Serbia. The EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia produced better results for mutual cooperation when the EU adopted an innovative diplomatic approach by engaging in dialogue with the Serbian opposition.
There are many lessons that can be learned about European integration from Serbia’s case. The quality and nature (cooperative or confrontational) of bilateral relations between Serbia and individual EU members will be a determining factor, amongst others, for Serbia’s eligibility to join the EU. Such trend was previously evident with challenging accession experiences of other countries, especially the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Serbia’s solidarity with the EU on common policies, the degree of trust between them, and Serbia’s attitudes to EU foreign policy statements in international, regional and domestic forums will influence the final outcome of Serbia’s bid to join the EU. These ‘less formal’ criteria for EU accession have been under-researched in the EU enlargement literature. This thesis aims to fill that gap in knowledge from the Serbian case study.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEES</td>
<td>Central and Eastern European States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Democratic Party, <em>Demokratska Stranka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Serbia, <em>Demokratska Stranka Srbije</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOS</td>
<td>Democratic Opposition of Serbia, <em>Demokratska Opozicija Srbije</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>Eurovision Song Contest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany (‘West Germany’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRY</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic (‘East Germany’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUL</td>
<td>Yugoslav Left, <em>Jugoslovenska Levica</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAM</td>
<td>Non-Aligned Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS</td>
<td>New Serbia, <em>Nova Srbija</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>New Democratic Party, <em>Nova Demokratska Stranka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTS</td>
<td>Radio-Televizija Srbije</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name (in English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFRJ</td>
<td>Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, <em>Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNS</td>
<td>Serbian Progressive Party, <em>Srpska Napredna Stranka</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPO</td>
<td>Serbian Renewal Movement, <em>Srpski Pokret Obnove</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Serbia, <em>Socijalistička Partija Srbije</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDBA</td>
<td>Uprava Državne Bezbednosti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity.¹

This thesis aims to critically analyse political and diplomatic relations between the European Union (EU) and Serbia, and to contextualise the main achievements and trends of these relations within a broader historical context.² As such, the research presented in this thesis predominantly covers a period in Serbian politics after the Second World War until the first half of 2014. Between 1945 and June 2006 (when Serbia became an independent state following Montenegro’s referendum on separation from the state union), Serbia was part of larger territorial units, including: the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija, SFRJ), from 1945 to 1992; the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), from 1992 to 2003; and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, from 2003 to 2006.³ This thesis adopts a broader historical view, according to which EU–Serbia diplomatic relations were first developed in the 1960s, when Serbia was part of the SFRJ, and

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when the EU was composed of six member states. This stands in contrast to the majority of academic writings on this topic.

A complex diplomatic and political relationship between the EU and Serbia is understood in this thesis as a negotiated political process that has been inadequately explored from normative, or ideational perspectives, which will be revisited throughout this thesis. Gaining a better understanding of these perspectives is necessary in order to recognise a specific set of obstacles Serbia has faced on its path towards European integration. Ideational political challenges to Serbia’s European integration, which are both external and internal to Serbian politics, have been under-recognised in the mainstream literature on EU enlargement. This thesis will argue that these challenges are part of Serbia’s ‘identity politics’. They have presented serious obstacles to Serbia’s European integration process, causing delays in EU-Serbia negotiations. In order to better explain normative obstacles to Serbia’s European integration, this thesis will examine the main political discourses in Serbia in the context of its post-socialist reform process, also known as Europeanisation. A key division within mainstream political discourses in Serbia is currently evident between pro-EU and anti-EU proponents at the elite-level as well as societal level. This is a normative factor, which has contributed to Serbia’s sluggish Europeanisation. This is evident from the inconsistencies found within Serbia’s

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4 The founding member states of the EU are Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Political scientist Simon Hix aptly described the EU as ‘the most formalised and complex set of decision-making rules of any political system in the world’. Its ‘basic institutional quarter’ includes the European Commission, the Council, the European Parliament and the Court of Justice, all of which were established in the 1950s. S. Hix, *The political system of the European Union*, 2nd edn, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 3.

5 Like identity itself, ‘identity politics’ is a social construct, by which dominant political parties and pressure groups resort to history, geography, biology, legal norms and institutions, collective memory and even ‘personal fantasies’ of leaders to justify their ideological positions. M. Castells, *The power of identity: the information age, economy, society, and culture*, 2nd edn, Chichester, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2010, p. 7.

6 Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier have noted that the concept of ‘Europe’ in the literature on EU enlargement has become almost synonymous with the EU, while ‘Europeanness’ or ‘Europeanisation’ in candidate countries came to be measured through the intensity of their institutional relations with the EU, and their adoption of EU norms and rules. F. Schimmelfennig and U. Sedelmeier, ‘Theorising EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses, and the state of research’, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 9, no. 4, August 2002, p. 502.
foreign policy and its successive governments’ incoherent attitudes towards the EU as a negotiating partner.

The normative principles of Serbia’s foreign policy

In order to better understand the conduct of Serbia’s foreign policy towards the EU, which is essential for evaluating its effectiveness and the quality of their bilateral relations, it is important to explain the basic pillars of this policy. Membership of the EU is ‘the first strategic goal’ and a major foreign policy ambition of the Serbian Government today. This envisaged end-point for Serbia’s ongoing reform process has been a declared ambition of Serbia’s successive governments since the overthrow of its anti-EU leader Slobodan Milošević in October 2000 (an event that is commonly referred to as ‘Serbia’s regime change’). Serbia has been a potential candidate from the Western Balkans for EU membership as a democratic, parliamentary republic with a unicameral National Assembly (250 seats) after a new, pro-EU government was established in January 2001. Serbia’s foreign policy promotes multilateralism; Serbia as an investment and export destination to potential partners overseas; whilst also advocating for the ‘protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity’, including over a disputed territory of Kosovo, and the Serbian Government’s declared priority of attaining EU membership.

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8 The EU uses the term ‘Western Balkans’ for countries and entities in Southeast Europe that are not EU members. While the term included Croatia until it joined the EU in July 2013, the term now includes Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia. The potential candidates for EU membership from the Western Balkans are Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM and Kosovo, while formal candidates for EU membership include Albania, Montenegro and Serbia. The asterisk (Kosovo*) is used when referring to Kosovo in EU policy documents since February 2012, denoting the EU’s neutrality on the question of Kosovo’s final status. In this thesis, the term ‘Kosovo’ will be used without an asterisk. European Commission, ‘Enlargement’, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm#pc, (accessed 15 May 2014).
The significance of Serbia’s historical context for its EU accession

During the Cold War, when Serbia was home to socialist Yugoslavia’s capital (Belgrade), Yugoslavia’s foreign policy was based on the principles of neutrality and ‘non-alignment’ in international relations, which, as this thesis will argue, were connected to its historical perception of having a balancing role between East and West.\(^{10}\) Yugoslavia’s socialism precluded the Yugoslav Government from developing closer institutional ties to the EU, including political discussions towards any potential membership. Moreover, Yugoslavia’s support for decolonisation movements in the Third World, often at the expense of national interests of West European EU members, contributed to the worsening of its bilateral relations with them, especially France, at the time when the EU was in its early stages of development. In October 1957, the government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer severed diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia after latter officially recognised the German Democratic Republic (GDR) that was under communist rule.\(^{11}\)

In response to its political alienation from Western Europe that ensued, Yugoslavia became involved in the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the late 1950s, which held its inaugural conference in Belgrade in 1961. The NAM was instituted as an alternative to political and military rivalry between the two Soviet Union and the United States of America (USA). However, Yugoslavia’s foreign policy ideas of neutrality and East/West balancing predate Yugoslavia’s non-aligned socialism. These normative constructs are found when

\(^{10}\) These concepts will be further explored in Chapter Two.

\(^{11}\) This development occurred following Germany’s decision to apply the so-called Hallstein doctrine against Yugoslavia for the first time ever in the history of this policy. The ‘Hallstein doctrine’ refers to West Germany’s decision, made in 1955, not to maintain diplomatic relations with any country that recognises East Germany (which was under socialist rule) as a sovereign nation. The regulation made an exception for the Soviet Union, which had a special status in East Germany as an occupying power. This doctrine was selectively applied, first to Yugoslavia in 1957 and to Cuba in 1963, but not to Cambodia in 1969. By the early 1970s, this doctrine became obsolete. ‘Der Abbruch der deutsch–jugoslawischen Beziehungen’, Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung, no. 197, Bonn, Deutscher Verlag, 22 October 1957, p. 1807.
evaluating Serbia’s foreign policy orientation during earlier historical periods. This thesis argues that the broader historical context also influences the Serbian Government’s position on developing closer relations with the EU, including its Europeanisation trajectory. The relevance of particular interpretations of key events from Serbia’s earlier nation-building experiences for this country’s relationship with the EU will be explained later in this chapter.

Since the first democratic Serbian Government after the Second World War was formed in January 2001 following a decade of conflict, EU accession has become Serbia’s key foreign policy goal. Successive democratic, and generally pro-EU Serbian Governments held the view that EU accession is strongly in Serbia’s national interest. This position was, and continues to be disputed by Serbia’s anti-Western oriented political parties and social groups, which include some former political leaders who were previously pro-EU oriented. It is possible that, if left unaddressed, normative factors—especially the historically shaped ideas of political neutrality and East/West balancing that have never lost appeal among some sections of the Serbian electorate—will continue to present difficulties for Serbia to join the EU even if the Serbian Government eventually meets all pre-accession requirements that EU membership entails. Turkey’s difficult EU accession process shows that European integration of non-EU members (‘third countries’) can be stalled indefinitely due to one or both parties’ internal factors and inflexibility in their respective negotiating positions. Different normative frameworks between the negotiating parties can, therefore, delay any country’s EU accession, particularly where value-systems about international order and state sovereignty are incompatible between the two negotiating sides. This is also true for Serbia in relation to the EU, which is treated in this thesis as a case study.

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13 Turkey applied in 1987 to join the European Economic Community, becoming eligible for EU membership in 1997, and finally becoming a formal candidate in 1999. The country’s closer association with the EU dates back
Research questions

In assessing the reasons for Serbia’s delayed EU accession, one group of scholars tends to focus on formal agreements reached between the EU and Serbia, and on how Serbia’s institutional and administrative capacities align, or not, with the EU legislation. Progress in that domain is used as a yardstick to assess Serbia’s suitability to join the EU. This approach will be referred to in this thesis as the structural approach to Serbia’s EU accession. It also focuses on declared economic or political interests of the EU and Serbian political elites as key drivers of reform, with interests being defined as the ‘basic goals people seek in building strategies of action’.14 The second analytical perspective utilises culture-related arguments to explain why Serbia’s EU accession has been delayed. This approach will be referred to as the cultural approach to Serbia’s EU integration. A key focus of this perspective rests with an extreme notion of Serbian nationalism and even religion, which its proponents believe to be key factors preventing Serbia from ‘moving forward’ in embracing a post-national, European identity. The third analytical perspective focuses on assessing political conditionality that the EU applies to Serbia, such as through annual progress reports.15 This approach will be referred to as the regulative approach to Serbia’s EU integration.

15 Annual reports on Serbia, which are published by the European Commission and called ‘progress reports’, are an assessment tool that the EU uses to evaluate the progress of Serbia’s European integration when measured against the EU’s priorities for Serbia.
Research for this thesis has shown that none of the aforementioned analytical approaches can adequately explain the key policy shifts in Serbia’s and the EU’s preferences when applied to their diplomatic relations. These shifts result in incoherences in foreign policy decisions, which have created challenges to Serbia’s European integration process since 2001. In Serbia, domestic shifts in preferences, regarding the direction or ‘orientation’ of Serbian foreign policy, are linked to particular sets of normative ideas. This thesis will investigate these ideational positions regarding Serbia’s place in regional and global politics. They are predominantly determined by Serbia’s political leaders, but also influenced by the normative obstacles that contradictory positions produce.

Furthermore, the bulk of scholarly output on EU-Serbia relations tends to focus on the period after Serbia’s democratic changes in October 2000, without paying sufficient attention to Serbia’s earlier diplomatic engagement with the EU, which can offer a useful conceptual toolbox for evaluating their bilateral relations.16 This thesis hence sets out to answer the following set of questions: What are the key determining factors that have influenced Serbia’s course towards seeking European integration? Why has this led to Serbia’s EU accession process being delayed at various times? Did Serbia’s recent past play any role, and if so what kind of role regarding this delay? What lessons can be learned about EU foreign policy and its future development from the case study of Serbia’s delayed accession?

To answer these complex questions, this thesis will employ the methods of narration, textual analysis and a comparative method within this interdisciplinary inquiry into Serbia’s European integration. Serbia represents a complex case in the EU’s enlargement policy and a test-case

for the EU’s peace-building efforts in the region. The comparative method will examine what lessons the earlier historical precedents of other countries’ challenging accession experiences could highlight when analysing Serbia’s delayed accession. These methods are part of the constructivist approach to social science research. Constructivism treats political actors as highly social, normative and purposive participants that can shape foreign policy through negotiation and persuasion; it also regards national interests not as a given (a priori) but as socially and historically negotiated and/or constructed by the elites.\(^{17}\) While participants must be mindful of various structural and political constraints within the environment in which they operate, this thesis will argue that the actors’ normative frameworks influence their actions and decisions in the foreign policy domain.\(^{18}\) This normative aspect of EU-Serbia relations has been less frequently researched than other aspects of their multi-faceted relationship, such as economic or trade interests. For this reason, the thesis will also delve deeper into their historical engagement in order to demonstrate the depth and complexity of their pre-2001 relations, which directly influence the specific normative constructs developed from Serbia’s past towards EU-Serbia relations today. This thesis argues that there is a correlation between domestic changes in Serbia, and progress, or backsliding in its European integration.

**Relevance of the research project**

Serbia has been variously described as a fledgling democracy, Europe’s pariah state, and a country with a difficult transition to democracy.\(^{19}\) Over the past two decades, there has been a

\(^{17}\) These points will be elaborated upon later in the Introduction.

\(^{18}\) These are not ideological views *per se* but rather a set of shared beliefs among members of one political community about their collective place and role in the world that can be held by political agents with completely opposing ideologies (for instance, the socialists and liberal democrats).

proliferation of academic works examining the EU’s role in the Balkans, as well as Serbian nationalism. As references in this thesis will demonstrate, Serbia’s domestic politics has attracted extensive media and scholarly attention. This was predominantly due to Serbia’s involvement in Southeast Europe’s most violent conflict since the Second World War, the Balkan conflict, which included the Bosnian War (1992–95) and armed conflicts of Serbia and Montenegro (as part of the FRY) with Slovenia and Croatia. In 1999, Yugoslavia’s federal government was also involved in an armed conflict with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which brought NATO military action against the FRY over Serbia’s repression against Kosovo Albanian rebels. The Bosnian War claimed the highest number of casualties, with approximately 100,000 killed, although initial assessment figures were higher. It not only displaced millions of people, but also caused long-term damage to key regional infrastructure, personal property and the natural environment. The ongoing material consequences of recent conflicts are exacerbated today because of inadequate regulations and a lack of long-term vision for the region’s collective future in the EU. However, there are also ongoing consequences that are not material, but deeply normative, social and political.

The Bosnian War drew into the region large numbers of international peacekeepers, who came as guarantors of peace under UN authority. In some instances, the UN failed to prevent violence

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20 The term ‘ethnic cleansing’ is used by scholars in different ways. In this thesis, the term refers to ‘the use of force or intimidation to remove people of a certain ethnic or religious group from an area’. R. Cohen, ‘Ethnic cleansing’, 2011, http://www.crimesofwar.org/a-z-guide/ethnic-cleansing/, (accessed 13 May 2013).
from occurring in UN-designated safe havens, which were meant to be conflict-free areas.\textsuperscript{23} Serbia and Croatia organised their own paramilitary forces, which received external support from other countries and diaspora groups.\textsuperscript{24} Another consequence of the war was the increased threat to Europe of Islamic fundamentalism, as many radical Islamists came to Bosnia-Herzegovina from afar to fight in the Bosnian War on the side of Bosnian Muslims (hereafter referred to as ‘Bosniaks’).\textsuperscript{25} Apart from creating a negative image of the Balkans and Serbia in the West, violent conflict during the 1990s precluded European integration of countries in this region, and separated it from other European integration processes on the EU’s eastern borders at that time.\textsuperscript{26}

Upon visiting the Bosnian War’s most visible scar, the Srebrenica mass grave at Potočari in Eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon said ‘the international community failed in preventing the genocide that unfolded’.\textsuperscript{27} Scholars have been discussing ever since the causes and consequences of these tragic events. An established view is that the EU did not do enough to prevent the outbreak of hostilities, or to provide a membership perspective to Yugoslavia in 1990.\textsuperscript{28} Therefore, many scholars commence their examination of

\textsuperscript{23} For an extraordinary story of how UN legal immunity was misused according to a personal account by a former UN employee, see N.L. Diu, ‘What the UN doesn’t want you to know’, \textit{The Telegraph}, 6 February 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/9041974/What-the-UN-Doesnt-Want-You-to-Know.html, (accessed 1 May 2013).

\textsuperscript{24} The full extent of crimes committed during this war, including by regular forces of the warring parties involved, paramilitary groups, and also international actors, will probably never be known.


\textsuperscript{26} Yugoslavia’s conflict-ridden disintegration stood in stark contrast to Czechoslovakia’s peaceful separation (‘velvet divorce’) and even the Soviet Union’s dissolution in the early 1990s.


\textsuperscript{28} Chapter Three will discuss some of these issues in more detail.
Serbia’s European integration with the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration. This thesis will limit its analysis of the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration to how these wars impacted on EU-Serbia relations, and how they might have influenced the EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia after the regime change in 2000.

Yugoslavia’s disintegration coincided with historic changes at the EU’s Eastern borders, as socialism was being replaced with democratic governments in Central and East European States (CEES). Serbia’s disproportionate military offensive against Slovenia and Croatia (after they proclaimed independence in June 1991) ironically unfolded at the same time as the CEES were democratising. While the war in Slovenia lasted only for ten days, the war in Croatia lasted for four years, ending in 1995, like the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the involvement of the United States (US). Furthermore, the Milošević regime’s confrontation with NATO in 1999 over the former’s actions in the disputed autonomous province of Kosovo degraded Serbia’s already damaged international image after the siege of Sarajevo and murders of many thousands of Bosnian Muslim boys and men in Srebrenica.29

Despite Kosovo proclaiming independence on 17 February 2008, with support from key EU states (in particular, France and Germany), successive Serbian Governments strongly opposed its international recognition (with diplomatic support from Russia and China).30 The issue of Kosovo’s independence also divided EU members, preventing a common position.31 It also

29 For a useful overview of key approaches to the issue of NATO’s intervention to end the Kosovo conflict, see D. Chandler, ‘Review essay: Kosovo and the remaking of international relations’, The Global Review of Ethnopolitics, vol. 1, no. 4, June 2002, pp. 110–118. Chapter Four will discuss this conflict in more detail.
30 While Kosovo has been receiving international recognition progressively, it still cannot become a full member of the United Nations (UN) and many international organisations where Russia has veto power. Political scientist Milenko Petrović fittingly described Kosovo as an ‘in-between’ or a ‘quasi-state’, as it is not a ‘normal’ independent state which is recognised by the UN. M. Petrović, The democratic transition of post-Communist Europe: in the shadow of communist differences and uneven EUropeanisation, Hampshire, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 157.
31 Five EU members, Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain pledged not to recognise Kosovo’s independence without Serbia’s consent, despite the European Parliament’s call in 2010 to do so. ‘European
made Serbia’s relations with its neighbours more complicated, as Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Macedonia recognise Kosovo’s independence, while Romania and Bosnian- Herzegovina do not (mainly due to the opposition by Bosnian Serbs). Due to these events in Southeast Europe’s recent history, Serbia has attracted strong academic interest, mostly negative. Another reason for academic output in recent years has been Serbia’s difficult European integration and frequent delays in the formal negotiations with the EU due to one or both parties under-delivering on agreed commitments. This thesis argues that these shifts were caused by changes in preferences by either the EU or the Serbian Government. Domestic preference-change in Serbia was strongly influenced by the normative framework of the governing party (or the coalition of parties) in power. For this reason, the thesis will investigate the shifts in Serbia’s preferences towards the EU by using a chronological and thematic approach (including by the Serbian Government in power). The next section will evaluate major conceptual approaches to Serbia’s delayed accession, suggesting an alternative approach. It will also explain key arguments, methodology, fieldwork methods, and the structure of this thesis.

Thesis framework

Serbia was the last country in Southeast Europe to oust an autocratic leader, Slobodan Milošević, from power in October 2000. Its democratic breakthrough, hence, occurred eleven years after neighbouring Romanians toppled their notorious dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu, and


less than a year after Croatians elected their first reformist and pro-European government.\textsuperscript{34} However, both Romania and Croatia are today members of the EU, alongside nine other former socialist states which had joined the EU over the last decade, while Serbia’s EU accession remains, at best, a distant possibility.\textsuperscript{35} This discrepancy has led many scholars to ask what has happened to the progress of Serbian reforms, and why this country has lagged so much behind others from a similar institutional heritage that have joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013.\textsuperscript{36}

As the policy on enlargement currently stands, to be considered for EU membership, associated states (candidates) need to progressively align their institutions, policies and legislation with the EU’s body of law, the \textit{acquis communautaire} (the acquis).\textsuperscript{37} At present, the latter is subdivided into thirty-five policy areas (or chapters).\textsuperscript{38} Candidates, including Serbia, must amply address all policy areas that are specified in the chapters, for which they need to receive detailed feedback from the European Commission (about their progress in meeting criteria in those areas). Ultimately, the closing of chapters sends a clear signal to the EU that the applicant state has fulfilled all procedural requirements for EU membership, so that negotiations on an Accession Treaty can start. After the treaty receives support from key EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and the Council of the European Union), EU

\textsuperscript{34} For information about EU incentives in Croatia’s move to democratise’ in 1999–2000, see T. Freybourg and S. Richter, ‘National identity matters: the limited impact of EU political conditionality in the Western Balkans’, \textit{Challenges to Democracy in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century Working Paper}, no. 19, National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), June 2008.


\textsuperscript{36} For a useful summary of main structural approaches to that question, see M. Petrović, \textit{The democratic transition of post-Communist Europe}, 2013, op. cit., pp. 2–6, 31–40.

\textsuperscript{37} EU accession norms will be discussed in more detail in Chapter One.

\textsuperscript{38} During their pre-accession screening, Bulgaria and Romania had to conclude with the EU thirty-one chapters, and Croatia thirty-five, which possibly indicated a growing complexity of the EU accession process. European Commission, ‘Chapters of the acquis’, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/chapters-of-the-acquis/index_en.htm, (accessed 1 May 2014).
members and the acceding country must ratify the treaty before the candidate can join the EU on the date specified in the treaty.\textsuperscript{39}

Currently there are three dominant conceptual approaches that seek to explain Serbia’s obstacles on its path towards obtaining EU membership. These are referred to in this thesis as the structural approaches, cultural approaches and regulatory approaches. The three approaches tend to emphasise different aspects of Serbia’s Europeanisation processes, offering different causal explanations of what has led to delays in Serbia’s EU accession process. An alternative or normative approach, which derives from the author’s own research findings and fieldwork, will be detailed after the three dominant approaches are explained.

But what is precisely meant by the normative approach? A normative perspective refers here to collectively-oriented, and in essence nationalistic (or exclusionary) political attitudes as main reference points (‘ideational frameworks’) from Serbia’s political history. The elites in Serbia, both political and religious, have resorted to such concepts in order to create a particular vision or ‘collective mental map’ of Serbia’s place in the world, and European politics in particular, having dismissed alternative viewpoints as anti-patriotic, foreign-inspired and malicious.\textsuperscript{40} The process of collectively-oriented memory building was often not explicit but implicit, by which elites adopted and furthered political discourses and policies of their predecessors, political party comrades and even mentors.

A renowned German specialist of Balkan politics and Serbia’s nation- and state-building, Holm Sundhaussens, found that contrary to a popular belief that Serbia represents a special case in

\textsuperscript{39} EU Information Centre, ‘Negotiation chapters: 35 steps towards the European Union’, Belgrade, January 2014, p. 6. Historical development of EU accession norms since the Copenhagen summit in 1993 will be discussed in Chapter One.

Southeast European politics (which had been, in his view, naively held by many Serbian scholars and Western observers), Serbia was a ‘normal’ country that followed similar nation-building processes to others in Central and Eastern Europe in the 19th century. Its ‘arrogant religious and political elites’ created popular memory or ‘myths’ embodying uncritical reflection of important events from Serbia’s past, most importantly the Kosovo battle of 1389, and before the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan Peninsula, glorified nationalistic discourses of Serbia’s territorial expansion under the Nemanjić’s political dynasty (12th and 13th centuries). Popular memory of such events has then been used in an instrumental way in order to further political discourses and aims of the ruling elites. Examples include, during Milošević-era in Serbian politics, a Greater Serbia narrative that was promoted by many of the leading Serbian writers and political actors. In earlier times, it included the Serbian victimhood discourses in Kosovo during the 1960s and 1970s that was promoted by the religious establishment.

This thesis argues that a similar trend can be observed when analysing Serbia’s Europeanisation process. The thesis investigates concepts not covered specifically by Sundhaussen, those of East/West balancing and political neutrality in foreign policy. These concepts, which will be investigated in Chapter Two, are important examples of how elite-driven interpretations of Serbia’s past political circumstances may have contributed to its delayed EU accession. By arguing that Serbia should distance itself from the West (the EU being seen as part of the West) and by promoting Serbia’s ‘historical’ role of bridging between civilisations (even if it involves a closer alliance with Russia), EU-sceptic elites in Serbia have contributed to increased

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41 The vast majority of Holm Sundhaussen’s work, including his seminal works on Serbian and Yugoslav nation-building and politics, have never been published in English. The author of this thesis had to rely on the original sources in German and the official translation of one of his books, *Serbia’s history from the 19th to 21st century*, which is available in Serbian and in parts, also online. ‘H. Zundhausen: Stare tabue zamenjuju novi’, *Danas*, 21 October 2008, http://www.danas.rs/vesti/fel jon/stare_tabue_zamenjuju_novi.24.html?news_id=143049 (accessed 1 July 2014).

resistance to the Serbian Government’s EU-oriented reform agenda domestically. This may, in turn, assist opponents to further enlargement inside the EU to have arguments to reject even more vehemently Serbia’s potential accession, by arguing that EU accession itself lacks popular legitimacy in contemporary Serbian society.\footnote{Without a referendum on this issue in Serbia, it is difficult to precisely determine whether this might indeed be the case.}

In Sundhaussen’s view, the emphasis on territorial expansion rather than the consolidation of democratic institutions is an important factor that has derailed Serbia’s evolution into a modern European state. Undoubtedly, functioning democratic institutions would certainly improve Serbia’s prospects to join the EU, which is the argument put forward by advocates of structuralist perspectives that will be discussed in the next section. However, without a shared understanding among pro-EU oriented Serbian elites about what democratic governance entails in the first place, that this state of affairs is \textit{desirable} at all levels of society (not only at the state level in order to satisfy regular EU questionnaires that are linked to more development assistance funds) and that transformation needs to occur precisely at the elite-level in order to inspire all-encompassing change (by elites taking responsibility for diplomatic failures in Serbia’s accession process rather than using slow reforms within state institutions as an excuse for their own lagged performance), Serbia’s EU accession is less likely to occur. But let us now turn to the structural approaches to Serbia’s delayed accession in order to evaluate what kind of obstacles the proponents of structuralist approaches believe to be hindering Serbia’s progression towards meeting its professed foreign policy end-goal, the membership of the EU.
Structural approaches to Serbia’s delayed European integration

The first approach that this thesis has identified in the study of Serbia’s delayed EU accession prioritises administrative and institutional (‘structural’) obstacles as the main reason behind Serbia’s late start in adopting EU norms and standards, which has in turn led to its delayed EU accession. These standards refer to Serbia’s adoption of the *acquis* and various regulations of the EU across all sectors. For the proponents of structural approaches, Serbia is viewed as one economic and administrative unit within a broader spectrum of other post-communist states that have already joined the EU, especially the CEES. However, Serbia’s experiences with the economic self-management system were vastly different from corresponding experiences in other Europe’s socialist countries. Structural explanations of Serbia’s delayed EU accession emphasise that Serbia had begun to chart its EU-oriented institutional reform course much later than most other post-communist countries, and that its delayed institutional reforms have hindered it from starting EU accession negotiations earlier.

Supporters of structural arguments maintain that Serbia inherited its structural weaknesses from the Milošević era, which still jeopardises its European integration. Some of these scholars go

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44 It is important to note that scholars who place broader structural (institutional or economic) over other factors in expaining the reasons behind Serbia’s delayed accession, do not necessarily share similar views on other aspects of Serbia’s European integration. Their grouping in this thesis is the result of factors that they describe as determining Serbia’s European integration and delayed accession. The same conclusion applies to proponents of the other two conceptual approaches.

45 For a comprehensive survey of the adoption of European standards in Serbia, see J. Milić (ed.), *Evropski standardi u Srbiji: zbornik radova*, Centre for Democracy, Belgrade, 2009. It is also important to note that many of EU standards vary in practice from state to state. For example, fiscal policy standards, such as fiscal discipline, would be differently understood and implemented in the UK when compared to Malta or Cyprus. Country differentiation on fiscal policy matters also varies greatly within the Euro area. See, for instance, European Central Bank, ‘Implementation of the excessive deficit procedure under the reinforced stability and growth pact in euro area member states’, *ECB Monthly Bulletin Box*, September 2013.


47 This approach is particularly prevalent in the policy documents of major financial donors.

further into Serbia’s past, arguing that Serbia’s inefficient state administration was a continuation of its bureaucratic practices from state socialism, and even from royalist Yugoslavia (1918–1941). 49 Regional expert Jasmina Džinić has rightly observed that partocracy has become the main challenge to Serbia’s institutional reforms since the overthrow of Serbian autocrat Slobodan Milošević. 50 Partocracy relies for its survival on non-merit based employment practices and corruption. 51 Partocracy continued to exist as a de facto system during the Milošević era in Serbian politics. 52 During that period in Serbian politics, many senior civil servants and university lecturers who were not regarded as supporters of the regime were dismissed from their positions. 53 A Serbian sociologist, Srečko Mihailović, has argued that Serbia’s widely-adhered to system of partocracy has become a major challenge to Serbia’s democratic reform even after the regime change. 54 A public opinion survey in Serbia of 2011

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51 Partocracy is an informal system of governing in Serbia’s semi-democratised society that grants excessive powers to political parties, especially those in power, which appoint senior public servants based on their membership or affiliation to a political party that is in power, instead of on merit.
52 In the Yugoslav socialist system, nomenklatura or the Communist Party hierarchy would often determine which party loyalist would obtain the highest or privileged official positions, including ambassadorial posts. Milošević continued and adapted this system by encircling himself with loyalists, who were also from other (non-SPS) political parties that supported his regime (such as Jugoslovenska Levica, JUL; and Srpska Radikalna Stranka, SRS).
found that corruption in Serbia was particularly prevalent in publicly-funded companies and government agencies and ministries.\textsuperscript{55}

Proponents of structural approaches maintain that delays in Serbia’s adoption of EU standards have been also caused by internal resistance to reform from within the public sector at all levels of public administration, as well as specific ministries.\textsuperscript{56} Public institutions in Serbia have a ‘difficult to change’ mentality towards work, and opposition from senior management is strong towards innovation and modernisation, especially towards the introduction of advanced technologies and European standards.\textsuperscript{57} This ‘socialist-era mentality’ towards work is captured by a popular saying: ‘Radio ne radio, svira ti radio’, which in a free translation can be rendered as ‘even if you don’t work, you’ll still get paid’.\textsuperscript{58} Furthermore, Serbia’s lack of innovation in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector can be seen from its ranking in a global ICT index, which shows that in 2011 and 2012 Serbia lagged behind all twenty-seven EU members.\textsuperscript{59} Therefore, the lack of modernisation within Serbian state institutions, and little changes in elite-level attitudes to governance is seen according to this perspective as major hurdles to European integration, which slowed down Serbia’s reform process despite Serbia’s shift to democracy and pro-EU rhetoric.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{58} N. Šovljanski, ‘Radio ne radio svira ti radio: lice i naličje ocenjivanja zaposlenih’, \textit{E-kapija}, 30 September 2009, http://www.ekapija.com/website/sr/page/283746/Radio-ne-radio-svira-ti-radio-lice-i-nali per centC4 per cent8Dje-ocenjivanja-zaposlenih, (accessed 13 May 2013). This kind of attitude was common in state socialist systems. In communist Poland, there was a similar saying that can be freely translated as: ‘If you are on your feet or lying down, you still get two zloties’ (salary).
\end{itemize}
In the post-Cold War era, including in Serbia, the EU has certainly been a major external driver of institutional reform, having financed many programs in Serbia towards this end. The EU was extensively engaged in the processes of norms-diffusion and transfer of European standards to former socialist countries generally. Political scientist Ian Manners has defined the EU, a ‘hybrid polity’, as a globally-engaged actor that seeks to promote European standards to non-EU members, striving to change existing institutional norms in third countries order to put forward its own standards of state behaviour.\(^\text{60}\) The diffusion of democratic practices, norms and institutional standards from the EU to the CEES before the latter’s EU accession was deemed to be a relatively successful experience; although many institutional reforms in the CEES were only partially completed when they joined the EU, and are in need of further development.\(^\text{61}\)

Some authors have observed that Serbia’s European integration was hindered by the inability of Serbia’s reformist, post-Milošević governments to learn from past reform practices in the CEES. A Norwegian expert on Serbia’s institutional reforms, Svein Eriksen, has argued that Serbia’s structural reform process was weakened by the internal resistance to changing the status quo, particularly the tendency in government administration to focus on controlling the ‘observance of existing arrangements and censuring non-compliance’.\(^\text{62}\) Eriksen also observed that in Serbia during the early 2000s, the reform process was unevenly implemented from ministry to ministry, while the delays in reform were able to be traced to the frictions between


\(^{61}\) For the Polish case, regarded as one of the most successful in the CEES, see J. Kaminska, ‘The link between national foreign policy and the performance of a country in the European Union: the Polish case’, *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69–84; G. Pridham, ‘Confining conditions and breaking with the past: historical legacies and political learning in transitions to democracy’, *Democratization*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2000, pp. 36–64.

individual ministers and outdated rules within which their ministries were operating. Eriksen put it this way: ‘The norms governing political and bureaucratic behaviour respectively are distinctly different … in Serbia than what is normally found in Western Europe. At the same time as Serbian bureaucrats are expected to follow a very formal – some might say formalistic–tradition in the German/Austrian style there is also an autocratic leadership ideal’, apparently with its ‘roots in the Ottoman Turkish tradition’.63

Some of Eriksen’s observations are similar to research findings by political economist Milica Uvalić, who was Assistant Minister for Foreign Economic Relations in Serbia’s first post-Milošević democratic government. In Uvalić’s personal experience with implementing reforms in Serbia’s economic sector, she observed that while the CEES’s experience generated specific lessons on ‘neglected areas and the sequencing of reforms, the mistakes of [these] countries seem to have been forgotten too easily in countries like Serbia, embarking on transition later’.64 Serbia’s limited capacities, especially those that were the consequence of Serbia’s economic collapse in the 1990s, and the overly pronounced focus by its leaders on political issues rather than economic and structural reform, prevented Serbia from moving as fast as the CEES towards EU membership.65 However, Serbia could have been included earlier in the membership negotiations had pre-accession talks with the EU not been stopped, from both sides and in different historical moments, over issues which they individually saw as non-compliance with earlier agreements.66

65 Public expectations were also not met as the progress was much slower than Serbian citizens were expecting at the time of the regime change in early October 2000.
66 The EU halted negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association (SAA) agreement in 2006 due to Serbia’s lack of full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, Serbia temporarily halted dialogue with the EU after Kosovo proclaimed independence in February 2008. These moments were, in fact, lost opportunities to bring Serbia and the EU closer together, as they reflected disagreements specific to that time without considering the long-term goal of Serbia’s membership in the EU. Therefore, regardless of the level of institutional reform in associated states, including in Serbia, the political
The structural perspective does not adequately explain, however, why the EU has during previous accession rounds admitted members who, despite an earlier start to reform than Serbia, also did not have entrenched democratic traditions or strong institutional capacities, judiciary that was free of political influence, or a good anti-corruption record. Some CEES (in particular, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania) were admitted before these conditions were completely satisfied as the normative opposition to their membership was overcome (through informal summitry and the cultivation of close personal relationship with influential leaders of several EU members) with the processes of trust- and solidarity building.  

The structural perspective also does not explain why Croatia, which turned more democratic less than one year earlier than Serbia (in 1999), received political support from key EU members although its structural weaknesses were similar to Serbia’s and only partially addressed.

Serbia’s complex structural conditions and institutional weaknesses include a weak judiciary, inadequately reformed Parliament, an oversized and politicised bureaucracy, high levels of corruption, the legacy of living under two different types of authoritarian regime. The socialist Yugoslavia was a one-party state that was much better organised when compared to the chaotic period in Serbian politics during the Milošević regime, when policy making was arbitrary, often contradictory, and public institutions were extremely politicised. The proponents of structural explanations, therefore, believe that problems which Serbia has faced in its European integration process stem from two main sources: its structural legacy of communism and poorly

disagreements (underpinned by the clashes of normative frameworks between the EU and the Serbian Government) were the primary reason behind the delays in formal talks, and not the structural factors.

67 Interview with Srđan Majstorović, Deputy Director of the Serbian European Integration Office, Belgrade, June 2012.

68 Several interviewees made this comparison between Serbia’s two authoritarian regimes, the socialist one during the SFRY and an autocratic one during the Milošević period. Interviews with Vladan Dinić, owner of an independent Serbian newspaper Svedok, Belgrade, June 2010; and Srđan Srećković, Minister for Diaspora from the Serbian Renewal Movement, Belgrade, July 2012.
implemented institutional reforms after the regime change (including the lack of government regulation and oversight that produced mass irregularities in virtually every political and economic sector). 69

The formidable ideological differences between the Serbian Government and the EU and its members on a number of regional issues, including on the issue of Kosovo’s independence, have also cost Serbia the opportunity to establish closer institutional and political ties to the EU, despite some progress in Serbia’s institutional reform. Therefore, the structural approach does not deal with normative or social factors, as it focuses on material or structural preconditions of enlargement. It does not adequately explain the variation in the type of new EU members which have acceded since 2004, all of which were also ‘latecomers’ in European integration when compared to the more Europeanised Austria, Finland and Sweden, which joined the EU in 1995.

Eight post-communist states in transition, which joined the EU in May 2004, constituted prior to their accession a different breed of EU candidate from countries which had joined the EU in 1995. 70 Their particular domestic conditions and specific economic need for knowledge and technology transfers from the West required them to undertake far-reaching political and economic reforms with the EU’s assistance. 71 That was not the case with countries in the 1995

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69 These irregularities include endemic corruption, nepotism, the lack of national standards and oversight of education bodies (in particular, the obtaining of higher degrees at private universities), poor standards and oversight in the health sector, questionable tender practices in the privatisation of national companies, and similar issues.

70 The eight post-communist countries involved were the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

enlargement, which could not join the EU earlier as they were neutral states during the Cold War and their specific domestic conditions prevented them from politically aligning with the EU, or militarily with NATO. Later, as candidates for EU membership, the CEES needed to harmonise their legislation with the acquis and align their policies with joint statements and common declarations of the EU. Some of the potential benefits behind their motivation to join the EU, other than a desire to ‘return to Europe’, included advantages from accessing Europe’s largest free trade area; the EU’s special development funds; and benefiting from the EU’s political clout on the international stage when speaking with one voice, such as on trade negotiation matters and human rights issues with non-members. Individual CEES could never be as effective internationally outside the EU framework, especially in discussions with other regions.\(^\text{72}\)

Similar motivations, especially regarding economic development, appear to have encouraged Serbia under its first pro-EU government led by a Western-educated Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić to aim for EU membership as his country’s foremost foreign policy goal.\(^\text{73}\) However, due to Serbia’s particular domestic conditions and less than positive international image, it had become much harder to convince other EU members to accept Serbia as a candidate for EU membership until the country demonstrated a greater commitment to Europe. This process, for instance, took eleven years from the time Serbia had installed its first democratic government in January 2001 to the confirmation of Serbia’s candidature in 2012. Moreover, the time lag between democratisation in the CEES and the formal opening of accession negotiations with

\(^{72}\) Political scientist Neill Nugent believed that the loss of status for Western European countries after the Second World War was also an important incentive for their leaders to engage in economic integration in the 1950s, and political cooperation in the 1970s. N. Nugent, *The government and politics of the European Union*, 6th edn, Durham, Duke University Press, 2006, p. 21.

the EU was around eight years on average, whereas for Serbia, it took thirteen years. For Croatia, which had a similar legacy to Serbia in terms of a shared socialist past and a reputation of war crimes including during the Second World War, it is remarkable that the process of negotiating and obtaining associate membership took significantly less time than it did for Serbia (three years). Therefore, Croatia seems to have had an even stronger incentive to reform, despite its own internal obstacles, as EU membership seemed to be more closely within its reach than it was for the Serbian Government in the same period (2003). Serbia’s domestic circumstances and weaker external incentives were thus key reasons why Serbia did not progress as fast as Croatia towards EU accession.

**Cultural explanations for Serbia’s delayed reforms**

The second approach relates to Serbia’s inability, or the lack of political will, to deal effectively and comprehensively with the Milošević era wartime legacy. This approach particularly examines *cultural obstacles* to Serbia’s reform. It focuses on issues such as extreme nationalism in contemporary Serbia, the ‘culture of denial’ of war crimes, infringements of minority rights, and inadequate support for NGOs as key reasons for Serbia’s delayed EU accession. The solution that this approach suggests is for Serbia to accept full responsibility for crimes committed during the 1990s in its name, and come to terms with its violent past by showing leadership and a constructive approach to its neighbours.

Some strands of this approach are connected with discourses on Europe’s identity formation and the exclusionary idea of geographical and cultural boundaries of Europe. Non-EU members, especially candidates in the Western Balkans, but also Turkey, are juxtaposed as

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74 The EU initiated formal accession negotiations with the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus in March 1998, and in October 1999 with Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.
Europe’s ‘civilisational other’.\textsuperscript{75} Serbia is seen, according to this perspective, as an exceptional case in European enlargement due to its recent history of violent conflict and extreme nationalism. It is portrayed as a semi-reformed country that is politically unpredictable, unstable, difficult to trust, economically weak and with contested sovereignty. These factors make it less desirable as a potential EU member because its popularity as a potential member has been low among EU citizens. Opponents of any further EU enlargement into the Western Balkans have constructed narratives of this region’s, and in particular Serbia’s ‘backwardness’ and cultural inadequacy for EU membership. US historian Samuel Huntington noted in 1991 that ‘the prospects for democracy in Serbia appear dubious’, although during that year anti-government protests in March were some of the biggest in Serbia during the Milošević era.\textsuperscript{76}

Therefore, while structural conditions were certainly constraining the change from authoritarianism to democracy in Serbia, the fact that liberal forces were on the streets in mass protests meant that prospects for democracy did exist in Serbia. However, there was not enough support from the EU in particular to assist with leadership change.

In the 1990s as Yugoslavia was unravelling, Huntington placed Serbia within Eastern or ‘Orthodox civilisation’ in his view of a ‘global clash of civilisations’.\textsuperscript{77} However, Serbian intellectual elites have traditionally regarded themselves differently—as a bridge between ‘civilisations’, which was also congruent with socialist Yugoslavia’s foreign policy following SFRJ’s expulsion from the Soviet bloc in 1948.\textsuperscript{78} In addition, Serbia’s religious character, which was revived after the collapse of Yugoslav communism, is not much different from that

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\textsuperscript{77} S.P. Huntington, \textit{The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order}, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2003, p. 138. Throughout history, Serbia has been involved in many wars with neighbouring Bulgaria, which is also an Orthodox country. Therefore, there is little evidence that Serbia’s Orthodox religion has in any way predetermined Serbia’s foreign policy choices.

\textsuperscript{78} This event will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.
of Greece, yet Greece has been a member of the EU since 1981, and Bulgaria and Romania, also Orthodox countries, joined the EU in 2007.\textsuperscript{79} More religious Serbs tend to view their country’s political relations with affinity to Russia, but also with absolute independence from other Orthodox churches (particularly Russian and Greek).\textsuperscript{80} Serbian public opinion on foreign policy remains divided between Europhiles and Russophiles.\textsuperscript{81} Serbian pro-EU elites (labelled as ‘Evropejci’ in the Serbian media) tend to regard Serbia as part of the Western cultural tradition.\textsuperscript{82} Both views inform and influence key political parties, their leaders and decisions relating to Serbia’s foreign relations with the West, Russia and neighbouring states. Political scientist Sabrina P. Ramet comments:

In the case of Yugoslavia, the dominant values underpinning each of the three Yugoslavias were values hostile to the liberal project and, ultimately, conducive to instability and decay.\textsuperscript{83}

A former Polish President, Lech Wałęsa, similarly observed that Yugoslavia, as an ‘artificial creation’, was maintained by repression.\textsuperscript{84} However, Sabrina Ramet’s overly generalised

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} Greece, Romania and Bulgaria are also members of NATO.
\item \textsuperscript{80} For an analysis of Russia’s foreign policy towards the Balkans, especially during the Balkan conflict of the 1990s, see J. Headley, \textit{Russia and the Balkans: foreign policy from Yeltsin to Putin}, New York, Columbia University Press, 2008.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
approach does not adequately acknowledge the existence of liberal and pro-Western political ideas in Serbia. Democrats in former Yugoslavia often did not receive adequate support from abroad. Another weakness of the cultural approach is that it does not explain the shifts in political views, by for example a democratic, pro-EU conservative party later becoming anti-EU, such as the DSS, or an anti-EU politician converting to become a champion of Serbia’s EU accession (for example, Serbia’s current Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vučić). Nationalism is not an adequate explanation as the overall conservative stance by the DSS did not change over the years, while its EU orientation did. Scholars of Balkan politics tend to use the terms: ‘nationalist’, ‘ultra-nationalist’, and ‘extreme-nationalist’ too loosely, often in the sense that everyone who is against Serbia’s membership of the EU is a nationalist, which is misleading.85

Serbia’s, and previously, the socialist Yugoslavia’s predilection not to choose political and military alignment with the West had been frequently misinterpreted as an anti-liberal policy principally because the available explanations did not acknowledge the existence of alternative, non-aligned ideational factors as part of Serbia’s political thinking. The inability to acknowledge that Serbia has had a tradition of non-aligned ideas during its modern political history could also be interpreted as a characterisation of any other idea that is not pro-EU as being necessarily anti-liberal. If that logic was applied to Switzerland’s and Norway’s cases, would their respective positions not to join the EU also be seen as anti-liberal in nature? Cultural explanations for Serbia’s delayed EU accession would in that case claim that Serbia’s weak democratic traditions would distinguish its ambivalent stance on EU accession (particularly under a conservative leadership) from European countries with longer democratic traditions. The Milošević regime, which encouraged Serbs to slide towards a fratricidal war in

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85 In this thesis, the term ‘nationalist’ will be used to denote current or past ethno-particularist discourses, which have been upheld by those citizens of former Yugoslavia who were for independent statehood of individual republics and against the Yugoslav Government’s policies.
former Yugoslavia during the 1990s and trumpeted the card of nationalism, undoubtedly delayed the start of Serbia’s democratic reform, and its membership of the EU too. Under the influence of the Milošević state propaganda many Serbs, especially those who hold anti-Western views, continue to deny that Serbian armed forces were responsible for any war crimes during the 1990s. A culture of denial of war crimes was not specific to Serbia, as it also took root in other regional countries.

Following the war in Croatia, many Croatian war crimes suspects, most notably Croatian General Ante Gotovina, went into hiding, which was condemned in the West. Their supporters staged protests against their arrest, including in diaspora communities, accusing the Croatian Government of being anti-patriotic by pursuing war heroes who fought against Serbs in Croatia’s Homeland War (Domovinski rat). Yet Croatia is today a member of the EU, despite significant public support for extreme nationalist groups, many of which still invoke symbols of the Croatian Nazi puppet state from the Second World War. Successive Croatian Governments have managed to overcome the challenge of domestic scepticism towards the EU, and meet many of the unpopular measures that had been requested by the EU (such as to arrest the Croatian indictees wanted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY). This was not because it had established democratic traditions for longer (after all, Croatia belonged to the same larger territorial entities as Serbia from 1918 to 1941,

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86 Ultra-nationalists also believed that Serbs were ‘innocent victims’ of Western ‘conspiracy’ and opportunistic neighbours, who collectively wanted to destroy what was Europe’s fifth largest military power, socialist Yugoslavia. These perceptions, which are perpetuated by right-wing political parties (such as SRS), contribute to the anti-Western sentiment in the Serbian electorate. R. Kerr, ‘Lost in translation? Perceptions of the ICTY in the former Yugoslavia’, in J.Gow, R. Kerr and Z. Pajić (eds), Prosecuting war crimes: lessons and legacies of the International Criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, New York, Routledge, 2014, p. 110.


and from 1945 to 1990), but principally because for Croatia, EU membership was more attainable than for Serbia. Political conditionality, which is discussed in the next section, has been more complex for Serbia than for Croatia because of Serbia’s unresolved statehood issue regarding Kosovo.

**The regulative approach**

The third approach addresses the role of external players, especially the EU, and its political conditionality mechanisms. It posits that unclear diplomatic signalling from the EU does not provide confidence in Serbia (as in other EU membership aspirants) that the EU is serious about its admission, which in turn has slowed down reform. The influence of EU enlargement fatigue and EU absorption capacity is also mentioned as a reason behind the EU’s mixed and incoherent approach towards Serbia’s accession. This approach will be referred to in this thesis as a regulative approach, as it views Europeanisation as a process of diffusion of EU standards through political conditionality mechanisms.

For Anastasakis, the externally driven process of Europeanisation in Southeast Europe over the past decade has been laden with many problems, in particular the ‘patronising nature of the process’ and the lack of power by the recipient states to influence Brussels’ conditionality. In Anastasakis’s view, this reflects the asymmetrical power balance in the relationship between the EU, a regional hegemon, and smaller non-EU states in the Western Balkans.89 EU conditions are often locally perceived as being imposed ‘by Brussels’, without paying significant attention to the sensitivities of the local ethnic groups involved.90 The EU’s

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insistence on preserving a joint state after the Milošević era comprising Serbia and Montenegro, despite the latter’s objections, is only one case where the proponents of this approach say the EU has made mistakes in its increasingly interventionist approach to the region’s domestic politics. The EU particularly insisted that authorities in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia establish full cooperation with the ICTY. For Croatia, it also became pivotal to resolve any outstanding bilateral disputes it had with any EU member, especially Slovenia, before it could accede to the EU.

Apart from cooperation with the ICTY, Serbia’s sovereignty-related dilemma in its European integration process related mostly to its former southern province of Kosovo and Metohija, which was placed under international administration after Serbia’s conflict with NATO in 1999. This was evident after Kosovo proclaimed independence in February 2008, which strained EU-Serbia relations. Several EU members encouraged this move, especially Germany, the UK and Italy, believing Kosovo’s independence constituted the best way forward from a tense situation that was threatening to become another security risk on the EU’s doorstep. Serbia interpreted this move as a threat to its national sovereignty and a denial of statehood for Kosovo Serbs, who wanted Kosovo to remain within Serbia.

By focusing its political and diplomatic energy on trying to prevent further recognition of Kosovo’s independence by other EU and UN members, Serbia downgraded its political relationship with Brussels and those EU members that recognised Kosovo’s independence.91 Serbia’s limited resources were thus drawn away from much-needed reforms. Kosovo’s independence was interpreted by the DSS and the SRS as foreign interference from the EU in

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91 Serbia’s approach to those EU countries that had recognised Kosovo’s independence resembled West Germany’s foreign policy towards Yugoslavia, when in 1957, Bonn downgraded its diplomatic relations with Belgrade because the Yugoslav Government formally recognised East Germany’s socialist regime.
regional and Serbia’s domestic affairs. Therefore, political disagreements between Serbia and key EU members over specific cases concerning Serbia’s domestic policy (the Hague conditionality and Kosovo’s proclamation of independence) rather than issues related to Serbian ‘cultural mentality’ were responsible for the delays to Serbia’s European integration.

**The normative approach**

This thesis puts forward an alternative explanation for Serbia’s delayed accession, dubbed here as the normative approach. This approach holds that normative factors, which are linked with particular normative conceptualisations of Serbia’s place in international politics, have caused major interruptions to Serbia’s European integration processes, including in negotiations with the EU. The concept of East/West bridging, which has historical origins in Serbian collective memory (but which was institutionalised in socialist Yugoslavia) has hindered the ability of Serbian democratic governments to express an unreserved commitment to Europe. This approach will consider the role of Serbian collective memory. It regards EU enlargement and accession negotiations towards a prospective EU membership to be highly normative and social processes. According to this perspective, normative factors, such as the candidate state’s value-system, are important for the EU when assessing new membership applications, especially the solidarity principle with EU’s common policies and the social value of mutual trust. The methodology used to evaluate the normative approach is explained below.

A socio-political norm of solidarity, which is referred to in the opening quote, represents the ‘glue’ of European integration. Without solidarity among EU members, institutional deepening
and territorial widening would not have taken place. In the EU’s highest levels of decision-making, solidarity is expressed through the principle of unanimity, where in many policy areas, including enlargement, the consensus of all EU members is required before a proposal is adopted to allow an applicant country to join the EU.\(^{93}\) By showing solidarity with the common decisions agreed upon by EU members, including in the foreign policy domain, candidates for EU membership need to demonstrate their commitment to EU values and the political will to take on other commitments of EU membership.

Normative power is the ability to establish external influence with which norms and standards of international relations can change, without using force or directly relying on material resources.\(^{94}\) A useful example of this type of power is West Germany’s influence in changing the formal norms of accession by arguing a special case for East Germany to be admitted into the EU in 1990. East Germany’s absorption into the EU without undergoing a formal accession process highlights the crucial role which West German leadership played in reassuring other EU members about Germany’s ability to subsidise Germany’s less developed Eastern regions.\(^{95}\) This also points to a situation in which changes in the domestic circumstances of one key EU member state may impact on or change the existing norms of enlargement. In the case of East Germany’s absorption into the EU, accession was allowed to proceed without formal negotiations on EU membership. West Germany’s central role in the EU directly facilitated

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\(^{93}\) The term ‘unanimity’ refers to decisions made by consensus. In the Council of the European Union (which is also known as the Council of Ministers, or ‘the Council’), unanimity is a form of decision-making used on sensitive issues, such as taxation, most areas of the common foreign and security policy, and enlargement. Under unanimity rules, all members of the Council must agree on a proposal for it to be passed. Another form of decision-making on less sensitive issues that are clearly defined by the Lisbon Treaty (in force since 1 December 2009) introduced to enable majority voting. For an overview of some of the changes which the Lisbon Treaty had for the qualified majority voting, see S.C. Sieberson, ‘Inching toward EU Supranationalism? Qualified majority voting and unanimity under the treaty of Lisbon’, Virginia Journal of International Law, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 919–995.

\(^{94}\) M. Kovačević, ‘Akterstvo i moć Evropske Unije’, Department of Political Science, University of Belgrade, Godišnjak, no. 7, June 2012, p. 160.

\(^{95}\) For further information, see D. Spence, *Enlargement without accession: the EC’s response to German unification*, London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1991.
East Germany’s accession in 1990 without a formal negotiation process, even though for over forty years the two German republics existed as separate legal, political and economic entities. East Germany’s membership of the EU as part of enlarged Germany is an example that EU accession is a normative, political process. In that case it was heavily dependent on West Germany’s ability to convince other EU members that they should change the existing rule through diplomatic means without any use of force or overt threats. It is an example where EU accession was a product of discursive persuasion, assurances and solidarity among EU members who trusted West Germany that it would deliver on its promise to successfully integrate East Germany into the EU.

**The principles of solidarity, trust and informal diplomacy**

There are three normative aspects, which this thesis will examine, influencing Serbia’s European integration. Serbia’s obstacles to obtaining membership of the EU have not been analysed through a combined analytical approach that includes social constructivism, comparative method and discourse analysis, which is developed in this thesis. The first aspect is the principle of solidarity that must exist between the EU and a candidate state before the latter could be eligible to join the EU. The second one is the principle of trust, which also must exist between the decision-makers in the EU and the government in the candidate state in order to overcome differences arising in their negotiations on closer relations. The third one is the principle of informal diplomacy, by which the EU seeks to build consensus with like-minded elites in the candidate state. In Serbia, the third aspect became evident with the increase in the EU’s engagement with political opposition parties and civil society during the Milošević era.

Craig Parsons, in his book *How to map arguments in Political Science*, has offered a useful typology of the ‘logics of explanation of political action’, dividing them into four distinct
categories: structural or material, institutional, ideational and psychological.\textsuperscript{96} Parson believes that ideational approaches, including constructivism, seek to explain ‘what people do as a function of the cognitive and/or affective elements that organise their thinking, and see these elements as created by certain historical groups of people’.\textsuperscript{97} For Serbia, these ‘groups’ include political and religious elites, who are included as a subject of analysis when examining EU-Serbia relations in a broader historical context as it will be demonstrated in later chapters.

\textbf{The social value of trust}

The thesis will also examine the social value of trust, which is particularly important between the EU and Serbia now that Serbia is a formal EU membership candidate. This value has not been specifically examined in the literature on EU-Serbia relations, although there were passing references to it as part of wider discussions on EU-Serbia’s lack of cooperation. The research for this thesis has found that trust as a social norm constitutes a basic prerequisite for the deepening of relations between the EU and Serbia, just as it was vital for the creation of the EU in the 1950s. The Treaty of Paris of 18 April 1951 (which entered into force on 23 July 1952) inaugurated the Coal and Steel Community that put former industries of war under common management to minimise the future risk of war breaking out between France and (West) Germany. Its signatories included France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux), whose institutional cooperation laid the groundwork for future enlargements, and whose cooperation was premised upon confidence-building and trust-enhancing measures expressed through the fulfilment of common commitments.\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{96} Parsons, \textit{How to map arguments in Political Science}, op. cit., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{97} ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Since 1957, the EU has experienced seven enlargement episodes. Enlargement occurred in 1973 (UK, Ireland and Denmark), 1981 (Greece), 1986 (Portugal and Spain), 1995 (Austria, Finland and Sweden), 2004 (with ten new members), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2013 (Croatia).
A better understanding of the normative and domestic challenges Serbia has faced in its European integration process would provide any observer with a deeper appreciation of key challenges to, and major opportunities for Serbia’s further progress towards EU accession. Serbia’s policy responses to the EU have been historically influenced by its elite preferences and ideologies. Since Kosovo’s independence proclamation, Serbia-EU relations have been influenced by a growing number of public demands to restore Serbia’s East/West intermediary position in international politics as an alternative to its successive governments’ generally EU-oriented path. Its close relationship with Russia and attempts to improve political relations with the NAM members have provided the Serbian Government with an alternative source of funding as well as more flexibility in foreign policy.\(^9^9\) Hence, this thesis is investigating the less frequently analysed normative, political nature of Serbia’s engagement with the EU, and the role of domestic factors in Serbia’s European integration.

The principle of solidarity

As the opening quote suggests, the socio-political norm of solidarity among EU members has been a unifying link that has encouraged states to further advance European integration, including in the domain of the EU’s foreign policy. What has become an equally important demonstration of solidarity between the candidate state and existing EU members, and the indication of the candidate’s preparedness to join the EU, is the expectation of the EU that the candidate shows solidarity with the commonly agreed positions (which is covered by Chapter 31 that is part of Serbia’s membership negotiations with the EU).\(^1^0^0\)

\(^9^9\) This is because the loans it received from non-Western sources did not have the same type of tied EU conditionality as the assistance from the EU.

\(^1^0^0\) Chapter 31 of the acquis presently states: ‘Applicant countries are required to progressively align with EU statements, and to apply sanctions and restrictive measures when and where required.’ ibid. See also D. Lazea,
Maximillian Rasch, who investigated voting coherence within the EU and with the candidate and potential candidate countries on specific issues in the UN General Assembly (UNGA), has found that as the prospect of the ten new members joining the EU became more tangible from the year 2000, their voting coherence levels began to converge with the EU’s average. As these countries were approaching the target date for accession of 2004, Rasch concluded that their policy positions at the UNGA were more becoming ‘Europeanised’ and ‘adjusted to the EU mainstream’.\(^{101}\)

Another researcher investigating voting coherence, Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués, has found that the end of the Cold War dramatically increased the convergence among EU members on those UNGA resolutions that were adopted by vote.\(^ {102}\) They may not have increased the EU member states’ political complementarity on all issues, but their solidarity with common positions was on the rise. Apart from the cessation of East/West tensions, which led to a shift in focus on new policy areas away from nuclear issues, she attributed higher convergence levels among EU members to their greater foreign policy coordination after the signing of the Treaty on European Union, and after the creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) mechanism in 1993.\(^{103}\) Johansson-Nogués has argued that the West became a key reference point for the CEES to which they could turn their transition in the fields of foreign and security policy. The governments in the CEES therein increased their domestic popularity, as aligning

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\(^{103}\) Johansson-Nogués also observed that ‘If the Union manages to coordinate the voices of all Fifteen, and in the future more member states, the Union may be able to shape the global regime on a host of issues more efficiently’. ibid., pp. 7–8.
with the West appeared to demonstrate a decisive shift away from their communist past.  

While thirty-five chapters were a new element in the enlargement process, a bilateral dispute between a candidate and existing member was not. This is known as the issue of *problematic partners* in the history of European integration, which is closely related to the issue of trust among states.  

**The principle of trust**

The issue of *problematic partners* between countries that generally have low levels of trust, featured heavily in the decade leading up to the EU’s first enlargement. This enlargement eventually occurred on 1 January 1973, increasing the EU’s membership from six to nine members. In particular, what was perceived as a lack of trust between France (an existing EU member) and Britain (a candidate state), led the French Government to reject the UK’s successive membership applications twice in the 1960s (in 1963 and 1967). This in turn, prompted the British Labor Government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson to turn to other priorities, therefore reducing their own enthusiasm for joining the bloc in which one key member was negatively predisposed towards it on ideological grounds. The UK’s membership negotiations impasse, which lasted for almost a decade, was resolved eventually.

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106 Denmark, Ireland and the UK joined the EU in 1973.  
107 France believed that with British accession into the EU, US influence would increase in Europe, and its leader, Charles de Gaulle, was opposed to that.  
with the passing of time and a change in domestic circumstances (leadership, discourses and dominant elite-level perceptions) in both France and the UK.

The French-British example is a case of delayed enlargement that can occur when the lack of trust in bilateral relations escalates into a dispute, or ideological confrontation between EU members (one or more) and a candidate state. The issue of problematic partners can also have a flow-on effect for the applications of other countries. In the middle of the French-British dispute, the Dutch Government insisted that Ireland’s and Denmark’s membership applications not be dealt with until the issue with the UK was firstly resolved.\textsuperscript{109} Moreover, in the early 1980s, the French opposition to Spanish and Portuguese membership applications resembled its unconstructive stance towards the UK’s accession.\textsuperscript{110} While opposition by individual EU members to specific candidates is part of the EU’s enlargement history, it remains important how negotiation impasses are managed, and whether the solidarity principle has enough political weight to prevail and convince the sceptics to reverse their position. Mediation dynamics can be influenced by how well the applicant is regarded by other EU members. Therefore, in the European integration framework, trust is a highly context-specific norm.\textsuperscript{111}

As the British preferred ‘open and flexible Europe’, the French and Germans generally preferred deeper institutional integration (‘deepening’) over enlargement (‘widening’). The tension between widening and deepening of the EU is an old feature of European integration, since:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{111} C. Bicchieri, E. Xiao and R. Muldoon, ‘Trustworthiness is a social norm, but trusting is not’, \textit{Politics, Philosophy & Economics}, vol. 10, no. 2, 2011, p. 181.
\end{itemize}
The British have always appeared to believe, most vociferously during Margaret Thatcher’s premiership, that any enlargement is attractive because it will lead to a weakening of the Union’s supranational elements and federal ambitions.112

The British have been generally supportive of further EU enlargement (even under conservative governments) and sceptical of further EU’s institutional integration.113 Political scientist David Allen observed that in order for the UK to accede to the EU, the Germans had to pressure the French to ultimately accept the UK’s accession bid in the early 1970s after Charles de Gaulle had left the French Presidency.114 However, it was principally the change in domestic circumstances in France that enabled a new French policy to develop towards the enlargement. De Gaulle certainly held a formidable ideological position on this issue, believing American influence would increase in Europe if the UK were allowed to join the EU.115 The French-British case of problematic partners and low levels of trust demonstrates the key role which EU leaders play as principal decision-makers in the enlargement process. Their personal preferences, fractious relationships and specific ideological positions can affect the progress of any new accessions, as the previous example of the UK’s delayed accession demonstrates.

Enlargement delays can thus result from the lack of trust between EU members and an applicant state. Writing 1974, Hardev Singh Chopra observed that the lack of trust between ‘the Gaullist France and Britain was mutual and complete’.116 In an opinion poll conducted in

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114 ibid.


Britain in 1966, the British public saw the US as their main ally, trusted India more than EU members, and France—only slightly more than the USSR.\footnote{117} In a low-trust bargaining environment, it is unsurprising that the UK was unable to join the EU until a former French Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou, who was in favour of further European integration, became French President.\footnote{118}

Jan-Henrik Meyer has observed that trust in European integration rests on ‘the impression that there is a common ground on fairness, of reliability and honesty reciprocity and equal burden sharing’.\footnote{119} In order to improve trust among its members, the EU enacted legal norms and institutional practices, which obliged countries to cooperate more closely.\footnote{120} Other observers, including Urbano et al., have argued that in situations where no trust relationship is formed as yet, social relations are often associated with uncertainty and vulnerability, and open to opportunism. Methods to reduce that problem include higher levels of monitoring, which can have an important role in regulating social relations where levels of trust between negotiating parties are low. The less trust there is, the more control mechanisms are employed.\footnote{121} Urbano et al., however, did not mention the social opposition to monitoring or ‘screening’ that conditionality can invoke. This occurs as a result of a perception of ‘too much conditionality’ in the candidate state, which has been the case in Serbia. Domestic opposition to Serbia’s

\footnote{121}ibid.
European integration in part derives from local opposition to foreign influence, which is how the monitoring of Serbian reforms by the European Commission has been perceived by some sectors of Serbian society. For those who oppose Serbia’s EU membership negotiations, the EU’s oversight of Serbia’s reforms through annual progress reports and by other means has produced generally lower levels of trust among some Serbian citizens towards the EU. This thesis has found that in situations in which less trust is present in the relationship between an EU member and a candidate state, the issue of problematic partners can arise more frequently.

**Key propositions and methodology**

The distinguished scholar of EU foreign policy, Karen E. Smith, has called for more empirical research into practical manifestations of the EU’s foreign policy in Southeast Europe where countries remain divided between ‘insiders’ (EU members) and ‘outsiders’ (non-EU members).\(^{122}\) Smith observed that excluding countries from EU membership in that region ‘could affect their domestic and foreign policies in ways not desired by the EU’.\(^{123}\) This may be the case with Serbia too. Serbia’s close political and economic relationship with Russia, and its growing trade and investment relationship with non-European countries (such as India, China and the United Arab Emirates) might become problematic now that Serbia is a formal candidate for EU membership.\(^{124}\) It will not be required of Serbia to immediately cease its bilateral political and trade arrangements and free trade agreements with non-EU countries, including Russia. However, before it signs the Accession Treaty with the EU, Serbia would

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\(^{123}\) ibid., p. 201.  
\(^{124}\) In 2011, Serbia’s two-way trade was almost two times higher with Iran than with Portugal ($58 million to $28 million respectively). During the same period, Serbia’s two-way trade with India was $168 million, Turkey $588 million, and slightly over $2.5 billion with Russia. In 2013, EU members accounted for 62.2 percent of Serbia’s total value of two-way trade, which was $35.1 billion. Privredna Komora Srbije, ‘Privreda Srbije’, http://www.pks.rs/PrivredaSrbije.aspx?id=0&, (accessed 12 May 2014).
need to implement the *acquis* to the best of its ability, and the Serbian Government will certainly need to revisit its bilateral partnerships and agreements with non-EU states.

The EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, has observed that the Western Balkans is where the Common Foreign and Security Policy ‘began’. He observed that the EU’s soft power in that region has a potential to ‘transform its nearest neighbours into functioning democracies and market economies’. He has cautioned that the EU’s soft power instruments would be tested the most in the Balkans, and that the EU cannot afford for this area to become ‘a new ghetto’ inside Europe. Commissioner Rehn concluded that the EU’s transformational power depends on the credibility of its promise to extend membership to the remaining Balkan countries in return for major reforms.\(^{125}\) Smith maintains that the awareness of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) had, in fact, increased as a result of the ‘Yugoslav fiasco’, which contention is linked to the argument that the EU did not respond appropriately to Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration in the early 1990s.\(^{126}\)

Studies of enlargement have generally had a ‘European level focus’, predominantly examining EU institutional processes, which enabled enlargement to take place.\(^{127}\) Enlargement fatigue has also featured in the literature on enlargement, including Serbia’s case, as political resistance within the EU towards accepting new members, especially from the Balkans, grew during the financial crisis in Europe. An understanding of EU power that is ‘both more hard-edged and multi-faceted’ is missing in much of the contemporary literature on enlargement. Jeffrey


\(^{126}\) Smith, *The making of EU foreign policy*, 2004, op. cit., p. 15. Critical views on the EU’s responses to the disintegration of Yugoslavia will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Three.

Checkel has suggested attempting to capture its institutional and productive dimensions, and not only by analysing the ‘compulsive face of power (the ability of A to get B to do what B otherwise would not do)’. This thesis will seek to capture these other dimensions of EU power though the case study of EU-Serbia relations by analysing enlargement policy from the perspective of the EU’s strategic and multitrack diplomacy—which includes official, government-to-government level of engagement and the EU’s less formal linkages with civil society and opposition parties in Serbia.

Current academic research on enlargement does not sufficiently explain the social nature and ideational premises of European integration, nor the influence on this process of the applicant state’s dominant normative discourses and political attitudes. This would help in explaining normative hurdles to further enlargement, not just material ones. Understanding better the key normative structures of accession should improve our knowledge of contemporary political events and debates surrounding accession, and possibly deepen our analysis of how these obstacles might be overcome in the future.

Comparative examples will help to illuminate major discourses that have shaped the development of Serbia’s accession, which is not a unique case in EU enlargement despite its embodying a protracted process. This research does not seek to offer a linear, chronological account of all events, treaties and agreements between Brussels and Belgrade since Tito’s

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128 ibid., p. 22.
130 Candidates during previous enlargement waves have each faced their own set of unique challenges before accession, including but not limited to bilateral disputes (Croatia, Slovenia), unresolved border issues (Cyprus), economic underdevelopment (Ireland, Spain and Portugal), nationalist discourses (Slovakia) and even civil unrest (Greece).
Yugoslavia and the EU formally established diplomatic relations in the late 1960s. It will investigate ideational factors that have presented major hurdles for closer relations to be developed between the EU and Serbia—which has already had some adverse consequences for European integration of the Balkan region.

The differences between the 2004 enlargement and previous rounds inspired scholars to analyse EU enlargement from alternative perspectives, as post-communist EU members formed a very different group of candidates.\textsuperscript{131} Before the 2004 enlargement, rationalist approaches dominated the study on European integration. Two dominant strands of rationalist approaches were supranationalism and intergovernmentalism.\textsuperscript{132} Both emphasised the geopolitical and economic nature of forthcoming Eastern enlargement and material nature of enlargement, and how membership of the EU would impact the economies of ‘older’ EU members. Intergovernmentalists believed that national governments as most important drivers of enlargement policy. On the other hand, the proponents of supranationalism considered EU institutions to be increasingly important and autonomous actors in driving the enlargement agenda forward.

Rationalist perspectives were unable to explain, however, the social nature of enlargement, the variation in processes and outcomes, and the ‘framing of issues before decisions were made about them’.\textsuperscript{133} An alternative explanation that sought to answer policy variation in the processes of EU enlargement was offered by constructivism. This normative approach emphasised the ‘role of ideas, discourses and social interaction in shaping interests’;

\textsuperscript{133} ibid., p. 586.
constructivists also wanted to show how the discourse of a ‘promise’ of membership to the CEES ‘became a structural constraint that made it difficult, if not impossible, to propose anything other than full EU membership’ to these states.\textsuperscript{134} If the EU did not meet that promise, it would have been seen by the CEES as a weak actor that does not deliver on its policy statements.

**Supranationalist school of European integration**

Proponents of a *supranationalist perspective* to European integration believed in the supranational power of institutions; that supranational institutions can act as political actors or agencies in their own right. Institutions are seen as providing structural conditions for driving the integration process forward, and as giving institutional constraints on member states’ behaviour. The major focus for the proponents of supranationalist perspectives was the politics *above* the level of states, with EU institutional structures and norms receiving most of their attention.\textsuperscript{135} The main proponents of this view, according to Simon Hix, shared a common belief that supranational institutions ‘exert a significant independent influence on institutional and policy outcomes’, including enlargement.\textsuperscript{136}

This perspective has tended to specifically focus on the role of formal accession norms in enlargement. Hix noted that ‘decisions by the governments produce particular “path dependencies” that invariably result in the further delegation of policy competences and powers to the EU institutions’.\textsuperscript{137} This was probably even more the case after the EU assumed a legal identity since the Lisbon Treaty’s entry into force. With the emergence of the European

\textsuperscript{134} ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} ibid. p. 584.
\textsuperscript{136} These scholars include Gary Marks, Paul Pierson, Alec Stone Sweet, Markus Jachtenfuchs and Beate Kohler-Koch, among others. Cited in Hix, *The political system of the European Union*, 2005, op. cit., p. 16.
\textsuperscript{137} ibid., p. 17.
External Action Service (EEAS), EU foreign policy towards Serbia, for instance, would have from thereon be primarily executed through EEAS and its missions. Despite any change in the EU members’ preferences towards a particular policy area, the EEAS would have proceeded on the basis of pre-agreed norms. In other words, once common standards and steps for accession have been agreed, the locked-in institutional policy processes would constrain EU members to a certain extent.

**Liberal intergovernmentalist school of European integration**

*Liberal intergovernmentalists* believe that state preferences are not fixed as each new government in the EU member states can have a different set of national priorities that can change with internal changes in their domestic environment. According to this perspective, state preferences could vary from issue to issue, meaning that any EU member may choose to support integration in one policy area but not in another area because of internal policy constraints. Leading political elites in EU members are, according to this perspective, primary actors operating within the EU’s complex political system, driving or halting further integration. Policy outcomes at the EU level are the products of ‘hard-won bargains and trade-offs between the interests of the member states’.¹³⁸ This perspective does not explain, however, how political elites get to change their preferences and how deliberations are made when EU members get to support a common EU position despite the fact that this position might go against the declared national preferences of those very elites.

Moravchik and Vachudova, who are exponents of liberal intergovernmentalism, have observed that elites within existing EU members promoted Eastern enlargement because their ruling elites considered it to be in their countries’ ‘long-term economic and geopolitical

¹³⁸ *ibid.*
interest—particularly as compared to the uncertain and potentially catastrophic costs of being left behind as others move forward'. According to this perspective, integration is primarily driven by self-interested states, especially more powerful ones like Germany and the UK. Integration is also understood as a series of ‘bargains’ among states that remain autonomous decision-makers within the EU, which offers an institutional platform for inter-state bargaining. The political scientist John McCormick argues that this type of bargaining among political elites involved complex political ‘games’ (among nation states; EU institutions and even directorates-general in the European Commission); and a search for compromise.

Richard Baldwin has posited that ‘high politics is clearly the strongest force behind the EU’s decision to enlarge eastward’. The Polish-British political scientist, Jan Zielonka, has argued that Eastern enlargement in 2004 was a reflection of the EU member states’ pursuit of geopolitical interests, rather than purely economic interests. According to this perspective, after the Soviet Union’s dissolution in the early 1990s the prospect of joining the EU offered to the CEES an alternative foreign policy orientation further away from Moscow. Their historical experiences of living under communist regimes with occasional military and political interference from Moscow have prompted the CEES to seek a new framework for political and economic modernisation. The EU offered practical advice and provided substantial aid to the CEES in their democratisation efforts. The EU was also a key reference point for successive governments in the CEES to legitimise their reform agendas to domestic audiences.

139 A. Moravcsik and M.A. Vachudova, op. cit., p. 43.
Constructivist approaches to European integration

This thesis considers that the EU’s Eastern enlargement in 2004 resulted from a negotiated process in which there was an alignment of material interests and congruence in normative frameworks of elites in both the EU member states and the CEES. These normative frameworks could best be explained through constructivist methods of analysing international relations.

In 1989, Nicholas G. Onuf introduced constructivism for the first time in the study of international relations and a new framework quickly presented a challenge to the emergence of constructivism in the late 1980s.\textsuperscript{144} Its emergence coincided with democratic changes in the CEES and a transformation in the international system more generally. The constructivist critique of rationalist approaches ‘focused on the tendency of rationalist studies to privilege decision-making over agenda-setting, and outcomes over process.’\textsuperscript{145} The social constructivist research agenda analyses the framing of issues before decisions about them are made, and outcomes reached.\textsuperscript{146} Constructivism began to explain the social construction of norms in world politics, and how this process affects state behaviour. Initially, constructivism was thought to offer little guidance for developing concepts and methods of empirical research. More recently, constructivists have undertaken empirical work, including on EU enlargement.\textsuperscript{147} However, few research studies have examined the Cold War’s historical context and its impact on domestic ideational structures in candidate states, which this thesis aims to address.

\textsuperscript{144} N.G. Onuf, \textit{World of our making}, Columbia, University of South California Press, 1989.
\textsuperscript{146} ibid.
Finnermore and Sikkink observed that constructivism’s distinctiveness lies in its theoretical arguments, not in its empirical research strategies.\(^{148}\) Key tenets of constructivism are:

- human interaction is shaped primarily by ideational factors, not simply material ones;\(^ {149}\)
- the most important ideational factors are widely shared and referred to as ‘intersubjective’ beliefs, which are not reducible to individuals; and
- the sets of shared beliefs construct the interests and identities of purposive actors.\(^ {150}\)

Constructivists do not take ‘identities and interests for granted’; understanding the processes by which these originate and change ‘has been a big part of the constructivist research program’.\(^ {151}\) For constructivists, understanding the constitution of norms is essential in explaining how actors behave and ‘what causes political outcomes’.\(^ {152}\) One of their main contributions was the idea that state identity ‘fundamentally shapes’ its leaders’ preferences and actions.\(^ {153}\) Political elites as dominant norm entrepreneurs construct state identities ‘within the social environment of international and domestic politics’.\(^ {154}\) For this reason, constructivists examine the influence of internal and external ideational factors on domestic politics. This perspective is a departure from rationalist approaches which considered state interests to be pre-determined by rational calculations rather than by the social nature of their executioners.\(^ {155}\) A political scientist, John G. Ruggie, observed:

Constructivists hold the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material; that ideational factors have normative as well as

\(^{148}\) ibid. p. 392.
\(^{149}\) Rationalists, unlike constructivists, view all interests as exclusively material, and strategic in nature.
\(^{150}\) ibid.
\(^{151}\) ibid., p. 394.
\(^{152}\) ibid.
\(^{153}\) ibid., p. 398.
\(^{154}\) ibid., p. 399.
\(^{155}\) ibid., p. 404.
instrumental dimensions; that they express not only individual but collective intentionality; and that the meaning and significance of ideational factors are not independent of time and place.\textsuperscript{156}

Constructivists utilise methods which include interpretation, discourse analysis, structured comparisons, interviews, participant observation and content analysis as their main research tools to ‘capture intersubjective meanings’.\textsuperscript{157} This thesis will employ some of these methods. Constructivists also believe that there is no objective knowledge about the world (Big truth) but many smaller truths or sets of beliefs that are constructed and then disseminated by norms entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{158} These social actors include prominent political elites, institutional communities, or smaller interest groups. Clifford J. Geertz examined the symbols which elites use to promote cultural systems of social meanings, such as religion, proving that symbols are a powerful tool to disseminate dominant sets of ideas in any human society.\textsuperscript{159} Peter Katzenstein, who is regarded as the founder of constructivist approach to analysing international relations, believed that

To understand the variety of policies pursued by societies toward other societies, it is essential to understand the history of the societies involved, with their residues of attitudes, practices, and expectations about their relationship to the world outside.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{157} Some constructivists specifically focus on communication and discourses, as ‘communicative action’ can change minds and worldviews.
Kazenstein’s philosophy was that ‘one cannot understand societies without understanding the regional and global contexts within which they exist’. The relationship between the EU and Serbia will be examined through elite-level relations, which will be limited to key moments in their diplomatic relations and within a broader historical context. The term ‘elite’ in Serbia’s case encompasses policy-makers, public servants, diplomatic representatives, major opposition parties and civil society groups. Previous rounds of EU enlargement will be viewed as the result of the EU’s plurilateral negotiations through inter- and intrastate bargaining, and through the conceptual lenses of democracy promotion by the EU elites to post-Communist states, which was accompanied by the use of economic incentives and soft power discourses.

Using constructivist methods in the analysis of EU-Serbia relations, this thesis advances three main propositions. Firstly, Serbia’s European integration has been a highly subjective, normative and social process. Subjective beliefs about Serbia’s place in international politics have deeply influenced Serbia’s European integration process. Secondly, clashes of normative assumptions between a candidate state and one or more EU members can generate instability, hinder negotiations and delay future accessions. Thirdly, the changes in Serbia’s domestic context have most profoundly influenced Serbia’s policy towards the EU, the EU’s responses towards Serbia, and the level of their engagement.

This thesis will evaluate the formal accession criteria of enlargement (Chapter One), by tracing the development of formal norms for enlargement into the Western Balkans, with a particular emphasis on Serbia’s accession. It will also investigate informal processes of enlargement, including the EU’s political dialogue with Serbia’s opposition. This thesis, therefore, will highlight the role of domestic factors in Serbia’s EU accession process, and how major internal

161 ibid.
changes in Serbia (including the regime change from authoritarianism to democracy in particular) have impacted on its European integration processes.

**The relevance of ‘informal institutions’ in European integration**

Henry Farrell and Adrienne Héritier have examined the EU’s formal and informal institutions in the context of co-decision procedures between European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.\(^{162}\) Their definitions of formal/informal institutions will be drawn upon in this thesis. They saw formal institutions as rules embedded in EU legislation, which ‘provides a basic starting point for interaction between parties’ and comprises ‘written rules enforced by a third party’; by contrast, informal institutions are those that ‘actors themselves enforce’.\(^{163}\) Certainly in the context of enlargement, EU legislation provides an overarching framework for the conduct of relations with non-members, outlining requirements for EU membership, but informal institutions also play a role. They distinguished between organisational actors, who represent ‘sets of actors united in pursuit of a common goal’, and institutions, which represent ‘sets of rules that structure social interaction’. Informal institutions, they wrote:

\[...\] may emerge from repeated [social] interactions and may have an important impact on institutional outcomes. ... These informal institutions may be influenced by the formal framework in which actors operate, but they will not be determined by this framework.\(^{164}\)


\(^{163}\) ibid., p. 581.

\(^{164}\) ibid., p. 580.
Data collection methods

Research methods for the purposes of data collection include assessing primary and secondary literature primarily in English and Serbian, and in other languages where required (as some earlier EU documents were not available in English), relying on the author’s working knowledge of German and Italian. The EU’s older documents were consulted through the University of Pittsburgh’s *Archive of European Integration* and online databases of the European Parliament, European Commission, Council of the European Union, the European Council, Presidency of the Council web pages, EU member states official web pages, Eurobarometer reports, and Eurostat.\(^{165}\) Other regularly consulted resources include the European Commission’s progress reports and official statements by EU Commissioners and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy; statements of the relevant bodies to the United Nations and in the media. The participant observation method was used in several cases where groups were involved, but all group members were fully aware of the author’s presence for research purposes as regards this thesis.

NGO reports presented a useful critical angle, and often, an alternative view to the official positions of government officials. Domestic political discourses in Serbia were examined through fieldwork (semi-structured) interviews, Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) surveys regarding public attitudes to Serbia’s EU accession, and *Gallup Balkan* reports. Other sources of information included parliamentary reports; print, audio and visual media sources; press releases, and political party documents. This thesis will include the author’s analysis of the perspectives of officials who were directly involved in Serbia’s pre-accession negotiations, including through a participant observation method. Historical records analysis was undertaken

with permission from relevant authorities, including the Historical Archives of Belgrade and the National Archives of Australia.

Fieldwork research was conducted under ethics clearance guidelines. Four groups of professionals were specifically targeted for interviews: officials (parliamentarians, the Serbian Government employees, EU officials, and diplomats), influential academics in Serbia who have published academic works on EU-Serbia relations, journalists, and NGOs that take part in Serbia’s discourses on European integration. More than twenty interviews were conducted where the participants agreed for the author of this thesis to identify them by their name or position. In instances where interviewees did not want their names to be used, but agreed for their general comments to be conveyed, their names will be omitted from the ‘List of Interviewees’ (see Appendix Three) and their comments will appear only in footnotes as part of additional information. The specific set of interview questions is included at the end of this thesis, as part of Appendix Three. The author of this thesis was careful that interviewees in Serbia were from different political groups in order to ensure the diversity of views presented in this thesis.

**Thesis structure**

This thesis has eight chapters, plus the Introduction, Conclusion and Appendices. Chapters are mostly chronological, but also thematic when dealing with particular case studies.

**Chapter One** will address the evolution of the EU accession norms since the end of the Cold War, in particular, the Copenhagen and Copenhagen Plus criteria for the Western Balkans. This chapter will also provide further definitions of enlargement and European integration.
Chapter Two will examine two particular sets of normative beliefs that still influence Serbian contemporary political discourses regarding European integration. Analysing historical context in the relationship between the EU and Serbia provides a basis for better understanding of normative ideas that underpin its behaviour and political attitudes towards the EU. The chapter aims to show that the content and quality of bilateral relationships between Yugoslavia and EU members determined the speed with which their contractual agreements were able to be forged. The concept of Serbia’s neutrality in foreign policy during the Cold War became a guiding principle of Yugoslavia’s non-alignment, which is further explained in the first chapter. Since the democratic change in October 2000, Serbian political elites have invoked these constructs as a legitimising basis for political decisions in foreign policy when they wanted to distance themselves from the EU.

This chapter will investigate how socio-political memory in a candidate state has come to influence contemporary discourses on Serbia’s accession and perceptions about Serbia’s place in regional (Balkan), European and world politics. It will argue that the idea of Serbia’s strategic position as the ‘bridge’ between Oriental (East) and Occidental (West) great powers was shaped by distinct historical experiences and a desire by its political elites to invoke social constructs that reawaken certain popular feelings among the citizens of Serbia in order to gain legitimacy. In order to explain this phenomenon, the first chapter will reference earlier historical occurrences of the East/West bridging idea to show its historical reproduction and continuing relevance. The second idea is one of national independence from foreign interference, which has become a set of shared beliefs for the Serbs, and is positioned within a broader discourse on nation-building. Yugoslavia’s foreign policy independence from both Eastern and Western blocs is an ideational argument and a model advanced by the EU sceptics in Serbia, which says that the country should remain permanently outside the EU to maintain
its independence. Both sets of ideas influenced cooperation between the EU and Serbia (as a central part of the former Yugoslavia) during the Cold War and the East/West division of Europe.

**Chapter Three** will explore the period of confrontation between the EU and Serbia between 1991 and 1998, while the Kosovo conflict will be treated as a separate topic in the study of Serbia’s accession and explored in more detail in **Chapter Four**. Whilst enlargement proceeded elsewhere in the CEES, the conflict in the former Yugoslavia derailed reform in the Western Balkans and made European borders less secure. It appears that the EU’s strict visa regime against Serbia, which was maintained for almost a decade after Serbia became democratic, was to a large extent influenced by the memory of conflict between Serbia and EU members during the 1990s.

EU diplomacy towards wars in Croatia and Bosnia in particular has been severely criticised in the literature. The swift recognition by Germany of Slovenia’s and Croatia’s independence before an official EU position was properly formulated was widely seen as an example of a truncated EU foreign policy in the 1990s, with a dominant Germany pursuing an independent foreign policy from the EU. The Yugoslav conflicts weakened the EU’s credibility as a conflict manager, and bitterly divided EU members over how best to respond to armed hostilities on its borders which caused an influx of refugees into the EU.

The maturing of the EU’s foreign policy mechanisms and diplomatic service came about, in part, as a response to wars in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. It was precisely this period in EU history that specifically influenced the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy instruments, and fostered further political cooperation between member states.
This period negatively affected normative conceptions about Serbia in the world, because of its infamous military incursions in the immediate neighbourhood in the name of military protection of one ethnic group against two others, which was antithetical to the EU’s founding values. This is another reason for the study of enlargement in the context of the Western Balkans, as this region’s experience has presented particular challenges to EU policy-making for which new institutional, political and administrative solutions were required. In other words, it could be argued that the historic changes in the geopolitical situation during the 1990s (which was characterised by transformation and the disappearance from the global political scene of the Soviet Union) helped promote deeper integration in the EU, despite differences in opinion or policies among EU members towards individual candidates.

**Chapter Five** will explore the significance of Serbia’s regime change for EU-Serbia relations. It will also investigate the Serbian Government’s rapprochement with the EU up to the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić in March 2003. It will explore the dual approach of the EU towards the Serbian Government (coercive diplomacy) and pro-EU opposition to the Milošević regime. The politics of conditionality affected the development of Serbia’s new political parties (intra-party transformation) and thereby affected national electoral processes and the domestic political situation in the Western Balkans. Contrary to the abundance of scholarly writings about the EU’s widely perceived passivity generally in the face of violence in the Balkans in the 1990s, the EU did resort to soft power diplomacy at the non-official level to bring about a democratic breakthrough in Serbia/FRY. This aspect of EU diplomacy is also confirmed by interviews with current and past EU and Serbian policy-makers.

**Chapter Six** will explore the EU-sceptic government of Vojislav Koštunica, and the cooling of relations between the EU and Serbia during Koštunica’s era. During this time, Serbia-EU
relations were advanced, but then backslid several times due to increasing differences in normative outlooks between the EU and the Serbian Government, which was moreover internally divided and unstable.

**Chapter Seven** will examine the pro-EU government and Presidency of Boris Tadić, up to his loss in the 2012 national elections. Normative closeness between Tadić’s government and EU foreign policy enabled EU-Serbia dialogue to go forward. Milestones were achieved, such as visa liberalisation for Serbia, which was seen as a major success, and Serbia’s formal status as a candidate for EU membership, which opened up new collaboration opportunities.166

**Chapter Eight** will analyse the major breakthrough in EU-Serbia relations under the Serbian coalition government (made up of the Progressives and the Socialists), the Brussels Agreement reached by Serbia with Kosovo authorities under EU auspices in April 2013.167 The mediation efforts by the EU to achieve this crucial result for confidence-building measures between Serbia and Kosovo were recognised with the EU receiving a Nobel Peace Prize in 2012.168

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166 For a full list of milestones in EU-Serbia relations, see Appendix Two.
167 The political party of the Progressives is called *Srpska Napredna Stranka* (SNS), and the party of the Socialists is called *Socijalistička Partija Srbije* (SPS).
168 The Nobel Peace Committee observed: ‘In this time of economic and social unrest, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wished to reward the EU's successful struggle for peace, reconciliation and for democracy and human rights. … The Nobel Committee also believes that the question of EU membership is bolstering the reconciliation process after the wars in the Balkan States’. The official website of the Nobel Prize, ‘The Nobel peace prize 2012: European Union’, http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/eu-facts.html, (accessed 12 October 2013).
Conclusion

The EU’s enlargement policy has long relied on a set of shared ideas among the key players involved in promoting enlargement. It was embedded within particular sets of ideas about world order and the extension of Europe’s liberal identity to third-countries (non-EU members). The Serbian accession case offers some lessons for the future planning of the EU’s enlargement policy in the Western Balkans, and for the EU’s use of soft power globally. The Introductory chapter of this thesis established the research design of this thesis and outlined the main approaches in studying Serbia’s delayed accession. It also presented how data collection was undertaken for this thesis, and which criteria was used to select the interviewees. It also outlined the thesis structure, describing the main themes of each chapter. It also provided working definitions of the terms used to create the original conceptual framework, the normative approach, which will be used in evaluating Serbia’s European integration.

The next chapter will provide an analysis of how did the accession process for the Western Balkans states, including Serbia, become more comprehensive than it was the case during previous accession rounds. Chapter One will also provide a working definition of ‘European integration’ and ‘European enlargement’, and explain in which context these terms will be used in this thesis. Outlining the evolution of the EU’s accession norms is necessary in order to better understand the normative obstacles which Serbia has faced in its ambition to develop closer relations with the EU.
CHAPTER ONE

The evolution of EU accession norms: towards a special criteria for the Western Balkans

Enlargement is ‘a key political process for international relations of Europe’, which occurs in parallel to the process of institutional integration in the EU.\textsuperscript{169} It has been ‘a central and quasi-permanent element of the EU’s history’.\textsuperscript{170} Scholar Andras Inotai cautioned that none of the present members were able to prepare fully for membership before accession.\textsuperscript{171} Academic Desmond Dinan noted that ‘the collapse of communism opened up a hitherto unimaginable enlargement scenario’, by which European ‘neutrals’ (Austria, Finland and Sweden) no longer faced any structural or political constraints to apply for EU membership.\textsuperscript{172} According to Christiansen, the key features of enlargement are gradual processes of expansion of: competencies, membership, majority vote and parliamentary powers.\textsuperscript{173} As an important policy area in the EU budget, enlargement required forward planning of expenditures.\textsuperscript{174} Normative expectations and standards for EU members are part of European liberal identity, the value-

\textsuperscript{169} F. Schimmelfennig and U. Schedelmeier, ‘Theorizing EU enlargement: research focus, hypotheses, and the state of research’, Journal of European Public Policy, vol. 9, no. 4, August 2002, p. 500. The development of enlargement as a norms-based policy process will be further discussed later on in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{171} Prior to this enlargement round, the EU had to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and strengthen institutional capacities to enable enlargement to go forward. A. Inotai, ‘The CEECs: from the association agreements to full membership’, in J. Redmond and G.R. Rosenthan (eds), The expanding European Union, 1998, op. cit., p. 165.
\textsuperscript{173} T. Christiansen, ‘European integration and regional cooperation’, 2004, op. cit., p. 582.
\textsuperscript{174} One cost estimate of the EU’s largest single enlargement in 2004 was €22 billion [of EU funds] devoted to 'pre-accession assistance' between 2000 and 2006 to countries that were joining. Enlargement archives, ‘Question and answers about the fifth enlargement (archived)’, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/questions_and_answers/11-22_en.htm#costs, (accessed 1 February 2014).
based identity of the EU that has played a key role in the enlargement processes.\textsuperscript{175} Enlargement, in this normative context, can be seen as an extension of EU power. As a European Commission document notes:

\begin{quote}
Enlargement reflects the EU’s essence as a soft power, which has achieved more through its gravitational pull than it could have been achieved by other means.\textsuperscript{176}
\end{quote}

In the post-Cold War era, the EU started to increasingly rely on its soft power instruments, especially towards the post-communist states. Joseph Nye coined the term ‘soft power’ to explain major shifts and diffusion of power in world politics after the Cold War.\textsuperscript{177} In his view, the collapse of the Soviet Union as a superpower led to a greater diffusion of power globally. It also led to a decrease in the effectiveness of hard or military power instruments, including the use of coercion and military threats. Since power is a relationship, the ‘proof of power’ came to rely less on material resources and more on the ability to change the behaviour of others without coercion. This method was seen as less costly and more efficient.\textsuperscript{178} The basis for the EU’s soft power was found to be in the values it was promoting, as per the next citation:

\begin{quote}
The EU is above all a community of \textbf{values}. We are a family of democratic European countries committed to working together for peace and freedom, prosperity and social
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{178} ibid., p. 155.
justice, and we defend these values. We seek to deepen the solidarity between the peoples of Europe, while respecting and preserving our diversity.\textsuperscript{179}

Nye defined soft or co-optive power as ‘the ability of a state to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent to its own’.\textsuperscript{180}

If the culture and ideas of one international player were attractive, it was presupposed that others would willingly follow them. Nye argued that soft power tended to arise from cultural and ideological attraction. One shortcoming of this approach is that Nye was seeing nation states as the primary actors in world politics, although he did recognise a growing importance of institutions and non-state actors as new sources of power. He noted that in areas where the EU acted as a unit, such as in trade, the effectiveness of its power was greater.\textsuperscript{181} In arenas where EU members spoke with one voice the impact of EU policies (including enlargement policy) was more substantial and had more transformational weight.

**European integration**

The term ‘European integration’ refers to gradual political, economic and social processes of transformation from a socialist, collectivist state to a democratic country in transition.\textsuperscript{182} In this multidimensional discourse regarding Europeanisation, the EU serves as the key reference


\textsuperscript{181} ibid., p. 158.

\textsuperscript{182} Transformation is a broader concept than democratic transition. A country’s transformation from socialist usually starts with the democratic breakthrough (the moment of the regime change), and includes the transition and consolidation phases. Consolidation occurs when democracy has become ‘the only game in town’. J.J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of democratic transition and consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and post-communist Europe*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, pp. 5–6, 200, 454. For an opposing view, according to which transition contains transformation but that transformation does not necessarily contain transition in post-Communist societies, see S.P. Ramet, ‘Trajectories of post-communist transformation: myths and rival theories about change in Central and Southeastern Europe’, *Perceptions*, vol. 18, no. 2, Summer 2013, pp. 62.
point to the prospective candidate, and the prospect of EU membership becomes the main
driver for the latter’s domestic reform. Othon Anastasakis has rightly pointed out that
Europeanisation took a ‘new turn’ with the collapse of communism and came to be associated
with the EU’s enlargement to the East; as the concept was originally used to describe ‘more
balanced interaction among Western European states’, and ‘changes inside the European
Community itself and the adaptive capabilities of its member states’. The concept came to
signify the adaptation of formerly authoritarian states to the Western political and economic
models. The EU also introduced systematic Europeanisation processes for these countries,
before they could join the EU.

The evolution of EU accession norms in the post-Cold War period rested on deliberate choices
made by the leaders of EU member states to extend democracy to the CEES. Their accession
was a highly normative, socially constructed, negotiated and politically-driven process.
Political scientist Neill Nugent, who extensively researched the processes of post-war integration in Western Europe, has concluded that there was nothing pre-determined or inevitable about these processes. He has found that national factors in the post-war era have, in fact, determined the pace and structure of European integration; and included different circumstances of Western European countries, and the needs and attitudes their leaders expressed towards European integration. Nugent, furthermore, has observed that especially since the EU’s first enlargement took place in 1973, political factors have been an important

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184 Post-war in this thesis refers to the late 1940s and 1950s era in Europe, following the conclusion of the Second World War with the capitulation of Nazi Germany on the Western Front on 8 May 1945 and on the Eastern Front in the early morning of 9 May 1945. The Second World War still occupies a special place in the national historical memory of European peoples, including Serbs. It can influence more conservative political views about who are ‘traditional enemies’ and ‘friendly states’. In Serbia, the conservatives particularly regard Germany as the ‘traditional enemy’, while Britain, France and Russia are perceived as wartime allies from the Second World War. However, the British and French participation in the 1999 bombardment of Yugoslavia by the NATO alliance somewhat diminished public perceptions of these two countries as ‘friendly’.
186 ibid., p. 23.
factor in shaping the nature and pace of integration processes. Nugent’s observations could also be applied to more recent enlargement rounds.

**Eastern enlargement**

Eastern enlargement presented new challenges to the study of European integration, as post-communist states, which joined the EU in 2004, had very different historical experiences from previous applicants for membership. The distinguished Estonian statesman and historian, Mart Laar, observed that a ‘mental and moral connection’ to Western Europe is what kept the Central and Eastern European peoples resilient in the face of the communist yoke. He noted:

> Their wish to be accepted again by the West and to be recognised as an integral part of the Western cultural realm was a more substantial driving force in their development than mere economic or political motivation could ever be.

The EU was certainly the main promoter of democracy, economic liberalisation and European standards to its post-communist neighbours, but not the only actor as the United States (US) agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and Christian groups were also active in that area. The EU’s past role in encouraging reforms in southern Europe was similarly important prior to the accession of Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986, which shows the continuity of its approach towards new accessions. The admittance in 1995 of Austria,

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187 ibid., p. 21.
190 The European Community’s active role in democracy promotion in Eastern Europe was made possible due to a political and economic vacuum left from a gradual removal of Soviet control from Eastern Europe. In this process, the EU acted as an external guarantee of stability, and provided vital reform-oriented financial assistance. Huntington, ‘Democracy’s third wave’, 1991, op. cit., p. 14.
Finland and Sweden into the EU probably gave the CEES an additional impetus to modernise. The admission of these countries into the EU also demonstrated to the aspirant EU members that political will among EU leaders to expand the EU was real and tangible. The absorption of the CEES into the EU highlights the significance of one important consideration when examining the EU’s policy of enlargement, which is the capacity of the EU to admit new members. The term ‘absorption capacity’ refers here primarily to the political agreement among existing EU members to take in new members.\textsuperscript{191} In Serbia’s case, the EU’s absorption capacity, as well as the separate issue of Serbia’s capacity to ‘absorb’ or adequately utilise EU funds for further reform, are frequently seen as key challenges to its European integration.\textsuperscript{192} This thesis argues that normative factors rather than any material factors are primary determinants of whether Serbia will be able to join the EU or not.

In 1984, one year before the Soviet Union’s reformist leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, it was completely unimaginable that two decades later, many formerly Eastern bloc countries would be members of the EU, which was their ideological ‘rival’ during the Cold War.\textsuperscript{193} For the CEES countries, the prospect of EU membership was the most significant motivating factor behind reform after their internal democratic changes occurred after 1989. Their accession to the EU has been popularly described as a ‘return to Europe’ in a normative sense, and as the EU’s most successful foreign policy action after the Cold War.\textsuperscript{194} The leadership change in the CEES

\textsuperscript{191} The EU frequently used this term in its policy documents when referring to further accessions. For a critique of this term, see Euractiv, ‘Analysis: just what is the EU’s “absorption capacity”’, Efficacité et Transparence des Acteurs Européens (Euractiv), 10 October 2006, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/analysis-just-eu-absorption-capacity/article-158638, (accessed 13 June 2013).


\textsuperscript{193} At such time it would have also been inconceivable that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) would be long gone from Europe’s political landscape after its relatively peaceful dissolution.

\textsuperscript{194} F. Schimmelfennig and H. Scholtz, ‘EU democracy promotion in the European neighbourhood’, European Union Politics, vol. 9, no. 2, 2008, p. 188.
enabled them to look to the EU as a model of peaceful regional integration and economic success, which stood in sharp contrast to their experiences of living under repressive Soviet satellite regimes.

**The Copenhagen criteria**

The European Council meeting at Copenhagen was a watershed moment for the EU’s enlargement policy, representing the key reference point for all future accessions as it laid out political, economic and legal accession criteria for future enlargement rounds of the EU—the Copenhagen criteria. The Council of twelve EU members reached a historic decision at the Copenhagen summit to formally open the door of accession to those politically neutral and formerly socialist states that already had negotiated Europe Agreements with the EU or were in the process of doing so. The agreements contained resolutions on ‘political dialogue, obligations related to the narrowing of the gap between the association states and [EU’s] legislative models’, and guidelines on cultural cooperation.

The Presidency Conclusions of the summit specified that a candidate state (also known as an ‘associated country’) would need to satisfy political and economic membership conditions, and bring domestic laws in line with the *acquis* through the process of legislative approximation. The political criterion encompassed ‘stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule

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196 In 1993, twelve members of the EU included Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

197 Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, ‘Poland’s way to EU’, [http://en.poland.gov.pl/Polandper centE2 per cent80 per cent99s,way,to,UE,458.html](http://en.poland.gov.pl/Polandper centE2 per cent80 per cent99s,way,to,UE,458.html), (accessed 1 February 2014).

of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities’. Moreover, the economic criterion stipulated ‘existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union’. The third Copenhagen criterion called on a candidate state to ‘take on obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union’, for which it would need to develop relevant capacities.

The aims were, however, not specified, remaining deliberately vague. Furthermore, the EU’s ability to absorb new members was also singled out at the summit. Integration capacity necessitated that ‘enlargement would need to be supported by public opinion in member states and the candidate’. The Copenhagen criteria emphasised, therefore, the political nature of enlargement, for both the EU and candidate states. By specifically referring to public opinion in the EU and candidate states, the Copenhagen criteria highlighted the importance for any future accessions of democratic legitimacy and popular support.

It appears that in the lead-up to the Copenhagen summit, informal summitry and individual contacts between the leaders of the CEES and the leaders of EU member states was crucial for convincing all EU members to support the goals of Eastern enlargement at the summit. The

200 Ibid.
204 The principal goals behind the Eastern enlargement were the promotion of democracy, European standards and free market economy to the CEES, and a normative desire of the EU to assert its liberal identity in Eastern Europe, therein uniting its Western and Eastern parts. D. Lazea, ‘EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe: a Social Constructivist approach’, 2011, op. cit., pp. 4–8.
Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has noted that the diplomatic efforts of the so-called Višegrad Group countries (comprising, in the early 1990s, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland) played a critical role before the Copenhagen summit in convincing the EU members about the CEES’s willingness and necessity to join.\textsuperscript{205} Potential candidates have thus actively contributed to the shaping of the EU’s common decisions on such an important policy area as enlargement.\textsuperscript{206} Their diplomatic efforts were aided by relationship-building with key supporters from inside the EU.

The most enthusiastic supporters of Eastern enlargement in the lead-up to the Copenhagen summit included the Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl; the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker (who is currently President-designate of the European Commission), and the Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt. These influential politicians were in frequent contact with the political leaders of the CEES, ‘helping to make their voices heard in Europe’.\textsuperscript{207} By comparison, the Serbian Government’s lobbying efforts were also vital before the European Council granted it a formal candidature in March 2012.\textsuperscript{208} This could indicate that more recent candidates, including Serbia, have learned some lessons from the previous EU enlargement rounds, particularly from the Copenhagen summit that was extremely important for the accession prospects of the CEES.\textsuperscript{209}

\textsuperscript{205} Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, ‘Poland’s way to EU’, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{206} A country is considered a formal candidate once the European Council confirms the European Commission’s positive opinion or avis regarding its candidacy.
\textsuperscript{207} M. Laar, \textit{The power of freedom}, 2010, op. cit., p. 208.
\textsuperscript{209} In an interview for this thesis with the Serbian Deputy Minister for European integration, he remarked that Serbia is constantly learning from the accessions of the CEES, especially from regional neighbours including Slovenia, and the Višegrad Group countries.
Furthermore, the centre-right European People’s Party (EPP) within the European Parliament was among the strongest supporters of Eastern enlargement.\(^{210}\) Therefore, the CEES were, like Serbia today, facing the issue of ‘ignorance and mistrust’, but the political support they received from influential EU members assisted them in overcoming normative obstacles (from within the EU) to their accession. Guided by the CEES’s experiences, it is likely that political support for Serbia’s accession within key EU institutions, including in the European Parliament, will be a significant determining factor influencing the EU’s decision whether or not to admit Serbia once all chapters are closed. A long-standing policy of the EPP Group in the European Parliament has been to support further enlargement in the Western Balkans.\(^{211}\) However, the Group’s responses to Serbia’s candidacy status in March 2012 were cautiously optimistic. EPP Group Spokesman, György Schöpflin MEP from Hungary, has observed that ‘all candidate countries have to come to terms with their neighbours, therefore Serbia has to confront Kosovo's independence and abandon its illusions’.\(^{212}\) While Cyprus did not ‘come to terms’ with Turkey over the issue of Northern Cyprus at the time of its EU accession in 2004, the MEP’s comments still indicate that as the largest party at the time in the European Parliament, the EPP would not allow Serbia to enter the EU unless its stance on the Kosovo issue was constructive and more flexible.\(^{213}\)

\(^{210}\) The work of Hans Geert Poettering, the Chairman of the EPP in the European Parliament, was important in gathering support among his colleagues for the accession of the CEES. Without such support, in Laar’s view, it would have difficult to overcome ‘the barriers of ignorance and mistrust’, M. Laar, *The power of freedom*, 2010, op. cit.

\(^{211}\) European People’s Party, ‘Enlargement and neighbourhood: South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, South Caucasus’, European Parliament, http://www.eppgroup.eu/free-text/South-Eastern-and-Eastern-Europe-South-Caucasus?page=0 per cent2C0 per cent2C0 per cent2C0 per cent2C0 per cent2C0 per cent2C3, (accessed 30 September 2013).


\(^{213}\) The EPP’s ongoing commitment to further enlargement in the Western Balkans was demonstrated in April 2014, when the EPP convened for the fourth time a debate between senior officials from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia and European Parliament representatives on further enlargement. European People’s Party, ‘Western Balkans: from stabilisation to accession’, European Parliament, 8 April 2014, http://www.eppgroup.eu/event/Western-Balkans-per-cent3A-from-stabilisation-to-accession, (accessed 1 May 2014).
After the Copenhagen summit, the legal basis for enlargement was strengthened with the entry into force of the Treaty on the European Union (known as the Maastricht Treaty) in November 1993. Article 49 of the Maastricht Treaty stated that any European country that respects democratic values of the EU could be eligible to join once it underwent a formal accession process, which required the applicants to undertake a series of steps. Potential candidates are required to submit an application to the EU stating their intention to seek EU membership. Before the Council could reach any further decision on the candidacy, which is done unanimously, the Council would need to consult the European Commission, and ‘ask the European Parliament for a favourable opinion adopted by an absolute majority of its members.’ A country-specific program would then need to be agreed between EU members and the candidate, and designated EU institutions would be tasked with overseeing the program’s implementation. Article 49 was rather ‘vague’ and deliberately ‘short on detail’, as it was formulated in such way as to allow for further evolution of the accession norms.

The next defining moment in the historic evolution of EU accession criteria occurred at the Madrid Council’s summit in late 1995, establishing the so-called Madrid criteria. The Madrid summit outlined the importance of EU enlargement for European security and regional economic interdependence. It also expanded the Copenhagen criteria by introducing the

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214 This treaty was signed on 7 February 1992.
215 However, the Maastricht Treaty did not specify the geographical boundaries of Europe.
criterion of administrative capacities for the pre-accession process.220 It highlighted that problems with meeting the accession criteria can result from weak administrative and institutional capacities, which are rooted in the inefficient ‘administrative tradition’ of post-communist states.221 By recognising that specific conditions in the CEES weakened their accession prospects, the EU confirmed the importance of domestic factors for European integration, as discussed earlier. The EU accredited the task of providing technical and administrative assistance to the CEES to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).222 Administrative and public sector reform is still weak in Serbia, which is now an official candidate for EU membership, highlighting that in this area too Serbia’s accession path has been similar in those aspects to the experiences of other CEES.

**Additional criteria for the Western Balkans: the ‘Copenhagen Plus’**

The EU regarded the situation in the Western Balkans after the wars in the 1990s as being similar to the situation in Europe as a whole after the Second World War. Political scientist Desmond Dinan observed that the EU advocated a similar solution to this post-conflict region: economic and political integration of the Western Balkans ‘as the best means of promoting peace, stability, and prosperity’; but in order to do so, Serbia needed to rebuild trust in its neighbourhood by pursuing a policy of reconciliation, which was ‘an important element of the integration process’, and a major assessment criterion in the Commission’s progress reports.223

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220 The Madrid criteria highlighted the need for candidates to align their public administration systems and policies with the principles found in the European Administrative Space (EAS). The European Policy Centre defined EAS as the ‘evolutionary process of gradually increasing convergence between national administrative systems and administrative practices of MS’. European Policy Centre, ‘EAS’, http://www.europeanpolicy.org/en/european-policies/european-administrative-space.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

221 ibid.

222 The OECD’s Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) body published regular assessments about the public governance/effectiveness of the public administration capacities in the candidate states. The EU consulted these reports in conjunction with regular European Commission’s progress reports for each candidate when making decisions about their progress.

Dinan also observed that the situation in the Western Balkans ‘will not be normal until Serbia, historically the regional power and still a cultural beacon in Southeastern Europe, joins the EU’. Because of the region’s specific conditions, the EU developed additional accession criteria in 2000 for the countries in the Western Balkans, which are known as the Copenhagen Plus criteria.

At the European Council meeting in Santa Maria de Feira (Portugal) in June 2000, the EU decided that all states and entities from the Western Balkans were potential candidates for EU membership. At that time, Serbia was still governed by Milošević’s autocratic regime, but its pro-EU opposition was mobilising to oppose the SPS-led Serbian Government at the next elections. The Presidency Conclusions signalled the EU’s political support for the latter:

A democratic, cooperative FRY living in peace with its neighbours will be a welcome member of the European family of democratic nations. The European Council supports the civil society initiatives as well as the democratic forces in Serbia in their struggle to achieve this goal and urges them to stay united and reinforce their cooperation.

This statement confirmed that the enlargement process was highly political in nature, and normative. Similarly to the political support which democratic leaders in the CEES received a decade earlier, the EU’s support for democracy-promotion in Serbia and Montenegro was a sign that it was becoming more active in this area, as the EU’s support was a direct incentive for leadership change in Serbia. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development estimated that between 1991 and 2004, the EU invested more than €6.4 billion to support

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224 ibid.
democratic reform in the Western Balkans, from which over 2 billion went to support democratisation efforts in Serbia and Montenegro.\(^{226}\)

Following Serbia’s regime change in October 2000, the European Council meeting in Zagreb in November 2000 confirmed that ‘the way is now open to **all** the countries of the region to move closer to the European Union as part of the stabilisation and association process’, whereas specifically for rump Yugoslavia:

> The prospect of a stabilisation and association agreement is now established in accordance with the invitation issued by the Council on 9 October 2000. A decision has been taken to set up an "EU/FRY consultative task force".\(^{227}\)

The EU then proposed ‘an individualised approach’ to all countries in the region, and announced ‘a single Community aid programme’ for countries participating in the Stabilization and Association Process—the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratisation and Stabilisation (CARDS) program to which the EU committed €4.65 billion over the six-year period.\(^{228}\) The Zagreb meeting, therefore, formally confirmed that SAP would constitute an overarching framework for the future accession processes in the Western Balkans.

In June 2003, the EU’s meeting with the Western Balkan states in Thessaloniki (Greece) established that SAP would be intensified by the means of signing ‘European Partnerships’. These agreements were comparable to the Europe Agreements, previously successfully


\(^{228}\) ibid.
pursued with the CEES.²²⁹ The so-called Thessaloniki Declaration reaffirmed that the future of the Western Balkans lies within the European Union. The Declaration emphasised a shared normative commitment of Western Balkan states to the principles of democracy, rule of law, market economy, international law including ‘inviolability of international borders’, regional cooperation, and a shared commitment to ‘the objectives of economic and political union’.²³⁰ Again, the integration objectives were not specifically outlined. The Declaration affirmed the historical continuity of the accession process and sustained relevance of the Copenhagen criteria. It established that SAP’s annual review mechanism will be constituted by the European Commission’s progress reports for each individual applicant.²³¹ The Council also called for closer coordination of national authorities in the Western Balkans with the ICTY, which underscores the political nature of the enlargement process. The EU’s first security White Paper, the European Security Strategy of December 2003, highlighted the EU’s commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Western Balkans.²³² This signalled the EU’s greater level of involvement in that region, which was welcomed by Serbia’s pro-democracy groups but increasingly resisted by the nationalists.

In 2006, the EU introduced additional accession criteria, which candidate states saw as ‘an unjustifiably restrictive policy’.²³³ The new enlargement strategy was based on the consolidation of commitments, conditionality and communication.²³⁴ Critics particularly objected to the EU’s stricter political conditionality, which had been, since Greece’s accession,

²³¹ ibid.
the main policy tool by which the EU was assessing the applicant’s suitability and readiness to join the bloc. Bargaining between the EU and candidates was to be based on a larger number of chapters, with Croatia having had to conclude the highest number of chapters so far, thirty-five in total. EU members were also given more powers to veto any chapter’s closure, which in Croatia’s case, resulted in a delayed accession due to its disputes with Slovenia that involved the EU’s mediation capacities.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a working definition of the key processes which this thesis is exploring, European integration and enlargement. It presented an overview of the evolution of EU accession norms since the end of the Cold War. The case study of Eastern enlargement was evoked in order to demonstrate that a relatively quick opening of accession negotiations between the EU and the CEES was the result of specific changes in Europe in the early 1990s, and diplomatic efforts which the CEES put into overcoming scepticism by some EU members about further enlargement. At the same time, the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration have utterly delayed Serbia’s EU accession, leaving a particular memory of Serbia and its role in regional politics. Examples provided in this chapter point to the fact that the EU’s diplomatic

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235 D. Lazea, ‘EU external relations: from non-intervention to political conditionality’, *Central European Journal for International and Security Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2011, p. 54. During this process, not only material achievements but also perceptions about the candidate state’s performance and commitments to the EU’s aims and objectives have guided the process of decision-making of EU members on the former’s EU membership bid. 236 Croatia had a maritime border dispute with Slovenia between 2007 and 2009, and an administrative dispute in 2012–13 from an issue dating back to socialist Yugoslavia’s dissolution. Both were resolved with EU mediation, before Croatia joined the EU. The Esprit de corps of EU policy making, the principle of solidarity, was at the forefront of the EU’s efforts to resolve Croatia’s last pre-accession hurdles. ‘Border dispute with Slovenia delays Croatia EU entry talks’, *Euractiv*, 24 April 2009, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/border-dispute-slovenia-delays-c-news-221682, (accessed 14 September 2013). B. Pavelić, ‘Slovenia pressured not to delay Croatia’s EU accession’, *Balkan Insight*, 10 January 2013, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/eu-expects-slovenia-not-to-block-croatia, (accessed 14 September 2013).
capacities expanded as a result of the ‘lessons’ it learned from the Yugoslav crisis, including the need to support democratic opposition as an alternative to Serbia’s authoritarian regime.

The next chapter will present the historical context of EU-Serbia relations, when Serbia was part of Yugoslavia. Gaining a better understanding of the obstacles which the Yugoslav Government had faced in its relationship with the EU also increases our knowledge of the main determinants behind their engagement, which will be investigated next.
CHAPTER TWO

The legacy of Yugoslavia’s relations with integrating Europe

The Yugoslav model was distinguished by its political decentralisation, non-alignment, freedom to travel and market-oriented economic reforms. But for ordinary Yugoslavs, better living standards measured in terms of the supply and quality of consumer goods, including food, represented one of the most obvious differences between their lives and those of their neighbours in the countries of the [Eastern] Bloc.\(^{237}\)

This chapter will critically examine two normative constructs relating to Serbia’s and the socialist Yugoslavia’s foreign policy: a concept of freedom of foreign policy action vis-à-vis key centres of power to the East and to the West, and a discourse about socialist Yugoslavia occupying a unique geo-political place between East and West following the principles of political and military neutrality and peaceful co-existence among nations.\(^{238}\) As normative constructs, these subjective ideas were diffused by prominent political and religious leaders (who were ‘the norm entrepreneurs’ in the constructivist approach to foreign policy analysis).\(^{239}\) Their persuasion and policies came to reflect a set of shared social understandings about Serbia’s, as well as Yugoslavia’s unique position in world politics.


\(^{238}\) The idea of peaceful co-existence among states in the international system was certainly not Yugoslavia’s invention. It can be traced to the US President, Woodrow Wilson’s address to the Congress, in which Wilson called for ‘equality among the peoples of the world’, instead of ‘mastery’ by one group of nations over another. Records of the United States Senate, National Archives, ‘President Wilson’s message to Congress’, 8 January 1918, http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=62&page=transcript, (accessed 10 May 2013).

\(^{239}\) Persuasion is ‘the process by which agent’s action becomes social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes the intersubjective’. R.A. Payne, ‘Persuasion, frames and norm construction’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2001, p. 38.
This chapter will, firstly, define Serbia’s ‘two freedoms’ idea, the political concepts of East and West, as well as seek to demonstrate how these concepts came to be reproduced in Serbian and Yugoslav politics. It will outline specific historical references as possible origins of this idea, which contemporary Serbian political leaders invoke when wanting to distance themselves from the EU’s political conditionality. By doing so, Serbian policy-makers are seeking more flexibility in policy making, which is also connected to the two freedoms idea, but also to the idea of indivisible sovereignty. It will, secondly, examine key events from Yugoslavia’s political history when political neutrality became a guiding principle of foreign relations. The policy of non-alignment, which had differentiated the country from all the Soviet-bloc countries, effectively led Yugoslavia to open negotiations with the EU on a comprehensive trade agreement with the EU as early as in the mid-1960s. The concept of problematic partners will be further explored to demonstrate that Yugoslavia’s relationship with the EU was connected to an improvement in its political relations with individual EU member states, especially France and West Germany. Thirdly, this chapter will assess Yugoslavia’s major agreements with the EU, in order to demonstrate, as suggested in the opening quote, Yugoslavia’s geopolitical and domestic distinctiveness during the Cold War period as a country that was keen to have a relationship with the West, at the same time as advocating for socialism in the world. Fourthly, this chapter will show that political and economic instability in Yugoslavia after Tito’s death in 1980 created conditions for the rise of nationalism and opposition to Yugoslavism that preceded the wars of the Yugoslav succession.

For example, in February 2014, Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić said that membership of the EU is an important strategic goal for Serbia, but that for his country it is equally important to have good and productive relations with Russia. Tanjug, ‘Nikolić: važna nam EU, ali i Rusija’, 12 February 2014, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2014&mm=02&dd=12&nav_id=811381, (accessed 10 April 2014).

The next chapter will discuss how such a state of affairs impacted on Serbia’s neutrality idea and its relationship with the West.
The idea of ‘two freedoms’: independence and neutrality in Serbian foreign policy

When discussing Serbian politics in the broader historical context, the terms ‘historical consciousness’ and ‘collective memory’ relate to a sum of beliefs and historically reproduced narratives that are shared among the members of one political community. These beliefs, which are also promulgated by the political leaders of that community, influence how certain historical events are remembered. This is far from being an ingrained ‘political culture’, or ‘civilisational trait’ among Serbs specifically, as the cultural proponents of Serbia’s delayed EU accession would claim. These are ‘small truths’, subjective beliefs that have been institutionalised during different historical periods, and disseminated by intellectuals, as well as cultural and political elites. These perceptions about Serbia’s place in the world as a country which should be independent, neutral and ultimately ‘free’ in its decisions, including on international issues, have been inadequately explored in the literature on Serbia’s European integration. They continue to influence today’s political discourses about Serbia’s foreign policy in the world, as well as towards the EU specifically.

This thesis posits that these constructs, reproduced throughout different periods in Serbian political history, are effectively incompatible with Serbia’s strategic goal to join the EU, representing one of the key obstacles today to Serbia’s European integration. The incompatibility stems from a clash with the EU’s regulations, as candidates like Serbia are required under pre-accession political conditionality rules not to be politically neutral, but to take a clear position and show solidarity in foreign policy with the EU’s commonly agreed positions, including on major international issues. The ongoing relevance of Serbia’s neutrality concept was demonstrated in early 2014, when Serbia refused to align with the EU’s common
position on Russia, which involved introducing targeted sanctions.\textsuperscript{242} A former Serbian Prime Minister and founding President of one of Serbia’s newest pro-EU opposition parties, Zoran Živković of New Party (\textit{Nova Stranka}, NS) argued that Serbia should introduce sanctions against Russia in 2014 as a matter of ‘principle’.\textsuperscript{243} This principle refers to the EU’s informal norm of solidarity with common decisions of the EU. The majority of commentators in Serbia on this issue have, however, stated that Serbia reserves a ‘moral right’, has an ‘obligation’, and is in a ‘special situation’ regarding Russia, a close trade partner, and for these reasons its position towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict ‘should remain neutral’.\textsuperscript{244} Some of Serbia’s long-held political beliefs and traditions might need to be renegotiated, or revisited before the country will be able to join the EU. Socialist Yugoslavia, whilst professing neutrality in foreign policy after its historic split with Stalin in 1948, was aligned on several major international issues with policies of the Soviet Union, some of which have cost the Yugoslav Government the opportunity to integrate deeper with the emerging EU, as this chapter will explain in more detail later.

Serbia’s attachment to specific ideas about freedom have been socially and politically constructed. This country has been long regarded as a political, military, social and cultural crossroads between East and West. The word ‘Serbia’ has both Eastern and Western origins. This word could derive from a Greek (‘Eastern’ heritage) word ‘Σέρβια’ (‘Servia’), meaning ‘land of the Serbs’. Another possible origin of ‘Serbia’ is from the Latin (‘Western’ heritage)

\textsuperscript{242} The economic attractions of South Stream energy project played a role in this decision too, as did the political leanings of Serbia’s current pro-EU coalition.


root ‘ser-’, meaning to watch over or protect.²⁴⁵ The Balkans, a rugged mountain region in Southeast Europe that has been inhabited since the ⁶ᵗʰ century by South Slavic tribes, including Serbs, has always been ethnically mixed, religiously diverse and highly syncretic, but politically divided.²⁴⁶ Principally because of Serbia’s unique geographical location, its political leaders have always been aware of their country’s strategic position, and created the discourse of neutrality and ‘East/West bridging’ to ensure Serbia’s national survival among big powers with interests in the Balkan region.

Serbia’s political leaders cherish the idea of independence from foreign rule and influence, which for the most part of Serbia’s medieval history was only an aspiration. People from Serbia are described as still being suspicious of foreigners, and external influence.²⁴⁷ Serbian historian and erstwhile liberal communist politician Latinka Perović observed that during Serbia’s relatively short post-Ottoman history, the country was torn between East and West, or between patriarchal and liberal views (with the former rejecting western influences and the latter idolising them).²⁴⁸ This dualism continues to the present, with Serbia being divided between the ‘Europhiles’ and the ‘Russophiles’. Serbia’s modern nation-building was influenced by its elite-level discourses on national independence (freedom from external powers) and neutrality (freedom in domestic and foreign policy decision-making).²⁴⁹ These two concepts are grouped

here as an idea of two freedoms. Its continued relevance can be seen in contemporary political discourses in Serbia.\textsuperscript{250}

The two freedoms idea is linked to a belief that Serbia’s survival as an independent state relies on strategic balancing between Eastern and Western centres of power. A frequently invoked example of this attitude in Serbian political discourses comes from the medieval reign of Serbian King Stefan the First Crowned, who secured his country’s autonomy in political and religious affairs in 1219 through a balancing act and negotiations with the two major centres of power at the time, Constantinople and Rome. The resultant creation of an autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church, independent from Greek, Byzantine and Roman Catholic influences, has been regarded by Serbian intellectuals as a model to follow.\textsuperscript{251} Therefore, the normative construct of East/West bridging (Serbia connecting civilisations), as well as wedging (Serbia at the crossroads of different civilisations), has a deep religious, cultural and political resonance for Serbs as a political community.

The idea of Serbia occupying a unique religious, economic, cultural and political space between East and West is associated with Stefan the First Crowned, and his subsequently canonised

\textsuperscript{250} In April 2012, the leader of Serbia’s largest opposition party, the Progressives (Srpska Napredna Stranka, SNS), Tomislav Nikolić said that Serbia has ‘two doors’, one leading to the West, and the other leading to the East. As President, he reiterated this position many times. RTS, ‘Nikolić: Srbija ka istoku i zapadu’, 6 April 2012, http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/1950/1zbori+2012/1078006/Nikolic+per+cent87+per+cent3A+Srbija+ka+istoku+i+zapadu.html, (accessed 1 December 2013). In conversations with then Opposition politician Tomislav Nikolić and his colleagues during the election campaign, it was mentioned that Serbia’s would first need to establish high-level dialogue with Kosovo before it could move closer towards the EU. This was the official policy of SNS. Interview with an opposition politician Tomislav Nikolić, Belgrade, April 2012. In previous fieldwork discussions with Nikolić, in January 2010, he had mentioned that the only way to improve relations with the EU was for Serbia to adopt a more constructive approach to the Kosovo issue. Interview with Opposition politician Tomislav Nikolić, Belgrade, January 2010.

\textsuperscript{251} J.V.A. Fine, The late Medieval Balkans: a critical survey from the late twelfth century to the Ottoman conquest, Michigan, Michigan University Press, 2009, pp. 116–117. John Fine also observes that Serbia’s religious independence initiated a close relationship between Church clerics and state affairs, a link that was externally criticised and its significance grossly exaggerated during the conflict in the Balkans in the 1990s. The Church’s role in state affairs increased after 2000. It has a high profile in negative campaigning against Serbia’s EU accession, which it links to issues such as the rights of sexual minorities that most Orthodox Churches oppose on moral grounds.
brother, St Sava, who was Serbia’s leading negotiator with great powers. In 1221, St Sava said to his peer:

The Orient thought that we are Occident, and Occident that we are Orient. Some of us conceived wrongly our place in this struggle of influences, shouting: we are not one or the other side, and others [claiming] that we are only one or the other! And we are, as I say to you Irinej, conditioned by destiny to be Orient in the Occident and Occident in the Orient.

Two years earlier, in 1219, St Sava authored the oldest known constitution of Serbia, commonly known as the Nomocanon (in Serbian, Savino zakonopravilo). This legal document enabled Serbia to seek religious and political independence from the Byzantine Emperor and the Patriarch of Constantinople by combining legal tenets from Roman (Western) and Byzantine (Eastern) medieval legal traditions. Furthermore, King Stefan had previously received a crown from the Roman Catholic Church in 1217, thereby establishing closer bonds with Rome which was a major source of political and religious power emanating from the West. By actively developing closer relations with both Rome and Constantinople, medieval Serbian leaders managed to secure in the 13th century their religious and political independence from two major centres of Christianity and power in Europe. The success of St Sava’s diplomatic mission was probably in part responsible for the popularity of St Sava’s cult in Serbia’s collective memory, especially during the Ottoman rule over Serbia that lasted for more than

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252 Former prince Rastko Nemanjić, with the monastic name of Sava, was Serbia’s first Archbishop and founder of the autocephalous Serbian Church.


254 St Sava’s Nomocanon and its relevance to the notion of independence for the Serbian people can be observed in its re-invocation in 1804 during Serbia’s First Uprising (Prvi Srpski Ustanak) against Ottoman rule, during which it was temporarily introduced as legal code. P. Zorić, ‘The Nomocanon of St. Sava and legal transplants’, Belgrade, Alan Watson Foundation, University of Belgrade School of Law, 2008, p. 6.
four centuries. St Sava represented a reference point for various Serbian independence movements during the Ottoman imperial rule in the Balkans, prompting the Ottomans to burn his relics in 1594 as a punishment for defiance by the Serbs.

Frequent re-invocations of St Sava’s legacy in contemporary Serbian discourses can be observed among the conservative political parties in Serbia, as well as among those who oppose Serbia’s European integration (‘EU sceptics’). Former Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, who founded the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) as an opposition party to the Milošević regime, invoked St Sava’s legacy in his book *Why Serbia and not the European Union*, to justify his position on why Serbia should not join the EU and NATO. Koštunica observed that the Serbian Orthodox Church was ‘the first, the oldest and always-present’ institution among the Serbian people, established by ‘a regent and his son’ (Dušan and Stefan of the Nemanjić dynasty), adding:

There are those who believe that the year of Serbia’s entry into the EU and NATO should be our Year Zero and that from that year on that we should calculate a time when a ‘new [pro-European] Serbia’ was created. In this ‘calendar’, there would be no place for the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Ahead of the parliamentary elections in 2014, Koštunica linked Serbia’s European integration to its loss of cultural and religious traditions, even language and the Cyrillic alphabet—which

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255 Collective memory was distinct from personal memory, as it represented dominant discourses promulgated by dominant elites in Serbian society that aimed to alter personal or group memories.
256 Following Serbia’s de facto independence from the Ottoman Empire when the former had become an autonomous principality in 1829, features of the Nomocanon were incorporated into Serbia’s civil code of 1844. This shows the historical continuity of the relevance of St Sava’s legacy into modern Serbian history. ibid.
257 V. Koštunica, *Zašto Srbija a ne Evropska Unija*, Belgrade, Fond Slobodan Jovanović, 2012, p. 41; the quote is a free translation by the author of this thesis.
is part of Serbia’s traditionalist or conservative understanding of national identity.\textsuperscript{258} However, Koštunica’s anti-EU position did not seem to resonate with the majority of Serbian voters, as the DSS and the SRS—which is also anti-EU oriented—could not obtain any parliamentary seats in the 2014 Serbian national parliamentary elections.\textsuperscript{259}

The prominent Balkan historian, Stevan K. Pavlowitch, has observed that modern Serbian nationalism was born out of opposition to foreign rule in the Balkans during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Ottoman Empire in the South-East, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the North-West.\textsuperscript{260} Serbian political leaders would also strategically allude to St Sava’s mission in order to secure popular support for revolts in seeking independence from foreign rule. Serbia’s East/West balancing act led occasionally to major political crises, such as in 1903, when pro-Austrian Serbian King Aleksandar Obrenović was massacred alongside his locally unpopular wife, Queen Draga, by pro-Russian Serbian army officers in a military coup.\textsuperscript{261} Following the transfer of royal power to the rival House of Karadžordević dynasty, Serbian foreign policy changed from being pro-Austrian towards being Russophile.\textsuperscript{262} In response, many Western European governments severed diplomatic relations with Serbia, accusing the new Serbian leaders of barbarism.\textsuperscript{263} Therefore, the themes of East/West balancing which have existed for

\textsuperscript{258} Such an attitude is typical of many anti-EU or EU-sceptic parties within the EU as well, such as the French Front National the Freedom Party of, Austria, the People’s Party of Denmark, Italy’s Lega Nord, the Greek Laos Party, the Belgian Vlaams Belan, Bulgaria’s Ataka and the British National Party.

\textsuperscript{259} The author of this thesis would like to thank Dr. Robert F. Miller for making this observation in a telephone conversation on 8 July 2014.


\textsuperscript{262} Scholar Ernest Petrić observed that the interaction between domestic and foreign policy fields ‘is in practice a continuous and bi-directional process of mutual influence. Changes in foreign policy as a result of internal political change are sometimes far-reaching and rapid’, as was the case after Milošević’s overthrow in October 2000 which resulted in a ‘sudden and significant shift in Serbian foreign policy’. E. Petrić, Foreign Policy: from conception to diplomatic practice, Leiden, Martinus Nijhoff, 2013, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{263} Most West European countries, including Great Britain but not Austria, cut off diplomatic relations with Serbia and regarded the regicide with repugnance. W.S. Vucinich, Serbia between East and West, 1954, p. 68.
a long time in Serbia’s political history, predate Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the two freedoms idea obtained a new meaning during the Cold War.

**Attachment to history in post-communist Europe**

Turbulent historical events of the 20th century deeply affected the ways in which history was viewed and talked about in Eastern European countries. Armed conflicts, especially the two world wars, claimed millions of lives and inflicted huge material losses. This reinforced the importance of historical memory for people in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, who continue to exhibit very passionate views about history.264 In this thesis, the term ‘Eastern Europe’ refers to the socialist countries in Central-East and South-East Europe that were an integral part of the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War, therefore excluding Yugoslavia.265

The distinguished Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm called the period in European history between the outbreak of the First World War and the end of the Cold War ‘the age of extremes’.266 Inter-state wars and civil discontent relating to the formation of new states

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264 See, for example, T.D. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, Bodley Head, Basic Books, 2010, p. vii. The EU’s emphasis on shared European history and the elimination of stereotypes of traditional allies and enemies has thus far assisted in the gradual alteration of nation-specific perspectives regarding major wars during 20th century Europe. The construction of European identity, which is not the subject of this thesis, is linked as a process to the creation of new narratives of peace and historical reconciliation, which is exactly how the European integration began after the Second World War. This is precisely what the Serbian traditionalists are resisting, the creation of new narratives, which they dismiss as the ‘foreign’, ‘Western’ and ‘undesirable’. These traditionalist views tend to be in minority. In April 2014, the results of a survey conducted in Serbia showed that only 11 per cent of all interviewees (out of a total number of 1,216 interviewees) did not see Serbia’s ‘approximation to the West’ as a positive thing. Ninamedia Research, ‘Život u Srbiji–izazovi i mogućnosti’, *Atlantic Council Serbia*, 17 April 2014, p. 5, http://www.atlanticcouncil.rs/attachments/article/176/Zapadne%20vrednosti%20u%20Srbiji%20-%20istra++ivanje%20javnog%20mnjenja%20Brezultati%5D.pdf, (accessed 3 May 2014).

265 A political construct in the term ‘Eastern Europe’, which continues to be used in some academic circles and the media, can have pejorative connotations to emphasise a lower level of economic development in the CEES in comparison with the rest of the EU.

affected the balance of power in the Balkans. It was in this geographical space that two large European land empires (Habsburg and Ottoman) had collided with indigenous ambitions for national self-determination, drawing imperial Russia and Britain into the conflict.\textsuperscript{267} The removal from the Balkans of foreign imperial rule by the Habsburg and the Ottomans after the First World War allowed for the creation of a first country where southern Slavs (Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, Slav Macedonians and Montenegrins) lived together in a pan-Slavic state. While, as Hobsbawm remarked, Western academics tend to be ignorant of the important historical background to the key political events of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, especially in Eastern Europe, scholars from formerly socialist countries tend, on the contrary, to carry ‘too much memory’ when dealing with their nations’ past.\textsuperscript{268}

**East, West and Balkans: historical perceptions as social constructs**

A distinction between ‘an abstract East’ and West, which ‘juxtaposes societies that coexisted but were opposed for political, religious or cultural reasons’, can be traced back to antiquity.\textsuperscript{269} Ancient Greeks regarded, on the one hand, peoples living to their East (especially Persians) and those living on the Balkan Peninsula as violent and anti-democratic. In the ancient Greek city-state of Athens, democracy as a system of ‘rule by the people’ was introduced by the Athenian leader Cleisthenes in 507 B.C.; it was a domain reserved for political deliberation by

\textsuperscript{267} Balkan is associated with a Turkish expression meaning ‘wooded mountain range’. Tom Gallagher has observed that the topology of this area made foreign invasion relatively easy while the mountain ranges separated different peoples. This contributed to the fragmentation of political power, including for communities of the same linguistic or religious origins (such as Serbs and Montenegrins). T. Gallagher, ‘To be or not to be Balkan? Romania’s quest for self-definition’, in S.R. Graubard (ed), *New Europe for the old?* New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 1999, p. 64.

\textsuperscript{268} Hobsbawm, *Age of extremes*, 1994, op. cit., p. 3.

\textsuperscript{269} M. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 11; 13–15. During the Middle Ages ‘religious’ was frequently associated with ‘political’, as notable members of religious hierarchy also held positions of power and decision-making in political affairs.
free, native and adult men (therefore, excluding slaves, foreigners and women).

The southern lands of the Balkan Peninsula where ancient Greeks lived were portrayed in their literary works, on the other hand, as an anchor of Western cultural civilisation, democracy, and as a legitimate source of knowledge about the outside world. Images of the Balkans as a violent place, and of peoples from the Balkans as having ‘barbaric’ or conflict-prone nature thus have ancient roots in the literary works of their neighbours. These negative images of the Balkans have been reproduced in the early 20th century, for instance, in German literary texts.

For many centuries, the differences between ‘East’ and ‘West’ were not only political but also religious. Religious leaders in Rome believed that Eastern lands, which were geographically and ‘culturally’ remote and situated in Egypt and Anatolia, were associated with the Christian Orthodoxy and the Byzantine Empire; and that the Catholic countries were the core political and religious centre of power in international relations. However, as scholar Maria Todorova observed, the Byzantine Empire was, after the fall of Western Roman Empire, the main reference point for Christianity for several centuries. The Byzantine Empire, ironically, regarded the European lands to its West to be an area of barbarity and crudeness. Historical variations in the meanings of ‘East’ and ‘West’ demonstrate that these terms have been politically and socially constructed and reproduced in various forms throughout European history. This can be also said for Serbia, which was regarded among Western European

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271 See, for example, ancient texts on the Persian wars by Herodotus that were written entirely from the Hellenic perspective. For further reading, see T.J. Dunbabin, Greeks and their eastern neighbours, London, Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, 1957.
272 For a useful demonstration of this point, see a study of cartoons on Serbia and the Balkans which were originally published in different German-language newspapers from 1903 to 1918, M. Ristović, Crni Petar i balkanski razbojnici: Balkan i Srbija u nemačkim satiričnim časopisima (1903–1918), 2nd edn, Belgrade, Čigoja, 2011.
274 ibid.
275 ibid.
political elites as a part of ‘Turkey-in-Europe’ for more than four hundred years —which was a term used for territories under the Ottoman rule in Southeast Europe.\textsuperscript{276} Since the Ottoman Empire and Catholic countries had a long history of conflict on European soil, Serbia, as an administrative unit within the Ottoman Empire, was also regarded in negative light. Serbia was described as a culturally backward and traditional or Oriental place by infrequent Western travellers due to its shared political history with the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{277} The Balkan region, including Serbia, was regarded by many Western Europeans as \textit{Near East}, rather than as European.\textsuperscript{278} The lower level of industrialisation in the Balkans is sometimes also invoked to demonstrate how backward this region has been in comparison with the more industrialised West.

In a broader sense, the terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ can also refer to the dichotomy between Islam (regarded as an Eastern religion) and Christianity (regarded by Romans as a ‘Western’ religion). In the age of colonialism, especially in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century (being the period of vastest European colonial expansion) the Orient was associated with European colonies in Asia, while the Occident was associated with the racial superiority and cultural dominance of Western European \textit{civilisation}. This worldview in particular was criticised by the Marxists and others as Eurocentric in nature, and as a justification by Western European colonial countries in their search for overseas markets to ‘exploit’.\textsuperscript{279} Some scholars today use a similar line of argument regarding Eastern enlargement of the EU. In their view, the EU’s expansion to the East

\textsuperscript{276} M. Glenny, \textit{The Balkans: nationalism, war and the great powers, 1804–1999}, New York, Viking, 1999, p. xxiii. Glenny also observes that the term ‘Balkan Peninsula’ was coined by the German geographer, Johann August Zeune, in 1808. ibid., p. xxii.


produced even more inequality between ‘old’ (EU-15) and ‘new’ EU members, resulting in various kinds of ‘exploitation’ of the CEES and their citizens as providers of cheap labour for Western European companies.\footnote{280}

Researcher Maria Tetovska has found that negative images of the Balkans were portrayed in the missionary anthropological texts from the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{281} Those literary works characterised the Balkans as an ‘inferior’ cultural and political space, in part ‘on the basis of its Eastern Orthodoxy from the angle of the Western, particularly Protestant, branch of the church’.\footnote{282} Eastern Orthodoxy was in those texts presented as ‘primitive, infantile, at an early stage of civilisation’, which was juxtaposed with the ‘sophisticated, rational, advanced West’.\footnote{283} People of the Balkans were judged as ‘backward, deficient and static’ on the basis of their religion, even though their religious sentiment played a key role in the wars for independence during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\footnote{284} Similar views of the Balkans were expressed in the German press in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which demonstrates a historical continuity of political perceptions of that region, including of Serbia.\footnote{285} These are precisely the kind of arguments, stereotypes and ideational constructs that opponents in the EU to Serbia’s membership employ when arguing against Serbia’s deeper European integration on normative grounds.


\footnote{282} ibid., p. xxxii.

\footnote{283} ibid., p. 55.

\footnote{284} ibid., p. 59–60.

As Yugoslavia was disintegrating in the early 1990s, negative images of Serbia and the Balkans resurfaced, and the term ‘balkanization’ was revived to describe the political fragmentation of a territorial unit into smaller units that are hostile towards each other.286 After the First World War, the ‘East’ was, in the European context, associated with Russia, and during the Cold War—with the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence. The term ‘West’ during the Cold War primarily referred to the US-led military alliance, NATO. After the Cold War, the ‘East’ was associated with the former Soviet bloc countries, while the ‘West’ generally referred to the Western liberal democracies.287 As political constructs, these terms are still present in the academic literature, although EU politics today is much more complex than during the Cold War, in part due to the Eastern enlargement.

A Balkan expert, Misha Glenny, accurately observed that Western reflections on the Balkans since the latter half of the 19th century have generally failed to consider the impact of the West on the region; experts are often too quick to attribute ‘an essentialist interpretation’ of the Balkans as a place of ‘ancient hatreds’ between various ethnic groups who have lived there for centuries.288 However, as Glenny suggests, the influence of great powers on the Balkans has contributed substantially to the history of this region being torn between different centres of power.289 Membership of the EU represents today a dividing line between the Balkan countries. By belonging to the EU some Balkan states, as EU members, gain opportunities that allow them to pursue a deeper integration with the EU by directly participating in EU policy-making.

289 ibid., p. xxv.
These opportunities, notably mobility of goods, people and capital, are not available to non-EU members in the Balkans, which are linked to the EU through a pre-accession process. Only by including the entire Balkan region into the EU would this dividing line be erased, but for that to occur, the promise of EU membership to the remaining states in the Balkans would need to be substantiated with more EU involvement.

**Defining Yugoslavia and its relationship with the West**

The following quote summarises how many observers saw Yugoslavia:

> During its whole existence, Yugoslavia was a respected country, which had diplomatic relations with almost all states of the world. Rarely feared by its neighbours, it was often busily engaged in promoting reconciliation in the Balkans and, relative to its moderate size and modest economic resources, was a beneficent, constructive factor in European politics.\(^{290}\)

The term ‘Yugoslavia’ literally means ‘the land of the South Slavs’, \textit{jug} meaning south in several South Slavic languages.\(^{291}\) During the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, there were three states named Yugoslavia: royal, interwar Yugoslavia (1918–1941), which was officially called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes until 1929; post-war or socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991), which had two official names after 1945, and a ‘rump Yugoslavia’ or the third Yugoslavia (FRY), which was effectively composed of Serbia and Montenegro.\(^{292}\) The creation of the first


\(^{292}\) Between 1945 and 1963, the state was known as the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, under its Constitution of 1946. In 1963, the country’s name was officially changed to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The third Yugoslavia (1992–2002) became known as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006), which ceased to exist in June 2006, after Montenegrins voted for independence in a referendum.
Yugoslavia had evolved out of a political idea in the 19th century. Habsburg and Balkan historian Dennison Rusinow has noted that the idea of Yugoslavia was ‘a century-old aspiration which held that the South Slav peoples should be united in one state’. The Yugoslav idea was ‘among the integrating national ideas that marked Europe’s 19th century’, which emerged at the same time as other European nations (Italy, Germany) were being constructed through political integration of previously autonomous territorial units. In intellectual circles, Yugoslavism was understood ‘as an attempt to create a united South Slav state that would rest on two pillars, freedom and equality’. Here again one can discern the re-emergence of the freedom idea, to which many groups in the Balkans commonly aspired.

Political sociologist Connie Robinson observed that, as a discourse, Yugoslavism had ‘framed political action and cultural initiatives for much of the 19th century and early 20th century’ for South Slavs. Yugoslavism as a normative construct came to prominence with the Illyrian movement led by the Croatian linguist, Ljudevit Gaj in the Habsburg Monarchy in the 1830s. Gaj and his supporters demanded political autonomy for the South Slavs from the Habsburgs, either through unification with Serbia or by following an independent path. Influential religious leaders, such as Croat Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and Canon Franjo Rački, supported Yugoslavism. They encouraged the creation of various cultural institutions (such as the Yugoslav Academy at Zagreb), which advocated the cultural and spiritual unification of South Slavic peoples, including linguistic unity, within a ‘federalised Habsburg Empire’.

The Yugoslav parliamentary group in the Austrian Parliament, called the Yugoslav Club, was

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296 Serbia formally became an autonomous principality within the Ottoman Empire in 1830.
also active in raising awareness of this aspiration by the Habsburgs, who saw in Serbia a source of threat.298 The Austro-Hungarian Empire formally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1908, triggering resentment among the local peoples especially Serbs.299 Yugoslavism was a narrative that conflicted with particularist ethno-nationalist discourses, which maintained that different South Slavic groups (Slovenes, Serbs and Croats) should be in separate states based on their ethnicity.300

The first or Royalist Yugoslavia came into existence as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes upon its proclamation in Belgrade on 1 December 1918 by mutual agreement of key political leaders of these three dominant ethnic groups.301 It was created through the ‘amalgamation of the previously independent kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro with sizeable fragments of the former Habsburg, Ottoman and Venetian empires’.302 Petar I Karadordević was its head of state until 1921 when his son, Aleksandar I, took the throne. The country changed its name to Yugoslavia in 1929 to symbolise the national unity of its constituent nations, and its centralised government. In 1929, therefore, the idea of Yugoslavism became an official name for a multi-national state in the Balkans that was united under the Serbian leadership, which some ethnic groups increasingly saw as being hegemonic. Since the first Yugoslavia’s creation, there was always a conflict between the ‘nationalist and

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299 The First World War was triggered when a 17-year old Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, executed a murder plot (with other members of the underground Black Hand organisation) to kill the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria. For an overview of different historical interpretations regarding the origins of the First World War, see I.M. Massey, ‘The Diplomatic origins of the First World War’, Royal Institute of International Affairs, vol. 25, no. 2, 1949, pp. 182–191. A lot of reviews of the causes of the First World War have appeared recently. See, for instance, M. MacMillan, The War that ended peace: the road to 1914, New York, Random House, 2013.

300 The key obstacle to the ethno-particularist notion of state building was the ethnic plurality of the Western Balkans. Ethno-particularist ideas are also known as ‘Greater Serbia’ and ‘Greater Croatia’ paradigms that surfaced in the context of civil wars that replaced Yugoslavism as the dominant idea of political organisation in Yugoslavia by the early 1990s.

301 Royalist Yugoslavia was ethnically mixed, and included, apart from South Slavs, Albanians, Hungarians, Jews, Russians, Germans, and other ethnic and religious groups.

302 Kosta St. Pavlowitch, op. cit.
integrationalist’ political elements. Political movements that were advancing anti-Yugoslav ideas became active at home and abroad, challenging the newly created unitary state. Pawlowitch comments that the ‘Yugoslavicizing’ policies of Aleksandar I were perceived by many Croats in particular as a ‘way of implementing the Serbian centralism, if not hegemony’. These perceptions were, in part, responsible for the assassination of the Yugoslav leader in 1934 by Croatian and Bulgarian nationalists during an official visit to France.

The Yugoslav Government declared military and political neutrality as the Second World War broke out in 1939. By 1941, royalist Yugoslavia was surrounded from all sides by the Axis powers and Nazi-controlled puppet regimes: Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria to the north and east; Austria in the west, and Albania under the control of Fascist Italy in the south. Under intense pressure from Germany, the Cvetković–Maček Yugoslav Government signed the so-called tripartite pact with the Axis powers in Vienna on 25 March 1941, which meant that royalist Yugoslavia had effectively sided with the Nazis. Prince Pavle Karadorđević of Yugoslavia, who apparently harboured territorial ambitions against Greece, possibly regarded the pact as an opportunity to advance these ambitions, but he also misjudged public sentiment in Serbia. The Tripartite pact divided the country along ethnic and political lines, with many Croats supporting the Axis powers and many Serbs rejecting the pact. Large anti-German

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305 Vienna, as the former capital of the Habsburg Empire, has had a particularly negative image in the collective memory for Serbs. The location of the signing ceremony with Nazi Germany had thus only reinforced the negative feelings of the Serbs towards the Nazis and Germany as a country. Both Austria and Germany had been Serbia’s major national enemies during the First World War.  
307 Mass demonstrations broke out in protest across Serbia with the celebrated slogan ‘Bolje rat nego pakt, Bolje grob nego rob’, which meant that Serbs believed it was ‘better to be in a war than have the pact’ with the Nazis, and that it was ‘better’ to die than live under a puppet regime. Thus the idea of national independence, once
demonstrations erupted in Belgrade after the pact was signed. A group of pro-Western Yugoslav military officers, which received some support from the British Government, staged a successful coup d’état on 27 March 1941. They replaced the Yugoslav regent with a 17-year old Petar II Karadordević, who was proclaimed fit to govern despite being underage. Nazi Germany’s leader, Adolf Hitler, regarded the Belgrade coup as a personal insult and an unacceptable act of defiance, and pledged to destroy Yugoslavia as a national and territorial unit.

In response to the Belgrade coup and without issuing a formal declaration of war, the Axis powers attacked Serbia on 6 April 1941 from several neighbouring countries. Under the leadership of an Austrian commander, Alexander Lohr, a series of ‘carpet bombing’ attacks commenced the campaign, which was followed by a ground invasion. Codenamed ‘Operation Retribution’, this military operation targeted major strategic, military, political and cultural establishments, including the Serbian National Library (1832–1941), destroying over 350,000 books and 500,000 unique manuscripts. The attacks in 1941, which came after the Axis powers had already bombed Warsaw, Rotterdam and London, claimed many thousands of lives in Yugoslavia and destroyed much of Yugoslavia’s pre-war institutions and infrastructure.

The same day the Nazis attacked Yugoslavia and Greece, royalist Yugoslavia signed a treaty

again, resurfaced in Serbia’s political history as a legitimising force used by the elites (in this case, military and political dissident leaders). Their actions caused a major reorientation of Serbia’s foreign policy.

309 V. Dedijer, ‘Sur l’armistice germano-yougoslave’, Revue d’histoire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, vol. 6, no. 23, July 1956, p. 3. The proponents of anti-EU discourses in Serbia today believe that by joining the EU, Serbia would cease to exist both as a national and territorial unit.
of non-aggression and friendship with the Soviet Union. Royalist Yugoslavia capitulated on 17 April 1941, after which it was partitioned among the Axis states, which created pro-Nazi puppet regimes on its former territory (Map 2, Appendix 2). In late April 1941, German-occupied Serbia came under a military government, in response to which two resistance groups sprung up with opposing resistance ideas, the monarchist loyalist Četnici (singular: ‘Četnik’) and the communist-led Partizani. While the former, under Colonel Dragoljub “Draža” Mihailović, sought to sabotage German military activities but avoided direct attacks as for every Nazi killed, one hundred civilians would be executed in occupied territories. The Partizani, under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, called for a large uprising against the Germans and ambushed their troops directly.

In Serbia’s collective memory, the most notorious regime created by the Nazi dismemberment of pre-war Yugoslavia was the puppet Nazi state of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH). The support of the British Government and other Allied nations (in particular, Russia’s Red Army) was crucial to the Partisans’ success and the national liberation of the formerly royalist Yugoslav lands in 1944–45. Tito emerged as a leading figure in the Partisans’ anti-Axis resistance struggle, eventually securing vital British support for his combat

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313 In the Serbian town of Kragujevac, over 5,000 school children, their teachers and other civilians were executed as a punishment for Serbian resistance activities.
314 The NDH period is remembered for the extreme atrocities committed against the Serbs, Jews, Roma people (gypsies) and political opponents of the puppet pro-Nazi Croatian regime. The four years of Axis occupation in Yugoslavia and resultant civil war among the partisan guerrillas, Nazis and ethno-nationalist armed groups have left a scar in the collective memories of all Balkan populations. Crimes committed by the Nazis and their supporters were later cited as a justification by the communist authorities for the expulsion from Yugoslavia of hundreds of thousands of Germans, Italian and Bulgarians. These justifications were made use of again when the communists set about eliminating anti-communist opposition. This ethnic cleansing was a forbidden topic in Titoist Yugoslavia. See J. Tomašević, The Chetniks: war and revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945, Chicago, Stanford University Press, 1975. Z. Janjetović, ‘The disappearance of the Germans from Yugoslavia: expulsion or emigration’, Society for Serbian-German Cooperation, 1991.
units in late 1943. Britain previously supported the Četnici, who were anti-communist and loyal to the young Serbian King who had fled to Britain after Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece in April 1941. Historian Stephen A. Hart has estimated that out of approximately 1.7 million dead from royalist Yugoslavia, ‘one million were caused by Yugoslav killing Yugoslav’.317

The Partisans’ appeals for unity among all ethnic groups who had lived in the first Yugoslavia received wider social appeal than competing ethno-nationalist discourses, although they also used coercion against their ideological opponents. After the war, the Yugoslav communists exploited for their own political purposes their reputation of being a ‘national liberation movement’ as a key element in socialist Yugoslavia’s state-building project. Carefully selected war experiences and stories of partisan ‘heroism’ during the war were contrasted with nationalist Četnik or Ustaše ‘betrayals’, which were frequently invoked by the communists to justify the Yugoslav Government’s repressive actions.318 As political murders were amongst many suppressed topics in socialist Yugoslavia, an accurate estimate of Yugoslavia’s political casualties may never be known.319

Some suggest that the creation of Yugoslavia, as an externally-supported project, was constructed upon a distorted narrative of the Second World War, which hid the truth about the

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316 In 1939, Tito became the Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.
318 The author of this thesis does not seek to equate Četnik and Ustaše groups, but to show that for the communists, all nationalist alternatives were eroding the legitimacy of their state-building project.
civilian victims in order to gather popular support for Yugoslavism. Rather than emphasising a common European tragedy, this perspective is internally-focused. It reinvokes the memory of heavy Serbian wartime losses and victimhood, which have a particularly strong emotive resonance among Serbs. This topic might, at first glance, seem to be unrelated to Serbia’s European integration. But the perspectives that emphasise victimhood and suffering by the Serbs due to foreign occupation are also linked to the political resistance to the idea of Serbia joining the EU. Boško Obradović, one of the leaders of the right-wing nationalist Dveri Srpske political party, said that the first task of Serbs today should consist of an ‘intra-Serbian integration’, advancing the idea that all Serbs should live in one state, including Serbs from Kosovo and from the Serbian administered area in Bosnia-Herzegovina, known as Republika Srpska. This perspective also emphasises Serbia’s traditional alliance with Russia, and promotes a strong anti-NATO rhetoric.

The Yugoslav League of Communists ultimately succeeded in building the second Yugoslavia through a narrative of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ (Bratstvo i jedinstvo), reinforced especially in the early years by widespread and severe repression. This narrative differs from the principle

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321 B. Obradović, Srpski zavet: srpsko nacionalno pitanje danas, Srpski Sabor Dveri, 2nd edn, 2008, p. 15. This political party calls itself ‘Movement for life of Serbia’, although it was registered as a political party before it was to take part in Serbia’s parliamentary elections in 2012. Although Dveri Srpske did not gain parliamentary representation at the national level, it is now represented in the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, and at the municipal level. Tanjug, ‘Dveri Movement submits list for March elections’, 12 February 2014, http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2014&mm=02&dd=12&nav_id=89308, (accessed 19 November 2013).


323 Communist narratives were promoted through print material, radio, public speeches, and also through commissioned films. For the spread of Yugoslavism as a new national narrative through movies, see P. Levi, Disintegration in frames: aesthetics and ideology in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinema, Chicago, Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 80.
of pan-Slavism, which has been at various times promoted by the Russians.  

Pan-Slavism is linked to the idea of political unity among all Slavic peoples (rather than South Slavs only).

‘Brotherhood and Unity’ was officially sanctioned by the Partisans in November 1943 during the second session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ).  

This AVNOJ session included non-communists as well as partisans under Tito, who were a key resistance group during the Second World War operating on the territories of the first Yugoslavia. AVNOJ was declared to be the legislative authority for the liberated territories, especially after Tito’s Partisans received support from the Allied powers (US, UK, and USSR) in December 1943.

The Yalta conference in 1945 confirmed AVNOJ’s place as a temporary Parliament for the second Yugoslavia, until the new Yugoslav Constitution was enacted in 1946. As the Western European countries were embarking on European integration by establishing their first supranational institution, the European Coal and Steel Community in July 1952, Yugoslavia’s narrative of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ among South Slavs also had the integrationist focus. This is why some scholars compare the EU’s integration project with Yugoslavia’s state-building.

Eurosceptics, including in Serbia, often draw parallels between Yugoslavia and the EU when discussing obstacles to the EU’s integration project in the times of economic recession.

The one-sided reporting of complex events that occurred during the Second World War in the Balkans is evident in the pro-communist reporting in the official newspaper Borba, as well as Serbia’s oldest newspaper Politika, which the author of this thesis examined at the Historical Archives of Belgrade, in June 2012. These newspapers, for example, featured on the front pages the names of prominent local ‘enemies of the state’ who had been executed. These names were included in the pro-communist reporting in the official newspaper Borba, as well as Serbia’s oldest newspaper Politika, which the author of this thesis examined at the Historical Archives of Belgrade, in June 2012. These newspapers, for example, featured on the front pages the names of prominent local ‘enemies of the state’ who had been executed. These voices were silenced and often disappeared from the public sphere.

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325 This AVNOJ session included non-communists as well as partisans under Tito, who were a key resistance group during the Second World War operating on the territories of the first Yugoslavia. AVNOJ was declared to be the legislative authority for the liberated territories, especially after Tito’s Partisans received support from the Allied powers (US, UK, and USSR) in December 1943.


included priests, academics, artists and whoever else was accused of being anti-communist.

One article from the daily *Borba* in April 1945 attempted to draw differences between the first and second Yugoslavia:

The main differences in foreign policy between old and new Yugoslavia lies in the fact that in royalist Yugoslavia there was a gap between foreign policy action and popular demands; now [in socialist Yugoslavia] there is an absolute national agreement with the foreign policy activities of the Yugoslav national government. The key aim of Yugoslavs in the foreign policy domain is: close friendship with all people who are fighting with us to eliminate fascism and are ready to respect the democratic and national rights of Yugoslavs; above all, [we aim towards] brotherly relations with all Slavs, with the big and powerful USSR.  

One can discern from this quote the influence of Soviet-style pan-Slavism and the USSR in general on the Yugoslav Government. This rhetoric profoundly changed and moved more towards Yugoslavism after Tito’s parting with Stalin’s policies in 1948, which will be discussed in the next section. The Yugoslav communists linked Yugoslavia’s state-building with their anti-fascist struggle in public statements, thereby claiming a greater degree of popular legitimacy from the first Yugoslavia.  

Despite the fact that Yugoslavia received significant Western aid for war-recovery efforts, for ideological reasons it presented itself as Moscow’s closest ally in 1945, as the excerpt above suggests. This is why a political conflict between the two communist leaders, Stalin and Tito, certainly caught many scholars by surprise three years later, when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc in June 1948 due to a

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329 B. Ziherl, ‘Dve spoljne politike’, *Borba, Komunist*, vol. 10, no. 93, 16 April 1945, p. 2. This newspaper was accessed in the Historical Archives of Belgrade during the author’s fieldwork in April/May 2012.

falling-out with the USSR. This paved the way for Yugoslavia’s ‘alternative’ foreign policy in the global balance of power, which it saw as being split between two main spheres of influence: the US-led Western bloc, and the USSR-led Eastern bloc (‘the Soviet bloc’). Understanding this position is essential in order to obtain a deeper insight into elite-level sectors of Serbian society which still advocate Serbia’s independence from global centres of power.

**Yugoslavia’s unique foreign policy in divided Europe**

The uniqueness of Yugoslavia’s foreign policy in divided Europe was based on the principle of its neutrality in international relations and political independence from the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the US. This was particularly manifested by Yugoslavia’s split with the Soviet bloc, and the Yugoslavia-West Germany tensions of 1957–1968, which prevented Yugoslavia from developing closer relations with the EU. The principles of neutrality and independence were demonstrated by Yugoslavia’s key role in founding the NAM. The Yugoslav Government also supported pro-independence movements in the Third World against the interests of West European countries. Yugoslavia also had a unique role as a labour exporter to Western Europe, which differentiated it from other CEES. These issues will be examined further in the next several sections.

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331 Members of the Soviet bloc were also members of the Warsaw Pact, which included apart from the Soviet Union, Albania (which withdrew in 1968), the German Democratic Republic (which withdrew in 1990), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. In the end after decades of armed confrontation, the Warsaw Pact’s only military operation in Europe was the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, in which Albania and Romania did not participate. The Warsaw Pact formally ceased to exist in 1991 after democratic changes swept Eastern Europe, resulting in regime changes in the CEES which turned towards the EU and away from Moscow.
Tito’s break with Stalin in 1948

After the initial period of national consolidation, Yugoslavia became more independent from Moscow’s influence following the celebrated Yugoslav-Soviet split in June 1948 when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform in Bucharest, which for Yugoslavia raised the fear of a foreign invasion. Stalin perceived Tito’s self-confidence and growing popularity after the Second World War as ‘an affront to his authority and an obstacle to his policy towards the West’, in part because of Tito’s support for a large Balkan federation of states that could have included Albania, Bulgaria and parts of Greece. Tito’s variant of socialism with workers’ self-management principles was seen as divisive not only in other socialist countries but in communist parties in Western Europe, such as in the UK, causing factional splits.

Following Yugoslavia’s political split with the Soviet bloc in 1948, Yugoslavia began to oppose the USSR’s policy in the Balkans. The Soviets’ hostile position increased Yugoslavia’s economic isolation whilst contributing to the worsening of Yugoslavia’s regional relationships, especially with Albania. This ran contrary to the British Government’s policy that extended support to the Greek Government. It also ran contrary to the Soviet Union’s wishes, which had rejected the Yugoslav idea of uniting South Slavs (including Bulgarians)

334 Furthermore, according to the so-called Percentages Agreement, Churchill and Stalin nominally agreed in October 1944 to divide Eastern Europe into spheres of influence, with Yugoslavia being divided in half. A. Resis, ‘The Churchill-Stalin Secret “Percentages” Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October 1944’, The American Historical Review, vol. 83, no. 2, April 1978, pp. 368–387.
335 Prior to the split Tito and Stalin were close to sealing a deal with Albanian leaders to station several military units there during the Greek civil war (March 1946–October 1949), in which Yugoslavia supported the rebellious Greek communists. J. Perović, ‘The Tito–Stalin split: a reassessment in light of new evidence’, Journal of Cold War Studies, vol. 9, no. 2, 2007, p. 34.
and Albanians into a larger territorial unit at the expense of Northern Greece. At the same time, the Soviets did not wish to risk a conflict with the West over Yugoslavia’s policy in the Balkans, which Stalin feared could have led to its achieving regional hegemony if the unification plan went ahead. Using new evidence from the Soviet archives, scholar Jeronim Perović attributes the split not to ideological differences in pursuing different paths to socialism, as many of Yugoslavia’s official historians had claimed, but to Yugoslavia’s increase in leverage over its neighbours:

To Stalin’s dismay … Tito continued to pursue an expansionist foreign policy agenda toward Yugoslavia’s neighbours, especially Albania, against Moscow’s stern advice at a time when Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe as a whole was hardening.\(^{336}\)

Yugoslavia’s split with the Soviet bloc improved the image of the Yugoslav Government in the West. As Dennis Hupchick has observed:

The majority of westerners had little knowledge of, or interest in, Balkan affairs beyond a rudimentary, generalised, and frequently oversimplified awareness of assorted cold war-related situations: Yugoslavia was a ‘good’ communist country ever since Marshal Josip Tito broke with Joseph Stalin in 1948 and mixed capitalism with socialism.\(^{337}\)

Tito’s foreign policy was henceforth based on tactical balancing between the two superpowers.\(^{338}\) The Soviets were so alarmed by the Yugoslav model of an independent path

\(^{336}\) ibid.
\(^{338}\) Yugoslavia’s wartime hero and leader of the partisan anti-Nazi guerrilla movement, Josip Broz Tito, was one of the creators of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and its first Secretary-General. InSerbia Network
to socialism and the possibility of this model spreading to neighbouring countries that they eliminated many prominent politicians in Eastern Europe whom they accused of the crime of ‘Titoism’ (most notably Albanian K. Xoxe, Hungarian L. Rajk, and Bulgarian T. Kostov). Tito managed to maintain the independence of Yugoslav socialism from ‘both Soviet Communism and Western capitalism by establishing political and economic relations with sympathetic regimes’. As one of the founders of an alternative organisation of non-aligned states, which numbered over 100 members in the 1970s, Tito’s brand of internationalism also raised suspicions in the eyes of the West as he also supported the anti-colonial struggles of many Non-Aligned Movement’s members against the political and economic interests of Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Italy in Africa, Middle East and Asia.

Political scientist Branislav Radeljić notes that ‘apart from being a trading partner and labour exporter, Yugoslavia did not enjoy much EU attention prior to the actual outbreak of Yugoslavia’s demise’ in the 1990s. Radeljić attributes a ‘fraught and difficult to define’ state of affairs between the EU and Yugoslavia to ‘diplomatic ignorance’ of Western diplomats beyond Yugoslavia’s capital, and their perceived ‘lack of interest, understanding and knowledge regarding Yugoslavia’s domestic problems and ethnic fragility’. From the author’s own research of consulting archival sources, it appears that Western diplomats were well aware of Yugoslavia’s diversity, including differences between individual Republics, as well as the economic discrepancy between Serbia’s Northern (Vojvodina) and Southern (Kosovo and Metohija) autonomous provinces. In addition, anti-Yugoslav ‘terrorist’ movements were active across Western and Northern Europe and as far as Australia in the

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340 Brown, Yugoslavia, the lost country, 2005, op. cit, p. 111.
342 Research of de-classified documents in the National Archives of Australia, August 2012.
1960s and 1970s. Their political activism demonstrated to the Western governments the complexity of Yugoslavia’s internal politics.

As this chapter’s opening quote suggested, the Yugoslav nationals generally enjoyed more personal freedoms than others in the Soviet bloc, but only since the late 1950s and only those who were not assessed by the state security organs to be political dissidents. On the domestic front, Mirko Tepavac suggests that although Tito had broken with Stalin’s international politics, in the early years since the split Tito had not deserted Stalin’s political methods, including collectivisation, nationalisation of private holdings, and rapid industrialisation and urbanisation built on unpaid labour.343 One particularly characteristic similarity in domestic policy between the Soviets and Tito was the elimination of political alternatives. But whereas over time, Tito began to relax his domestic policies, Moscow remained very sensitive to any signs of domestic liberalisation in ‘fraternal’ socialist countries.

As if not to allow other socialist countries to follow Tito’s example, the Soviet Union led military incursions into Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 to crack down on reformist trends.344 The elimination of political opposition in socialist countries more broadly, including in Yugoslavia, caused an inestimable number of victims.345 A recently formed Commission of experts in Serbia estimates that at least 52,000 people were killed in Serbia alone between 1944–45 and 1953.346 Anti-Yugoslav narratives, promoting self-determination


(such as during the so-called ‘Croatian Spring’ of nationalist sentiment in 1971) were strengthened by external support from diasporas as far as in Canada and Australia. The Yugoslav diplomatic, consular and trade missions became a target of militant attacks and expressions of anti-Yugoslav protest in the active diaspora communities. The notorious Yugoslav security organs kept many of these groups in check, including by assassinations on foreign soil, which only increased their opposition to Yugoslavism.

Although political pluralism, nationalism and the Soviet brand of Communism were all banned in Yugoslavia, some social pluralism was allowed as the citizens could form apolitical clubs. Yugoslavia’s Vice-President and long-time chief of Yugoslavia’s the State Security Administration or secret police (Uprava državne bezbednosti, UDBA), Aleksandar Ranković, became an opponent of Tito’s moves towards decentralisation. Ranković’s policies were also not viewed with much sympathy in the West during his time in power (1946–1966), especially his central role in purges against Kosovo Albanians. Following Ranković’s dismissal by Tito in 1966 after a wire-tapping affair, the reformist leaders in other republics rose to prominence, stirring the sensitive question of ethnic nationalism.

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349 Ranković’s ideas also influenced at the time a young communist, Slobodan Milošević. The influence was visible after he assumed leadership of the Serbian League of Communists in May 1986. For more discussion about ideational influences on Milošević’s policy on Kosovo, see L.J. Cohen, Serpent in the bosom: the rise and fall of Slobodan Milošević, Boulder, Westview Press, 2002.

350 The wire-tapping incident occurred when it became known that Yugoslavia’s secret service agency, UDBA, was wiretapping senior officials, including Tito’s offices and possibly, bedroom. Former US Foreign Service officer, Louis Sell, has observed that Ranković’s removal was diminished levels of control by the Yugoslav security services over the the military, which was ‘traditionally one of key levers of communist civilian control over the military’. More broadly, it led to a major liberalisation of the domestic regime as well as further freeing of people movements in and out of the country and increased Western influence. L. Sell, Slobodan Milošević and the destruction of Yugoslavia, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002, p. 21.
A specialist on national minorities in Yugoslavia, Jill Irvine, observed that ethnic tensions particularly increased in Croatia in the late 1960s and early 1970s to the point that some Serbian and Croatian communities were arming and readying themselves for violent confrontation. Tito personally intervened in the Croatian Spring to stop nationalist trends in Croatia, removing reformists from influential positions and imprisoning others, including Franjo Tuđman who later was to assume the Presidency of Croatia and a principal political role in its war for independence from Yugoslavia. Irvine rightly points out that the period of reformist trends during the Croatian Spring and the political turmoil that its events generated (including Tito’s heavy-handed response) shaped ‘the political perceptions and actions of both the leaders and the public in Croatia twenty years later’.

Similarly, for the Serbs in Croatia the events of the Croatian Spring were remembered as a time of sharp reduction in the role of Serbs in Croatian political life. Twenty years later, Serbs in Croatia were driven by a similar sense of insecurity and fear of marginalisation, when they resorted to similar methods as the Croatian Spring, by seizing greater autonomy for themselves. This attitude by the Serb minority towards the anti-Yugoslav and nationalist Croatian leadership proved to be disastrous for Serb-Croat relations. This demonstrates that national discourses and collective memories, including those the Yugoslav era, constitute extremely important mobilising factors for political action by ethnic groups from that region, including Serbs.

352 ibid, p. 149.
353 ibid, p. 158.
The principle of non-alignment

Non-alignment during the Cold War was ‘the principle of avoidance of affiliation with either the Soviet bloc or the Atlantic alliance, while affirming an active presence in foreign policy through the Non-Aligned Movement’.\textsuperscript{354} According to Boris Kanzleiter, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru probably coined this term in 1954.\textsuperscript{355} However, in her unofficial biography, Tito’s widow, Jovanka Broz, claimed that this idea was originally hers, dating back to an international conference of the Third World countries in 1955. She was considered to be a high-risk individual by the Yugoslav security services and held under house arrest for decades after socialist Yugoslavia’s disintegration without being formally charged with anything. In 2013, Jovanka Broz said to her unofficial biographer, Serbian journalist Žarko Jokanović:

The Non-Aligned Movement was my idea. It emerged when we [she and Tito] were in Indonesia, at the Bandung conference … Then I said to Tito, in front of Nehru: ‘Why are you only complaining about the two blocs? Why don’t you create something new yourselves? Let’s form something together, something third, like a wedge between those two superpowers’ … After hearing that, Nehru saluted my idea, saying that I was right. Everything went into that direction thereafter, and the NAM was formed.\textsuperscript{356}

Historian Mark Almond’s findings lend some weight to Jovanka Broz’s statement. Almond observed in 1994 in his seminal work, \textit{Europe’s backyard war: the war in the Balkans}, that at the Bandung conference in Indonesia Tito had laid the foundations of a new movement, NAM,

\textsuperscript{356} Ž. Jokanović, \textit{Jovanka Broz–Moj život moja istina}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} edn, Belgrade, Blic, 2013, pp. 49–50.
to provide Yugoslavia’s support to newly independent Third World states, such as India.\footnote{M. Almond, *Europe’s backyard war: the war in the Balkans*, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1994, p. 160.} At the Bandung conference, twenty-nine Asian, Middle East and African nations plus Yugoslavia (as the only representative of a European socialist state) met to discuss decolonisation.\footnote{Western European states, including EU members, supported the military actions of the French, Dutch and other West European armies against pro-independence groups during a decolonisation wave immediately after the end of the Second World War. Examples include the French-Algerian war 1954–62, in which Yugoslavia supported the Algerians, and the Indonesian war of Independence against the Dutch 1945–49, which in part instigated Tito and Sukarno’s amity. W. Mausbach, ‘European perspectives on the war in Vietnam’, *German Historical Institute Bulletin*, no. 30, spring 2002, pp. 71–86.} Tito became increasingly supportive of foreign policy positions of non-Western countries, including Egypt during the Suez crisis in 1956. This attitude put him at odds with the British and the French Governments, leading to a downgrade in Yugoslavia’s relationship with Western European countries during the period when the EU was being formed.\footnote{National Archives of Australia, ‘Yugoslavia, foreign policy, general’, A1838, 73/1/1, part one.} NAM was officially inaugurated in Belgrade in 1961, which was an endorsement and diplomatic triumph for Tito’s independent foreign policy on the international stage. In 1961, Yugoslavia joined the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC). According to Dean Vuletić, Yugoslavia was the only socialist country from Eastern Europe to take part in this Western European cultural event.\footnote{Finland, which was a neutral country during the Cold War, also began its participation in the ESC in 1961. European Broadcasting Union, ‘Eurovision Song Contest 1961’, http://www.eurovision.tv/page/history/by-year/contest?event=278, (accessed 1 May 2014).} Vuletić sees Yugoslavia’s participation in the ESC as an expression of its non-aligned position in Europe during the Cold War, and as an attempt to reaffirm its cultural and political independence from the USSR.\footnote{Other Eastern European countries entered this contest after the fall of their socialist governments in 1989–90. D Vuletić, ‘The socialist star: Yugoslavia, Cold War politics and the Eurovision Song Contest’, in I.R. and R.D. Tobin (eds), *A song for Europe: popular music and politics in the Eurovision Song Contest*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2007, p. 84.} In response, the Eastern bloc created a song contest of its own, the Intervision, which was, however, short-lived (1977–1980).\footnote{At a time of rising tensions over Ukraine between Russia and the EU and the West generally, the Intervision was revived as a concept in May 2014. It is due to run in October 2014 with participants from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and Russia-aligned former Soviet states.} Stalin’s
death in 1953 did not prevent Moscow seeing Yugoslavia and Tito as a nuisance, despite some improvement in bilateral relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia.363

The first commercial agreements with the EU

Yugoslavia was Southeast Europe’s first socialist country to enter into commercial relations with the EU.364 Its member states were able to invest in Yugoslav companies after a change in Yugoslav regulations in 1967. However, the breakdown in Yugoslavia’s relationship with West Germany in 1957 derailed any effort to forge a closer political relationship with the EU. By claiming a ‘special status’ in world politics, Tito’s Yugoslavia was attempting to reassert its growing confidence and independent status from the USSR. But President Tito’s worldview often clashed with the geopolitical interests of former colonial powers. Yugoslavia directly aided pro-independence movements from North Africa to Southeast Asia, including by sending them limited technical and military assistance. This was a practice also pursued by Soviet satellites and the People’s Republic of China, which meant that Yugoslavia could have been following the Soviet bloc’s common line on decolonisation despite Tito’s break with Stalin.365 Some Western countries indeed saw it that way.

363 Yugoslavia challenged the political order of the Soviet Union in Europe, with the Moscow leadership falsely accusing, for example, anti-Soviet protagonists in the Hungarian uprising of 1956 as ‘Tito’s spies’. The Soviets used the same argument for convicting political opponents within the Soviet Union for the crimes of Titoism, which referred to any divergence from the USSR’s policies. The Soviet leader Khrushchev visited Yugoslavia in 1955 and 1963, but the USSR did not succeed in its attempt to lure Tito back into its orbit. W. Taubman, Khrushchev: the man and his era, London, Simon & Schuster Inc., 2004, pp. 267–270, 608–609.

364 The only other socialist country from Central-East and Southeast Europe with which the EU concluded a trade agreement in the 1960s was Poland. European Parliament, Monthly Bulletin of European Documentation, no. 11, November 1965, p. 92.

Yugoslavia was a founding nation of the UN, having signed the UN Charter on 26 June 1945 at the San Francisco conference. In the UN’s De-colonization Committee, Yugoslavia was active in representing the Third World, through which President Tito hoped to extend his own brand of socialism in the world. By siding with Third World countries, Yugoslavia often distanced itself from Western European countries. During the 1950s and 1960s decolonisation wave, this became somewhat problematic for relations with Western Europe, as Yugoslavia was often acting against the interests of the former colonial powers in the UN. Despite having received significant post-war recovery aid from the West, Yugoslavia was eager to show its independence from the West in foreign policy. Another example of this was a decision to recognise the East German Government in 1957, which led to a cessation of political relations with West Germany. This caused a delay in its effort to improve its political and economic relations with the West after the split with the Soviet bloc.

**Problematic partner: France**

During Charles De Gaulle’s French Presidency (1959–1969) Yugoslavia had an ambivalent relationship with France, despite the fact that the Yugoslav partisans and the French army were allies during the Second World War. However, the French feared that ‘the communist deluge could easily spread to France and Italy, with their strong Communist parties’, and after that to other European countries. This is why France was a supporter of Yugoslavia’s split from the Soviet bloc. The West was also worried that if the Soviet Union attacked Yugoslavia, this could be a trigger for another war in Europe. They were eager to extend support to Tito to make that

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less likely. This also provided a chance of ‘penetrating into the world behind the Iron Curtain’.  

Decisions by Yugoslavia’s governing communist clique to, for example, assist armed independence movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America against French, Italian, Dutch or Belgian armies after the Second World War was justified by symbolically connecting this situation of the liberation fighters to Yugoslav experiences of living under foreign occupation during the Second World War. On 18 January 1958, a Yugoslav freighter Slovenia was forcibly searched by French warships off the Algerian coast because it was suspected of transporting weapons to anti-French rebel groups. After the arms were unloaded the vessel was allowed to proceed on its voyage, but the Yugoslav authorities lodged a protest with the French Government. Yugoslavia then recognised the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic in February 1962, whereupon France withdrew its Ambassador to Yugoslavia in response. France and the UK criticised Yugoslavia’s support to rebel movements in Third World colonies. Gradually, however, Yugoslav-French relations improved with the signing of the agreements on cultural cooperation (1964) and Scientific and Technical Cooperation (1966).

By 1967, France had changed its position on Israel, which brought it closer to Yugoslavia’s position on the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 (the Six-Day War). On 13 June 1967, Yugoslavia broke off diplomatic relations with Israel and declared its support for Arab countries. This followed a similar move previously undertaken by the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria on 10 June, and Poland and Hungary on 12 June 1967. This meant that on some

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international issues, Yugoslavia’s position was closer to that of position adopted by the Soviet bloc countries. After Yugoslavia’s bilateral relationship improved with France, the Yugoslav Government was able to move forward to formalise its relationship with the EU. But West Germany became another problematic partner for the Yugoslavs, as the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Tito held opposing views on the issue of recognition of East Germany.

**Problematic partner: West Germany**

After Stalin’s death in 1953, Tito and his foreign minister, Koča Popović, started to build more amicable relationships with the Soviet bloc countries, but it needed to prove to them first that it was not a puppet to the West. On 28 June 1956, West Germany’s Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano warned it would consider it an unfriendly act for any country to recognise East Germany’s statehood and that it would punish any country to do so (under the so-called Hallstein doctrine). Following President Tito’s visit to Moscow in June 1957, Yugoslavia decided to establish official diplomatic relations with the East German Government on 15 October 1957, a decision fiercely opposed by West Germany. This made Yugoslavia Europe’s last communist country to do so. In response, West Germany severed diplomatic ties with Yugoslavia on 19 October 1957, fearing similar recognition moves by other non-Soviet bloc countries. Bonn’s decision of November 1957 to keep a consulate in Zagreb open reflected West Germany’s ‘extensive interests in the Yugoslav republic of Croatia’.

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Yugoslavia responded by calling the West German position ‘a unilateral, arbitrary and hostile act’, but the US, France and Britain also conveyed to the Yugoslav authorities their countries’ displeasure with Yugoslavia’s position and expressed support for West Germany’s position.\footnote{373}{Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, London, 19–26 October 1957, p. 15816.} France agreed to represent West Germany’s interests in Yugoslavia, while Sweden agreed to represent the Yugoslav Government’s interests in West Germany. President Tito had possibly yielded to Soviet pressure to recognise East Germany before the November 1957 Moscow conference, at which Yugoslavia (without Tito being present in person) also signed the Peace Manifesto, thereby endorsing ‘Soviet policy in the Middle East and elsewhere’.\footnote{374}{Taubman, Khrushchev: the man and his era, 2004, op. cit., p. 735.}

Diplomatic friction between Bonn and Belgrade represented a major hurdle for closer EU-Yugoslav relations, which in the late 1950s and early 1960s did not seem to be a priority for either side as the EU was focused on internal consolidation and Yugoslavia on building the NAM. Only with a change of leadership in West Germany was Tito able to resume dialogue on improving political relations.\footnote{375}{The Hallstein doctrine was made obsolete after the election in 1969 and Chancellor Willy Brandt’s new Ostpolitik that relied on a softer approach towards East Germany.} From 23 to 29 January 1968, talks were held in Belgrade directly between West Germany and Yugoslavia with a final agreement to resume diplomatic relations. West German-Yugoslav economic negotiations on a ‘new long-term trade and payments agreement, economic and technical cooperation, tourism, transport and Yugoslavia’s relations with the European Economic Community’ concluded in Bonn on 26 January, with a final agreement to resume diplomatic relations announced on 31 January 1968.\footnote{376}{Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, London, 17–24 February 1968, p. 22540.}

Only after diplomatic relations with West Germany were re-established, was the Yugoslav leadership able to advance economic and technical cooperation with Brussels. This included
the start of official dialogue following the posting of Yugoslavia’s Ambassador to Brussels in 1968, the first from any European socialist state. Talks on closer relations with the European Economic Community were held simultaneously during the delegation’s meeting in Yugoslavia in January 1968. This demonstrates that the diplomatic relationship between Belgrade and Brussels was heavily conditional upon the improvement of relations between Yugoslavia and individual EU members, especially those with whom the Yugoslav leadership disagreed over important external policy questions.

There was a personal dimension to Yugoslavia’s restart with West Germany, which is attributed to Tito’s amicable relationship with West Germany’s foreign minister, Willy Brandt (Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs from December 1966 to October 1969), who after the elections of 1969 became the Chancellor of Germany. Tito respected Foreign Minister Willy Brandt as the anti-Nazi activist, and their conversations were said to be very long and deep, which was rare for Tito when meeting a foreign minister of any Western country.377

**Internal politics of Yugoslavia: further liberalisation**

The dismissal of the hard-line member of Tito’s top ruling circle, Serb Aleksandar Ranković, in 1966 also opened new pathways towards cooperation with foreign governments that gave in turn more prominence to more moderate Yugoslav communists. In addition, Yugoslavia’s open-borders policy and the encouragement of Central and West European tourism to the coastal areas from 1967 onwards also contributed to Yugoslavia’s image being more of a ‘benign’ socialist state. In January 1967, Yugoslavia became the first socialist country to

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abolish visa requirements and open borders with most Western countries. As Yugoslavia was becoming more open towards Western countries, trade with EU members was increasing and it demanded greater access for its agricultural goods (including beef) to the Common Market countries. By late 1960s, there were Western cultural products and press freely available in Yugoslavia, which was a huge contrast with the Soviet bloc.

The Soviet military incursion into Czechoslovakia in 1968 greatly alarmed the Titoist leadership and was an important external motivating factor behind the leadership’s decision to improve its economic relations with Western Europe. At the same time, the EU was integrating its economies further: by July 1968, EU member states had established a common external tariff and removed internal quota restrictions. They also created an industrial customs union in 1968. As the EU was becoming a large free-trade area in Europe, Yugoslavia possibly also sought to obtain economic benefits for itself by embarking on negotiating a commercial accord with the EU, at the same time as launching a diplomatic effort to improve relations with West Germany.

Another sign of liberalisation in Yugoslavia was the sending of temporary workers (‘Gastarbeiter’) to Western Europe in the 1960s. As John Besemeres has noted, the ‘Yugoslav Gastarbeiter phenomenon was one without parallel in the Socialist world’. One of Yugoslavia’s policies to tackle the rising unemployment in certain regions was to send, through official government agencies, large numbers of Yugoslav guest workers to Western European

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379 Decision-making institutions in the EU were streamlined in April 1965 with the so-called Merger Treaty. It came into force on 1 July 1967, bringing three distinct institutions (Euratom, European Economic Community and European Coal and Steel Community) into a single institutional structure, establishing a single Council and a single Commission for the European Communities.
countries (in particular, to West Germany) to undertake unskilled work. The idea behind these policies was that upon the completion of labour requirements, guest workers would eventually return to Yugoslavia, but in reality, many stayed on to live in Western Europe. Labour migration from Yugoslavia to Western Europe undoubtedly influenced international perceptions about Yugoslavia as a more open socialist country. Yugoslavia also had extradition treaties in place with several Western countries, which were used as a means of controlling émigré dissidents.

While political life was greatly liberalised during the 1960s, vigorous anti-government political dissent continued to be discouraged and suppressed in Yugoslavia, often with lengthy imprisonment and physical torture. Given Yugoslavia’s fairly open borders, it was common for political dissidents to flee to neighbouring Western countries, with Paris, Milan, London and Vienna becoming hubs for anti-Yugoslav activities. Dissident sentiment peaked in Yugoslavia in the early 1970s with the Croatian Spring, after which there was a crackdown on nationalist sentiment in all republics. European capitals were also targeted by Yugoslav intelligence services looking for émigré dissidents, which caused uncomfortable political issues between Yugoslavia and EU members, which were rarely publicly mentioned.

Liberalisation had also led to greater turbulence within Yugoslavia’s ethnic communities, in particular on issues of representation in local government and education. Yugoslavia’s constitutional revisions of 1974 gave Bosniaks the status of a nationality and autonomous republic status to two provinces in Serbia. This followed mass riots in 1968 in Kosovo where

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381 According to the official Serbian Communist Party meeting notes, which the author found in the Historical Archives of Belgrade during fieldwork in April/May 2012, the Yugoslav Government started to lose profits it was receiving for each worker sent to West Germany with a growing number of undeclared guest workers going through private channels to work in Germany.

Kosovo Albanians demanded better representation in government. The changes also facilitated greater linkages between Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces with other countries; Kosovo Albanians were allowed for the first time to travel to Albania.\textsuperscript{383} However, as in Croatia, any decision that were seen as too liberal were reined in by Tito. The Slovenian Prime Minister Stane Kavčič was ousted in 1974 for allegedly ‘attempting to make Slovenia an economic appendage of Western Europe’.\textsuperscript{384}

Nonetheless, following the constitutional changes, Slovenia and Croatia started to cooperate more closely with their non-communist neighbours in an informal arrangement known as Alpen-Adria, which began around 1978. This low-key forum connected Slovenian and Croatian regions with two western regions of Hungary, five in Austria, four in Italy and Bavaria from the Federal Republic of Germany.\textsuperscript{385} The physical proximity of these two republics to Austria and Italy facilitated closer regional exchanges, and the incentive of economic opportunities. The influence of the two EU members increased in Slovenia and Croatia through television and radio reporting, which are among the main instruments of soft power. This development could have strengthened the independence aspirations of more liberal Slovenes and Croatians, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Key agreements between Yugoslavia and the EU**

Exploratory exchanges towards establishing a commercial accord between the EU and Yugoslavia dated to 1965, but no agreement could be formalised without Germany’s consent.

\textsuperscript{383} This development was also enabled by an improvement in bilateral relations between socialist Albania and Yugoslavia.


The European Commission discussed matters of a technical nature with Yugoslav counterparts in 1965 and 1967. The two sides explored the scope for sector-specific trade agreement in order to improve economic exchanges. Following these encounters, the Committee of Permanent Representatives put forward to the Commission, in collaboration with the Commission’s staff, a proposal regarding the establishment of a non-discriminatory commercial accord with Yugoslavia.

The commercial relations between the EU and Yugoslavia were regulated by five-year agreements. Closer economic exchanges came about as a result of Yugoslavia’s economic reforms, which allowed for some foreign investment in Yugoslav state companies operating under the Yugoslav workers’ self-management principles, which made Yugoslavia exceptional among all other socialist countries at the time.\textsuperscript{386} EU members reserved the right to place certain restrictions on the cotton textiles imports from Yugoslavia, certain agricultural products (such as beef) and primary materials. On 2 December 1967 the EU and Yugoslavia signed a Declaration on Bilateral relations.\textsuperscript{387} Political scientist and currently Serbia’s lead negotiator on agreements with the EU, Tanja Miščević, has noted that the Declaration was the first agreement with a socialist government that the EU signed, even though the treaty of Rome (of 1957) had allowed for such a development.\textsuperscript{388} The Declaration established a framework of negotiations for closer economic relations between the EU and Yugoslavia after a formal relationship was established.


The first three-year non-preferential trade agreement between Yugoslavia and the EU was signed in Brussels on 19 March 1970, entering into force on 1 May 1970. During the 1970s, bilateral trade expanded further, especially in the sheep and goat meat trade. From 1 July 1971, Yugoslavia was included in the preferential trading scheme of the EU, which was aimed at increasing economic development in industrialising countries, including Yugoslavia, by granting them preferential trade measures. These agreements carried political weight as their existence demonstrated that genuine political will existed on both sides towards developing closer relations. By comparison, the CEES did not sign similar agreements with the EU until more than a decade later. Therefore, the contractual basis for closer relations with the EU and Yugoslavia was put in place in December 1967 and it lasted until the outbreak of conflict in the former Yugoslavia. On 27 April 1973, the EU-Yugoslavia trade agreement was briefly extended until 30 September that year to allow negotiations for a new agreement to be completed.

A new five-year trade agreement was signed in Brussels on 26 June 1973, with effect from 1 October. At the same time ‘the Community informed the Yugoslav Government by letter of its readiness to have an exchange of views on the question of Yugoslav workers in the nine Community countries’. The agreement provided for maintaining most-favoured-nation status for Yugoslavia, and more liberal tariff arrangements in several sectors, including free trade in industrial goods (except for cotton textiles). In March 1974, ministerial meetings were established as well as meetings of the Joint Committee. In the textiles sector, Yugoslavia

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391 In the agricultural field, Yugoslavia secured a ‘no tariff’ concession on its pig meat exports to the EU. An additional feature in the agreement was the inclusion of an ‘evolutionary clause’ under which further evolution of trade relations was possible under existing arrangements. Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, London, 6–12 August 1973, p. 26027.
concluded a bilateral agreement with the Community in 1976 under the Multifibre Arrangement. On 2 December 1976, the two sides delivered a Joint Declaration, which expressed the ‘desire of the two parties to strengthen, deepen and diversify their relations’; it was followed by the Council decision to extend ordinary loans from the European Investment Bank to Yugoslavia—which appeared to be another sign of improving relations and mutual trust.\footnote{European Commission, ‘EEC-Yugoslavia relations’, Information memo, Brussels, November 1977, http://aei.pitt.edu/30607/1/P_109_77.pdf, (accessed 1 December 2013).}

According to a European Commission document, the 1976 Joint Declaration provided a blueprint for the strengthening of relations during the next decade.\footnote{European Commission, ‘European Community and Yugoslavia’, July 1988, Brussels, p. 1.} The Commission opened a delegation in Belgrade at the end of 1980, twelve years after the Yugoslav mission to the EU was established in Brussels. In February that year, the European Parliament passed a resolution on relations between the EU and Yugoslavia. On 25 February 1980, a Cooperation Agreement was signed between Belgrade and Brussels, regulating cooperation in the areas of finance, trade, agriculture, primary industries, transport, tourism, science and technology as well as social affairs. With this agreement the EU pledged to increase technical aid to Yugoslavia. The First Financial Protocol covering science cooperation and political dialogue followed. Another bilateral agreement was signed on 2 April 1980 which entered into force on 1 April 1983.\footnote{The agreement which was named Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was terminated on 26 May 1992. Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Treaties’, http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_Topics/Treaties/Search_the_Treaty_Database?sln=000630, (accessed 1 December 2013).}

This agreement was part of the Mediterranean agreements of the EU, which included trade preferences, and covered areas such as ‘transport, industrial development, foreign investment, energy, environmental protection, tourism, agriculture and others, and a specified special Financial Protocol’.\footnote{D. Lopandić, ‘The Development of Bilateral Relations between the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro/the Republic of Serbia with the European Union’, 2006, op. cit., p. 85.} It signalled a significant deepening of relations between Yugoslavia and
the EU. The President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, also visited Yugoslavia in late July 1987. His visit seemed like a sign of maturity in political cooperation between the EU and Yugoslavia, and distracted the EU’s attention from the deepening political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia.\(^{396}\)

In 1988, the EU held the first ‘political dialogue’ with Yugoslavia which was chaired by Greece.\(^{397}\) The special relationship Yugoslavia had with the EU, in comparison to other socialist countries, led many to believe that the country would be the first socialist state to join the EU. Some scholars argued that the EU should have opened its membership doors to allow Yugoslavia to become its 13\(^{th}\) member.\(^{398}\) They believed that Yugoslavia had all the necessary preconditions to take on the burden of membership and absorption of the _acquis_. A call for Yugoslavia to become the 13\(^{th}\) member state came too late to guarantee Yugoslavia’s survival as a federation, or its smooth transition to democracy.\(^{399}\) Ultimately, the wars of Yugoslav disintegration, which developed rapidly, completely overwhelmed the EU’s crisis management capacities. EU members also failed to speak with one voice regarding the crisis in Yugoslavia. The EU policy towards the conflict in the Balkans will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Conclusion**

This chapter analysed EU-Yugoslavia’s relations through a thematic examination of East/West historical narratives and Yugoslavia’s unique foreign policy of neutrality during the Cold War. One could derive several key lessons from it about Serbia’s relationship with the EU today.

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One of the lessons from the Yugoslav period is that fractious political relations between Yugoslavia and individual EU members impeded Yugoslavia’s bilateral relationship with the EU, including the signing of trade agreements. The success of Serbia’s ongoing accession talks with the EU will depend on the quality of the Serbian official relations with individual EU members. Serbia can maintain with all twenty-eight EU members. Any major unresolved differences between Serbia and any EU member, particularly Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, Hungary and Romania, just like with West Germany and France in the 1950s and 1960s, have the potential to derail any progress in Serbia’s accession. Furthermore, discourses on national and absolute sovereignty and independence from foreign influence are likely to present challenges to Serbia’s European integration. Some of these normative ideas will certainly need to be renegotiated if Serbia wants to actually join the EU—a goal which challenges Serbia’s absolute sovereignty idea. The next chapter will examine this concept as well as the normative legacy from the wars of Yugoslav succession which influence more immediately perceptions of Serbia in the EU and of the EU in Serbia today.\footnote{C. Koulouri (ed.), \textit{Clio in the Balkans: the politics of history education}, Center for democracy and reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002, \url{http://www.cdsee.org/pdf/clio_in_the_balkans.pdf}, (accessed 1 May 2013).}
CHAPTER THREE

Shifting away from Europe: Yugoslavia’s violent dissolution

The peoples of the Balkans deserve the chance to leave their tragic past behind. The nations that have done so earlier owe it to their sense of humanity, their dignity, and peace of conscience to help the fragile nations in the region overcome their present predicament and transform the bloody Balkans of yesterday into the Southeastern Europe of the future. 401

This chapter will outline key political narratives from the Milošević period in Serbian politics, which were closely connected to the events surrounding Yugoslavia’s disintegration. These narratives still present normative obstacles to Serbia’s European integration. Key political changes in the early 1990s in Slovenia and Croatia will be outlined, which preceded their independence declarations. This period was characterised by the rise in anti-EU and anti-Western discourses in Serbia (particularly, the perceptions of Serbian victimhood, injustice and mistreatment by the West). These political narratives were propagated by dominant political elites (the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Serbian Radical Party and the Yugoslav Left coalition), including through state media and selectivity in reporting on the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration. Anti-Western narratives, which were advanced by the Milošević regime, continue to influence political attitudes in Serbia about European integration, as noted by a prominent Serbian expert on EU affairs, Tanja Miščević. 402

402 Miščević observed that memory of the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration still influence foreign policies of some EU member states towards Serbia. Email correspondence with Tanja Miščević, July 2010.
The chapter will also assess the EU’s piecemeal responses to the unfolding political crisis in Yugoslavia that led to the wars. It will seek to evaluate the key differences between the EU’s slow and ineffective policy responses to the crisis in Croatia (which paved the way for an even bigger crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina), and vigorous diplomatic efforts of three EU members, who successfully negotiated the end of war in Slovenia. One of the major consequences of the Yugoslav dissolution was the formation of a negative image of Serbia in the EU (particularly among those who oppose Serbia’s EU accession), and the creation of a negative, ‘interventionist’ image of the EU in Serbia (particularly among the nationalists). The wars left Serbia’s administrative capacities in turmoil (which the structuralist view emphasises), encouraging also the rise in ethno-particularist discourses (which the cultural view emphasises).

This chapter argues that among a major normative consequence of the wars for Serbia was the emergence of pro-EU and anti-EU narratives, which was highly unusual given that Yugoslavia did not regard the EU as its ideological ‘enemy’ during the Cold War. This development signalled that Serbia’s new political elites were, towards the late 1980s, moving away from the ‘neutrality’ in foreign policy and ‘East/West bridging’ principles towards adopting an anti-Western normative platform and diplomatic posturing which resembled more the USSR’s attitudes towards the West generally rather than the Yugoslav foreign policy. During Serbia’s international isolation during the 1990s, the national state-sponsored propaganda generated a negative image of the West, including of the EU, among ruling political elites and many citizens. This discourse also emphasised the Serbian victimhood idea in relation to the West. The second discourse of Serbia’s ‘return to Europe’ was being advanced by pro-reformists politicians, who later became the main drivers of Serbia’s European integration.
Yugoslavia’s legitimacy crisis following Tito’s death

President Tito died on 4 May 1980, during the Soviet Union’s intervention in Afghanistan, which was a cause of concern among the Western nations for the safety of Yugoslavia. Dozens of world leaders from both aligned and non-aligned countries descended upon Belgrade for Tito’s funeral, held on 8 May. His funeral was, in an ideational sense, a requiem for Yugoslavism. Domestically, Tito was the unifying link between the Yugoslav republics and the chief mediator in their disputes. Yugoslavia established an annual rotating Presidency between representatives from the constituent republics, which resembled the EU’s rotating presidency arrangement, with the crucial difference that the Yugoslav system lost public support and legitimacy, especially outside Serbia. Tito’s death opened up public space for anti-Yugoslav dissent, which was seen through the rise of dissident culture (including the emergence of a popular anti-communist Slovenian magazine Mladina, and new rock music bands in the mid-1980s whose lyrics openly defied socialism). The influence of foundational narratives of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ had lost its appeal to many Yugoslav citizens, especially as economic troubles hit all Yugoslav regions hard, albeit unequally. Widespread discontent about the lack of economic opportunities in Yugoslavia, as well as a desire for greater levels of political participation, were the causes underpinning the Kosovo Albanian riots in 1981.

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405 The results of Yugoslavia’s Kraigher Commission in 1983 provided a pessimistic assessment of SFRY’s economy, urging economic reforms. Its recommendations were, however, never realised. V. Meier, Yugoslavia: a history of its demise, New York, Routledge, 1995, p. 13.
406 Kosovo was among the least developed regions in Yugoslavia, with unemployment of over 35 per cent by 1990. Economic discontent was fuelled by rising political demands for self-determination, which were in part inspired by intensifying contacts between Kosovo Albanians and the population in neighbouring Albania after
As the economic situation in Yugoslavia deteriorated, and foreign debt grew immensely, social discontent increased in all Yugoslav republics. As Yugoslavia’s foreign debt hit $25 billion by 1985, the Yugoslav dinar plunged from 15 to 1,370 to the US dollar, and inflation exceeded 300 per cent per annum. One viewpoint (also structuralist) holds that the economic decline of Yugoslavia was a precursor to its political disintegration. Slovenia and Croatia widely blamed the crisis on the authorities in Belgrade (which was both Yugoslavia’s and Serbia’s capital) for their economic troubles, and refused to provide dues to the Yugoslav Development Fund any longer (which subsidised Yugoslavia’s poorer regions). This situation became a fertile ground for ethno-particularist narratives to develop, and fill the vacuum left by the diminished public legitimacy of Yugoslavism. The new Croatian and Slovenian leaders regarded as the best solution from the economic crisis to seek withdrawal from the federal state, whilst turning towards the EU.

Attempting to mitigate poor economic performance, Yugoslavia increasingly directed its trade towards the West. The year 1987 can be used as a reference point for the closest economic relations between the two, as about 75 per cent of total Yugoslav exports was directed to EU members ($18.5 billion out of $25 billion). Closer ties were also evident from three protocols on financial cooperation (loans financed by the European Investment Bank), two of which only entered into force in 1982 and 1988 respectively. The third one later lapsed with the...
disintegration of Yugoslavia. In 1987, with the accession of Spain and Portugal into the EU, the 1980 agreement on trade liberalisation between the EU and Yugoslavia was widened to include the reduction of customs levies for some Yugoslav exports.\footnote{The protocol specified that the first phase of cooperation was concluded on 30 June 1985, and called for a new framework on economic relations.}

A contributing factor to the widespread social dissatisfaction in Yugoslavia was the federal government’s adoption of a harsh economic restructuring program and unpopular austerity measures, which were demanded by the Paris and the London Clubs of creditors and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).\footnote{R. Weissenbacher, ‘Serbia: thug of war’, Institute for Studies in Political Economy, February 2007, http://www.ipe.or.at/index.php?author_id=1, (accessed 1 December 2012). M. Chossudovsky, The globalization of poverty: impacts of IMF and World Bank reforms, London, Zed Books, 1997. Magaš, The destruction of Yugoslavia, 1993, op. cit., p. 96.} Many people in Yugoslavia criticised falling living standards and rising inflation. Unable to effectively pay off its rising foreign debt, the Yugoslav leadership began to remove some economic autonomy from the republics. This caused further alienation amongst citizens towards the federal authorities, as many of them began to blame ‘Belgrade’ for declining living standards, rising unemployment, food and supplies shortages, and tough economic times. It was precisely in the late 1980s that a communist politician turned Serb nationalist demagogue, Slobodan Milošević, rose to power. His rhetoric raised alarm bells in Western European capitals, but perhaps not loudly enough for the EU to become involved in conflict prevention. The EU’s external attention was predominantly focused on fast-unfolding events in Eastern Europe, and the Balkans once again was relegated to the periphery of its interest. Some MEPs such as, for example, German politician Doris Pack, claimed that they were even warning the European Commission in 1990 that Yugoslavia faced the possibility of dissolution, but that nobody took their concerns very seriously.\footnote{M. Braniff, Integrating the Balkans: conflict resolution and the impact of EU expansion, London, I.B. Tauris, 2011, p. 96; D. Pack, “Kukavičko ponašanje Zapada”, Međunarodni znanstveni skup “Jugoistočna Evropa 1918–1995”, http://www.camo.ch/kukavicko_ponasanje_zapada.htm, (accessed 12 January 2014).}
Yugoslavia’s statehood crisis

The first multiparty elections in the Yugoslav republics brought pro-independence politicians to power in Croatia and Slovenia, who advocated new political arrangements in their republics. In Montenegro and Serbia, the first multiparty elections resulted in an electoral victory for the pro-Yugoslav unionists (Momir Bulatović and Slobodan Milošević respectively), who were determined to preserve the Yugoslav federation even by force. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the most ethnically mixed and politically fragile republic, was divided, on the one hand, between Bosniaks and Croats who wanted independence, and on the other hand Serbs who wanted to remain in a common state with Serbia. During political negotiations among the republics in 1990, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia supported a compromise deal that would give the six republics independence in all areas except for defence, foreign policy and economy.\textsuperscript{413} Croatia and Slovenia saw it as a humiliating proposal, opting instead for independence.

While Serbs and Montenegrins in 1991 sought assistance from Russia to preserve Yugoslavia’s federal boundaries, Moscow could not provide it as Russia was itself undergoing political transformation.\textsuperscript{414} At the same time as Russia’s new leadership was seeking rapprochement with the West, Serbian leaders became the ideological opponents of the West. Russia only provided limited support to Serbia in international forums, and its role, which is generally


\textsuperscript{414} Researcher Andrew Konitzer observed how Yugoslav National Army (YNA) officials went to Moscow to seek military assistance in 1991 but returned empty-handed as Russia was domestically embroiled in its problems, which were related to the USSR’s dissolution. The YNA was predominantly under the Serbian Government control. A. Konitzer, ‘Serbia between East and West: bratstvo, balancing and business on Europe’s frontier’, \textit{Working Paper}, The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, University of Washington, 2008, p. 9.
viewed in positive terms in Serbia, was in fact marginal in this conflict, both in terms of mediation and financial or military support for Serbia and Montenegro.415

The Bosnian war’s disputed legacy has also divided the three ethnic groups involved (Bosniak, Croat and Serb) and their political leaders, especially over the causes of the war and its effects on political structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ever since the war’s end with the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, the region’s non-government organisations (NGOs) and human rights bodies have been calling for a better show of leadership by all sides to more effectively address the unresolved issues of war crimes, refugee return, property rights and compensation claims.416

The crisis in Slovenia

Slovenian intellectuals began to openly debate ideas about self-determination in the late 1980s. Perceived as scandalous at the time, ‘Contributions to the Slovenian National Program’ was published in the 57th edition of Nova Revija (a dissident cultural publication) in January 1987, which was a Slovenian response to rising centralist tendencies within the League of Communists.417 The Polish trade union-led political and social transformation in 1988–89 was an inspiration for the Slovenian anti-communist opposition in the lead-up to the republic’s first direct and multiparty elections.418 These elections took place on 8 April 1990, in which fourteen

415 For this reason, amongst others, Russia’s role in the wars of Yugoslavia’s succession is generally viewed as positive among Serbs, even though Russia supported all relevant UNSC resolutions endorsing independence for Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Russia’s alliance with Serbia is often exaggerated by Serbia’s anti-EU activists, who are reaching out to Russia in their quest for an alternative foreign policy orientation (away from Brussels) for Serbia today.

416 The political, economic and social consequences of the war are still being addressed by the international donor community in the region. See, for example, donors from the Western Balkans Investment Network, http://www.wbif.eu/EC,+IFIs+and+bilateral+donors, (accessed 1 May 2013).


418 ibid.
political parties vied for parliamentary representation. A pro-independence democratic coalition obtained the majority of parliamentary seats, 126 out of 240. A leader of that coalition, Lojže Peterle (who was also President of the largest coalition party among seven) was appointed as Slovenian Prime Minister in May 1990, and France Bučar was elected President. An official Slovenian Government document notes:

The most important ministries entrusted with organising Slovenia’s independence process were allocated to members of the Slovenian Democratic Party: Dr Dimitrij Rupel (Foreign Minister), Janez Janša (Defence) and Igor Bavčar (Internal Affairs).  

On 6 December 1990, Uradni list recalled Article 2104(2) of the Plebiscite on the Sovereignty and Independence of the Republic of Slovenia Act (adopted on 21 November 1990). That article stated that the establishment of an independent Slovenian state (based on the principle of self-determination) was not a hostile act directed against anyone. This could have been intended as a signal of reassurance to the YNA, since it was widely believed that the proclamation of independence would be opposed by the Serbian and Montenegrin anti-independence leaderships. The clash of irreconcilable political perspectives, involving pro-independence and anti-independence narratives, led to Yugoslavia’s political disintegration, which was a precursor to its territorial division. This highlights the importance of closely examining narratives and mainstream political discourses in candidate states for EU membership, which assist also in identifying major trends in EU-Serbia relations.

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The overwhelming majority of voters in Slovenia (88.2 per cent) supported independence in a referendum held on 23 December. The official result was announced on 26 December 1990. This date has been celebrated ever since as a Slovenian national holiday (Independence and Unity Day). Domestic legislative processes mandated the Slovenian Government to proclaim independence within six months, which occurred on 25 June 1991, the same day as Croatia also proclaimed independence. Slovenia’s independence proclamation was a precursor to armed clashes on 27 June 1991 between Slovenia’s security forces and the Yugoslav National Army. The regional implications surrounding this conflict were immediate. As a precautionary measure, the Austrian military, for the first time in its post-war history, invoked a military defence law that stationed several battalions along its 130 km border with Slovenia. On the eve of its attack on Slovenia, the Yugoslav military breached Austrian airspace and Austria—an EU candidate—contemplated national mobilisation.

During the Slovenian crisis, Croatia’s Prime Minister Stjepan “Stipe” Mesić was elected Yugoslav President on 30 June 1991. In his memoirs, Mesić described the period of the Slovenian crisis as a time of paralysis for the federal Presidency powers, whose powers were blocked by the YNA and Milošević’s inner circle. The internationally-mediated Brioni Agreement (with the involvement of Italian, Dutch and Luxembourg foreign ministers), which will be discussed later on in this chapter, ended the Ten Day Slovenian war on 8 July 1991. It

paved the way for the YNA’s formal withdrawal from Slovenia on 25 October 1991.\textsuperscript{426} The relatively short duration of the conflict in Slovenia is widely seen as being due to its ethnic homogeneity, and the EU’s high-level involvement in peace initiatives.

In early July 1991, the European Community froze arms sales and financial aid to Yugoslavia. A considerable internal debate took place within the EU at that time about whether to recognise Slovenian and Croatian independence, with France supporting the anti-recognition position, and Germany advocating recognition. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said that recognition of the ‘rebel republics would throw oil on the flames’, and that independence of Yugoslav republics would become a precedent for other cases in Europe.\textsuperscript{427} It remains unclear whether EU countries that supported the independence proclamations by Slovenia and Croatia, especially Germany, were aware of the grave risks to regional security that would follow from international recognition without some resolution first of the big problems of potential ethnic disputes and related anxieties.

The EU officially recognised the independence of the Republic of Slovenia in January 1992 and signed a Co-operation Agreement that entered into force in September 1993. Slovenia applied for EU membership in 1996 after signing a Europe Agreement, while official negotiations lasted between 1998 and 2002.\textsuperscript{428} Slovenia became an EU member state on 1 May


\textsuperscript{428} The Slovenian negotiating team secured over €500,000 in EU funding for structural and technical assistance only for the period of 2004–06. Negotiating Team of the Republic of Slovenia for the Accession to the European Union (December 2002), ‘Negotiations on the Accession of the Republic of Slovenia to the European Union Completed: presentation and assessment of the financial package’,
2004, being the first country from the former Yugoslavia to do so. Its relatively smooth passage to EU membership again reflected the absence of major ethnic conflicts within the country, its small size and relatively highly developed economy. Its skilled diplomats and politicians negotiated Slovenia’s entry into the EU together with the CEES in 2004—three years ahead of Bulgaria and Romania, and nine years ahead of Croatia.

**Outbreak of the crisis in Croatia**

In Croatia, ethnic tensions erupted in May 1990 when the Croatian soccer team Dinamo played a match in Zagreb against the Serbian Red Star team, which ended in violence between fans and police. During the same period, Croatia’s first multiparty elections in April–May 1990 brought to power a pro-independence political party (Croatian Democratic Union). Franjo Tudman, Croatia’s ethno-nationalist demagogue, became Croatia’s President. A referendum on independence in Croatia on 19 May 1991 was boycotted by the large Serbian minority, but the rest of Croatia’s population favoured independence. According to the 1991 Yugoslav national census, Serbs comprised twelve per cent of Croatia’s population, or approximately 580,000 people. Serbian community leaders in Croatia held a separate referendum on 12 May in which they chose to secede from Croatia. Scholar Jonathan Wheatley observes that in

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divided societies, such as Croatia’s, a referendum was a political tool used by the dominant group to promote its hegemony claims.\textsuperscript{433}

With the first multiparty elections across Yugoslavia, nationalist symbols used by different ethnic groups were not interpreted uniformly by their rivals. The most controversial symbols included the Croatian red and white chequered flag of the wartime Ustaša regime in Croatia (which became the official Croatian flag after the constitutional changes of December 1990), and a three-finger salute used by Serbs. These symbols were banned during Yugoslavia as they appeared to be a sign of national disobedience and extreme nationalism, opposing the dominant national discourse of ‘Brotherhood and Unity’. Both controversial symbols were interpreted, from the perception of each other’s ethnic group, through the framework of extreme nationalism. Researcher Francis Tapon observed:

\begin{quote}
Given the tense situation, using checkered design was a tactless and provocative move [by the Croatian Government] given the Second World War history.\textsuperscript{434}
\end{quote}

The use of three-finger salute (\textit{tri prsta}) by Serbs also invoked uneasy feelings among other ethnic groups, as they regarded it to be an invocation of aggressive Serbian nationalism.\textsuperscript{435} Scholar Anamaria Dutc\c{e}ac Segesten noted that the symbol of \textit{tri prsta} had deeper historical roots in the Serbian national tradition. The symbol denoted the Holy Trinity and thus symbolised the Serbian Christian Orthodox identity.\textsuperscript{436} In Central European tradition, the same


gesture was used for centuries as heraldic charge when swearing an oath (the Schwurhand). However, because Četnici and the Serbian militia groups during the wars of Yugoslav succession used tri prsta, this gesture became regarded as a symbol of extreme nationalism, in just the same way as Serbs saw the Croatian chequered flag.

As inter-ethnic relations in Croatia rapidly deteriorated between ethnic Croats and Serbs, the NGO Human Rights Watch observed that in 1990, many Serbs in Croatia reported intimidation and job dismissals on the basis of their nationality. They also protested the ban, which was introduced in 1990 by the pro-independence Croatian Government, on the official use of the Cyrillic alphabet. Thousands of Serbs became internally displaced following armed clashes between the Croatian republican security forces and Serbian minority militia forces. This conflict triggered a military intervention by the Yugoslav National Army in August 1991, which was not impartial in this conflict, and supported Serbs.

**Changing domestic context in Serbia**

A major normative consequence of Yugoslavia’s dissolution, which is still important for EU-Serbia relations today, was the rise of ethno-particularistic narratives as mainstream political discourses. In Serbia, these narratives were promoted by the new socialist elite. The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) was formed during Yugoslavia’s dissolution in 1990. Its founder Slobodan Milošević, a former communist bureaucrat who turned Serbian nationalist, became the head of the Serbian regional communist Party in May 1986. In January 1988, Milošević engineered the ousting of his former mentor, Ivan Stambolić, who was Serbia’s President. It is now widely believed that Milošević was involved in Stambolić’s disappearance and murder in 1989.

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2000. It has been described as the ‘most significant political murder of the late Milošević era’, and tied to speculation that the US was allegedly ‘grooming’ Stambolić as a possible successor to Milošević in mid-2000 when he was reported as missing.438

After Milošević became Serbia’s President in 1989 and founded the SPS in July 1990, the idea of centralised Yugoslavism became the Serbian republic’s main policy.439 Centralised Yugoslavism advocated the preservation of federal government, which clashed with the idea of independent statehood for Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks and other ethnic groups (Slav Macedonians and Kosovo Albanians). Serbian communities living outside Serbia predominantly supported centralised Yugoslavism.440 Proponents of self-determination seemed to be acutely aware of momentous political changes sweeping Eastern Europe after the Polish Spring protests in 1988, and the EU’s new policy towards Eastern Europe.441 They were thus partly inspired by wider geopolitical developments, and started to develop a ‘return to Europe’ discourse—which, in 2000, also inspired Serbian pro-democracy activists.

Dominant narratives of the 1990s period impact on the perceptions of the EU in Serbia, and are associated with negative images of Serbia in the EU. Lecheler and De Vreese found that attitudes in the EU towards Serbia are still ‘suffering from the country’s role in the Balkan conflicts’, despite Serbia’s central position in the Western Balkans, whose ‘membership

process exemplified future enlargement rounds'. Dominant sets of ideas for ethno-
particularistic narrative proponents in Serbia in the 1990s include narratives of Serbian
victimhood as well as denial that Serbs committed war crimes. Macdonald argues that
‘Greater Serbian and Greater Croatian ambitions were premised on the need to protect one’s
fellow co-nationals throughout the region when Yugoslavia was in the final stages of life’. Furthermore, he observes that both sides portrayed Bosniaks as ‘the vanguard of a dangerous
Islamic conspiracy’, resorting to ‘orientalist discourses to assert their false claims’. However, the victimhood discourse generated by the biggest casualty group of the Bosnian
War, the Bosniaks, attracted international financial and military support, especially from
Muslim countries and Islamic NGOs. According to scholar Elissa Helms, narratives of
victimhood, particularly in gendered terms, emerged as a particularly powerful vehicle of
nationalism for some Bosniak groups in the post-conflict period. The narrative of Serbian victimhood during the wars of Yugoslavia’s succession was, in part,
influenced by Milošević-era propaganda, which only highlighted Serbian war victims, for
example during Radio Television Serbia’s (RTS) peak television news hour on Channel One. After the propaganda machine orchestrated by the Milošević regime refused to recognise the

442 S. Lecheler and C.H. De Vreese, ‘Framing Serbia: the effects of news framing on public support for EU
443 The victimhood narrative was also present among the Croatians as well as Bosniaks and Albanians. For
Croatian victimhood narratives, see D.B. Macdonald, *Balkan Holocausts: Serbian and Croatian victim
444 ibid., p. 245.
445 ibid., p. 244.
447 E. Helms, *Innocence and victimhood: gender, nation, and women’s activism in post-war Bosnia-
448 The screening of this program became a rallying point for anti-government protests.
Serbian democratic opposition’s electoral success in the 1996 local elections, people protested en masse against Channel One’s biased reporting.449 A foreign observer commented:

An extremely popular way of displaying dissent in the Winter Protest [November 1996–February 1997] was called ‘Noise is in fashion’ (‘Buka u modi’); every evening at 7.30pm, hundreds of thousands of people drowned out the main evening news report on state TV with an outburst of noise from their living rooms and balconies.450

This was the time when the European Commission started to devise a new strategy of engagement with the anti-Milošević opposition in Serbia, which culminated several years later in the ‘Energy for Democracy’ program.451 The physical presence of a large number of refugees in Serbia from the conflict areas, many of whom were affected by the war, further swayed public opinion in Serbia against the independence of other republics. Therefore, anti-independence and ethno-particularistic narratives, but also reformist and anti-Milošević narratives have all influenced the conceptual lenses through which Serbian political elites and many Serbian citizens have remembered the wars of Yugoslav succession.452

The disintegration of Yugoslavia

The Balkan conflict during the 1990s is widely regarded as Europe’s worst single episode of violence since the Second World War.\textsuperscript{453} Political decisions by the leaders in five former Yugoslav republics to take up violence were influenced by ethno-particularist narratives of exclusion. The Slovenes, Croats and Bosniaks held opposing views to those of Serbs and Montenegrins regarding the future of the Yugoslav federation. Nationalist political leaders often invoked their own ethnic group’s traumatic experiences during the Second World War that resonated well with their voters, whose fears were exploited to justify their leaders’ political decisions. While religious differences existed among quarrelling parties, the role of these differences in the conflict was frequently overemphasised as ‘many commentators … failed to recognise the degree to which resurgent local nationalisms brought about and then often used religious revival rather than the other way around’.\textsuperscript{454}

What was once a bold and non-aligned country, Yugoslavia became economically and politically so exhausted and internally discordant by the mid-1980s that ultra-nationalist and/or pro-independence narratives started to fill its political spaces. Glenny observes the rise in propaganda of extremist organisations that ‘swamped the public arena with instrumentalised historical memories’.\textsuperscript{455} In Serbia this was manifested by the invocation of stories regarding Serbian victims in the Ustaše-run Croatia (NDH, 1941–1944), a very sensitive topic among Serbs.\textsuperscript{456} The growth of nationalist sentiment in Serbia predated this war: a leaked draft 1986

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\textsuperscript{453} As a recent historical event, it continues to define this region in academic works. It influences perceptions and policy-making in former Yugoslav republics towards their neighbours, of Serbia towards the EU and of EU members, especially Germany, Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands, towards Serbia.
\item\textsuperscript{455} Glenny, \textit{The Balkans}, 1999, op. cit., p. 629.
\end{itemize}
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memorandum from one of Serbia’s oldest scholarly institutions (established in 1841), the Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, was widely seen as evidence of rising Serbian ultranationalism under Milošević.457

The self-determination idea resonated among those citizens who did not identify with Yugoslavism, which tended to be much more vigorously promoted by Serbian intellectuals. These incompatible perspectives clashed on the battlefield when the Yugoslav National Army engaged Slovenian Territorial Defence forces on 27 June 1991, two days after Slovenia declared independence during Milan Kučan’s presidency. Croatia also declared independence on 25 June in what appeared to be a coordinated move with Slovenia.458 The Slovenian ‘Ten-day War’ marked the start of the wars of Yugoslav succession. It turned global public opinion against Serbia, whose military intervention in the secessionist republics (often carried out by ostensibly shared federal institutions, especially the Yugoslav National Army) was compared to the Soviet Union’s interventions in the CEES during the Cold War.459

A missed opportunity: the ‘Hour of Europe’

In the years before the deterioration of the internal security situation in Yugoslavia, it appears that financial and economic relations were the chief focus of meetings between the Yugoslav Government and EU institutions. In November 1989, EU and Yugoslavia agreed to ‘anticipate the negotiation of a new financial protocol’; the EU also agreed to extend technical assistance


to certain Yugoslav economic sectors and ‘examine the possibility of Yugoslavia’s participation in the EU programs’. On 7 February 1990, Yugoslavia applied for membership of another European institution, the Council of Europe. At the request of the Yugoslav Government, the EU even agreed to review bilateral relations. In September 1990, the Council decided to extend to Yugoslavia the program of aid for economic reconstruction (Phare), which was an economic development program that the EU originally created for Poland and Hungary. On 18 December 1990, the EU–Yugoslavia Ministerial Cooperation Council adopted a decision to advance their bilateral cooperation. This indicates that the EU supported, at that stage, the maintaining of Yugoslavia’s federal state, even though it had already become clear by that stage that the Slovenian and Croatian republican governments were campaigning for independence, including in the European Parliament.

Criticism of the EU’s responses to the Yugoslav crisis in 1990–91 focuses mainly on the incoherence of its foreign policy, its slow response and the tendency by key EU members, especially Germany, to act autonomously without collective consent or coordination. The failure to provide a coherent response meant that the political will in the EU to make more effort towards conflict prevention and effective crisis mediation was weak. The EU mediators were initially advocating preservation of the Yugoslav federation, as self-determination claims and nationalism were initially seen as ideas that went against the philosophy of deeper

462 ibid., pp. 15; 20, 30.
465 The first attempt by EU members to coordinate their foreign policies was the European Political Cooperation (EPC) arrangement. EPC was introduced in 1970 and lasted until November 1993, when it was replaced by the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy pillar. The CFSP is still very much a work in progress.
European integration.⁴⁶⁶ In the circumstances, this approach quickly became overtaken by events in Yugoslavia.

James Gow observes that the EU attempted to mediate between quarrelling republics not because of its sense of regional responsibility, but for reasons of its own security. Yugoslavia was, by then, the main maritime and land communications bridge between two EU members, Italy and Greece. Yugoslavia also benefited from the EU’s financial assistance schemes before the conflict.⁴⁶⁷ Financial leverage was erroneously believed to be a strong enough deterrent to dissuade Milošević and his inner circle from using the federal army against the republican governments seeking self-determination.

Given its severity, it seems bizarre that the deteriorating security situation in former Yugoslavia was discussed only as a minor item at the meeting of European Council in Luxembourg on 28–29 June 1991.⁴⁶⁸ This meeting took place during the week in which Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed independence (25 June), to which the federal army responded with force on the eve of the Luxembourg summit (27 June). On 23 June 1991, the EU pre-emptively suspended dialogue with Slovenian and Croatian leaders as both republics were preparing to proclaim independence.⁴⁶⁹ On 24 June 1991, the EU signed with the federal Yugoslav Government a five-year loan of almost $1 billion. The Luxembourg summit also ‘took note of the fact that, on behalf of the Twelve [EU members], Luxembourg has invoked the emergency mechanism in the CSCE framework in view of the extreme gravity of the situation in Yugoslavia’, which

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⁴⁶⁷ ibid.
was the first time for the European Political Cooperation that this mechanism was invoked.\textsuperscript{470} The EU leaders also reached a consensus, in principle, to create a peace monitoring mission for the Balkans.

On 3 July 1991 at a meeting in Prague, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) approved the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM). The ECMM helped to promote deeper policy institutionalisation and coordination among EU states. However, its mandate was weakened by an incoherent EU foreign policy. Raimo Väyrynen has observed that the CSCE was unable to stop violence in Yugoslavia because of its under-developed conflict prevention mechanisms. He noted that the EU’s and US’s political will to deal with ‘out of area’ conflicts, such as in Yugoslavia, was too weak; the CSCE’s main focus was on the EU’s Eastern border, and on integrating the CEES into Europe’s political (EU) and security (NATO) institutions.\textsuperscript{471} The CSCE helped to promote deeper policy institutionalisation and coordination among EU states. However, its mandate was weakened by the incoherence of EU foreign policy.\textsuperscript{472}

Germany’s threat to rapidly recognise Croatian and Slovenian independence did not help in overcoming disunity inside the EU. Sonia Lucarelli recalls that on 4 July Germany proposed a meeting of the Council of Ministers at The Hague to discuss independence as the optimal solution to the Yugoslav crisis. However, the French resisted this proposal.\textsuperscript{473} At the UN, the French, British and Belgian proposals for a UN intervention in the Yugoslav crisis were

\textsuperscript{470} European Council Luxembourg, 28–29 June 1991, op. cit., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{472} The break-up of Yugoslavia was also of particular concern to Greece for its own, domestic reasons. Greece opposed Macedonia’s international recognition under its constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia, lobbying hard that the country be eventually recognised only as ‘the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’, which Skoplje regarded as an act of provocation.
rejected by Russia and China, both veto-wielding members of the UNSC. This situation in EU policy-making was exploited in the Balkans by all major parties to the conflict, who started searching for support outside the EU, which made the wars of Yugoslavia’s succession even more complex.  

Following the proclamation of independence by Slovenia and Croatia, the eminent strategic historian Lawrence Freedman criticised the Western insistence on preserving the Yugoslav federation:

> By stressing national unity above all else the international community is making civil war more likely. … Divorce is messy and unpleasant. But it is preferable to domestic violence.

Europe’s leaders felt that the Yugoslav challenge gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to solve the continent’s problems. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Luxembourg and President of the EU Council, Jacques Poos, helped negotiate the Brioni Agreement. On his way to the negotiating table, Poos declared that ‘the hour of Europe has dawned’, presumably hoping that EU’s diplomatic crisis management capacities would preclude the need for US military involvement. The US Secretary of State, James Baker, not long afterwards announced that ‘We [the US] have no dog in this fight’.

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474 See the forthcoming publication, *Debating the end of Yugoslavia*, F. Bieber, A. Galijaš and R. Archer (eds), Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz, Austria, October 2014.


While the European institutions undertook numerous initiatives, they did not solve the problems and the phrase ‘the hour of Europe’ was to become notorious. In September 1991, the Council of Europe’s organs suspended cooperation with Yugoslavia as per resolution 969. Austria, then temporary member of UNSC, called for a UN peacekeeping mission in Yugoslavia, and the chair of UNSC, France, proposed an arms embargo (which lasted from September 1991 until June 1996, following the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement). The end of the conflict was made possible only with the US’s military involvement while the EU could not reconcile its differences until the Dayton Accords that ended the wars of Yugoslav succession in December 1995.

In December 1991, twelve EC foreign ministers expressed a political commitment to recognise Croatian and Slovenian independence, pending findings of the Badinter Commission about the aspirant states’ observance of the requisite criteria. During the same month, EFTA foreign ministers announced that ‘they consider the ongoing conflict in Yugoslavia as a tragedy to the population of that country’. This declaration suggested that the conflict in SFRJ was being viewed among EU’s regional partners in EFTA, among which were official EU membership candidates such as Austria, as an internal political issue. EFTA Council previously decided at a meeting on 14 November 1991 to suspend all forms of cooperation with SFRJ, after having reviewed bilateral ties since May. The EU also cut off all technical support and exploratory talks on a free trade agreement with Yugoslavia, cancelling the establishment of a development fund for SFRJ (with an agreed sum in April 1990 of $100 million to support the development

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480 ibid., pp. 12; 16.
of market economy in Yugoslavia). In January 1992, all EFTA members recognised Croatian and Slovenian independence.

It was widely assumed that the wars of Yugoslav succession caught the EU and world leaders by surprise. This position has been in recent years contested by scholars, including Glaurdić and Radeljić, who have examined the Balkan conflict in light of new evidence. Radeljić also observes how the EU ignored early warning signs of SFRJ’s potentially violent disintegration in 1990. These included reports from the Austrian politicians who were aware and had been publicly warning about the prospect of Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration that fell on deaf ears of the EU members. This shows that there had to be at least a rudimentary awareness present in the EU’s foreign policy circles what the increasing tensions in the Balkans might mean for regional and European security.

Internal divisions among member states over whether to preserve the Yugoslav federation, or to provide full diplomatic support for self-determination of individual republics, certainly crippled a common EU response and adversely affected the peace mission of the EU’s leading peace negotiator, Lord Carrington. As NATO’s former Secretary-General (1984–88), Carrington would have received regular strategic NATO assessments about the deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia during his time in office. Glaurdić quotes a NATO strategic assessment of March 1987 which posited that Yugoslavia’s deep economic and social divides could escalate into a ‘lebanonisation or super-balkanisation’ of SFRJ. In 1991, Carrington became a lead negotiator in the Peace Conference that ended the war in Slovenia, but did not succeed in convincing Milošević to agree to a peace plan that would result in a peaceful separation for

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481 ibid., p. 16.
482 Radeljić, Europe and the Collapse of Yugoslavia, 2012, op. cit., pp. 130–33. Austria was not an EU member until 1995.
Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lord Carrington resigned from this role in April 1992 as the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were under way. Carrington’s ambition to negotiate a ceasefire in Croatia, as he initially secured guarantees from the Croatian Government that rebel Serbs would not be attacked—which was an empty promise.

The European Commission’s attention during the second Delors Commission (1989–1992) was consumed by intra-EU affairs, including consolidation of the Single European Act that came into force in 1987, preparations for the Maastricht treaty summit in 1992, and EU enlargement to the East. The primary diplomatic focus of the EU was on the Soviet Union’s decline after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Germany’s reunification in 1990, East Germany’s European integration, and the first Gulf War. Former Dutch Finance Minister, Frans Andriessen, from the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) party was Vice-President and Commissioner responsible for External relations and trade policy at the outbreak of inter-ethnic hostilities in former Yugoslavia. From 1992 to 1994 during the third Delors Commission, another CDA party member, Hans Van den Broek, assumed the Commissioner’s Portfolio for External relations and enlargement. Van den Broek was the chief negotiator in the EU-brokered Brioni Agreement, who successfully negotiated that the Slovenian war would end on condition that the independence proclamation be frozen for three months.

Van den Broek proposed changes to Yugoslavia’s internal borders along ethnic lines. The rejection of this proposal by eleven other EU foreign ministers was described by former UK

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484 The only pro-independence republic against which Milošević did not wage war was FYROM. But spillover effects from the Yugoslav wars in FYROM made this country a hub for a range of illegal criminal activities, including weapons smuggling, especially in the lead-up to the Kosovo conflict.


486 Van den Broek served as Dutch foreign affairs minister from 1982 to 1993.
Foreign Secretary Lord Owen as one of the greatest missed opportunities of the EU’s diplomatic effort in containing the Balkan conflict.\textsuperscript{487} In his personal reflections on the Brioni Agreement, Van den Broek noted that after his diplomatic mission, nobody in the EU any longer believed in the preservation of Yugoslav unity. The EU still demanded a joint agreement on the distribution of property of all six republics as a condition for recognising the declared independence.\textsuperscript{488} After Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on 8 October 1991 for the second time (the EU had previously negotiated with them a three-month delay), EU members agreed on 19 December, under intense pressure from Germany, to recognise their independence within one month. ‘The tragic and violent further disintegration of former Yugoslavia also left deep marks in the Netherlands’, Van den Broek concluded.\textsuperscript{489}

Prior to the start of inter-ethnic hostilities in Yugoslavia, there was awareness among Western academics that home-grown problems within Yugoslavia were assuming a potentially dangerous character. Many observations about the looming crisis relied on observations from regional reporting, including the Slovenian press in which anti-Yugoslav discourses were prevalent. A collection of academic contributions in 1990 clearly outlined possible scenarios of Yugoslavia’s dissolution.\textsuperscript{490} However, awareness among regional academic experts was obviously not reflected on the EU level during 1990. As EU institutions were focused on the changes on the EU’s Eastern borders, they still fell short of extending to Yugoslavia an offer of an association agreement, which could have, potentially, averted the conflict.\textsuperscript{491}

\textsuperscript{489} ibid.
\textsuperscript{491} This period occurred at a time when Germany was arguing for a special case of admitting into the EU East Germany as part of an enlarged Federal Republic of Germany.
In line with the arguments that emphasise Serbia’s non-readiness to join the EU on the basis of institutional weaknesses, John Lampe similarly suggested that the ‘historical Balkan legacy’ of slow reform has generated economic sluggishness in Yugoslavia, which encouraged authoritarianism. According to this perspective, authoritarian tendencies in Yugoslavia derived support from ‘narrow nationalism’, which loomed as a major threat to long-term regional security and peaceful inter-ethnic co-existence.\textsuperscript{492} Misha Glenny notes that the ‘conundrum’ that lay at the heart of Yugoslavia’s national question related to the status of Croats as a minority in Yugoslavia, and the status of the Serbs as a minority in Croatia.\textsuperscript{493} According to this perspective, the unresolved ‘ethnic question’ was the underlying cause of Yugoslavia’s disintegration. Ramet noted that the failure of the three Yugoslavias’ state-building projects, especially in the absence of political legitimation from all major ethnic groups, was an underlying cause for conflict.\textsuperscript{494} This thesis adds to the debate by developing the idea that competing narratives of statehood, nationality, national sovereignty, coupled with different levels of democratisation between the Yugoslav republics and Slovenia’s and Croatia’s ‘return to Europe’ discourses, constitute the principal causes behind Yugoslavia’s disintegration.

**The Croat-Serb rivalry and competing victimhood narratives**

The victimhood narratives by various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia strengthened the nationalist discourses. Serbs in Croatia displayed an antagonistic attitude towards Croatia’s new leadership led by former Yugoslav army general and nationalist dissident, Franjo Tuđman. In advocating self-determination for Croatia, Tuđman sometimes used language that seemed to


recall pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic attitudes from Croatia’s Ustaše-led puppet state during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{495} Tudman’s Croatian Democratic Union party won the republican April–May 1990 elections on anti-Yugoslavism platform, and Tudman subsequently became Croatian President. At the level of ethnic politics two trends were occurring in parallel: Croatia’s unilateral separation from Yugoslavia, and the Serbian minority’s attempted unilateral secession from Croatia. Bromley argues that the Yugoslav wars were caused by two such interlinked factors:

First, attempts by Slovenia, Croatia and, later, Bosnia and Herzegovina to secede from the SFRJ and corresponding efforts by Serbia to halt that process. Second, attempts by externally supported ethnic minorities within the breakaway republics to secede from the new states.\textsuperscript{496}

In August 1990, the Serbs in Croatia proclaimed Krajina to be an autonomous region, and in April 1991 declared its secession from Croatia and foreshadowed its possible annexation to Serbia. Meanwhile, Croatia adopted a new Constitution in December 1990. However, by April 1991 conflict had broken out between the Croatian territorial defence forces and Serbs from Krajina, and Milošević sent in the federal army to support Serbs in Croatia. In May, the Croats voted in a referendum (mostly boycotted by the Serbs) to separate from the SFRJ, and declared independence on 25 June 1991. The conflict was in full swing by August 1991. The war is viewed in Croatia as a liberation from the Serbian hegemony in Yugoslavia (hence the name \textit{Domovinski odbrambeni rat}, the Homeland defence war). Croatian Serbs saw it as a direct threat to their ethnic group’s survival. The conflict seemed to fulfil the prediction of one of

\textsuperscript{496} Bromley, \textit{United Nations arms embargoes}, 2007, op. cit.
Tito’s closest colleagues, Stane Dolanc after the 1968 student protests in Kosovo, when he warned of ‘the danger of the growth of other kinds of nationalisms’ in the SFRJ. 497

During Operation Storm in August 1995, led by the Croatian military with the logistical support of a private US company L-3 MPRI, it is estimated that over 200,000 Serbs were driven out of their homes and a further 2,000 are presumed dead or missing. 498 This event from the Croatian War remains a particularly sensitive bilateral issue between Serbia and Croatia. Graphic images of a convoy of refugees entering Serbia with minimal supplies in overcrowded vehicles are reprinted every year at the August commemoration of the exodus. 499 These images help reinvoke the collective memory of the war, whilst strengthening the perceptions of Serbian victimhood and a tendency to blame external actors but not the Serbian Government for the outbreak of the conflict, and crimes such as ethnic cleansing.

In the future negotiating rounds with the EU, unresolved issues between Croatia and Serbia have a potential to delay Serbia’s accession negotiations. 500 A dispute between Croatia and Serbia over several Danubian islands has not attracted as much attention as the genocide case before the International Court of Justice. 501 In 2001, however, several scholars drew attention

499 Milosević did not allow the Serbian refugee convoy to stop in Belgrade, instructing them to resettle instead in Kosovo and Vojvodina. Police allowed some voluntary NGOs to distribute humanitarian supplies to the passing convoy as they guarded all major exits from the highway in order to prevent the convoy from stopping. Personal observations of the author.
to the disputed islands.\textsuperscript{502} Although this dispute is low on the bilateral agenda between Belgrade and Zagreb, as in the case of Croatia’s accession and the border issue it had with Slovenia during accession negotiations, Zagreb might decide to raise this issue with Serbia further down the track of Serbia’ negotiations with the EU. This move would, in turn, risk delaying Serbia’s negotiations with the EU. Victimhood narratives by both Serbs and Croats, which are linked with their perceptions of the Balkan conflict, are also likely to resurface in such a scenario.

The exodus of several hundred thousand Serbs from Croatia became a rallying point for Serbia’s right-wing groups. Images of refugee convoys that were kilometres long were, during the war with Croatia, were also used for propaganda purposes by the Milošević regime to attract more combat volunteers. However, the refugee crisis was also a symbol of humanitarian disaster and a looming security risk for the EU, as many refugees sought resettlement in the West, especially in EU member states.\textsuperscript{503} In Serbia’s victimhood discourses, Operation Storm is cited as the example in which the ‘West’ was apparently ‘biased’ against Serbs, and that for this reason, Serbia should maintain its ‘neutrality’ and abandon European integration.\textsuperscript{504}

In a surprise move, in November 2013, the ICTY Appeals Court overturned the 2011 convictions of former Croatian generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač, for crimes their troops committed against Serbs during military actions, including Operation Storm, in which


\textsuperscript{504} A Serbian politician Dragan Marković “Palma”, the president of \textit{Jedinstvena Srbija} political party, said in 2012 that Croatia should not be allowed to join the EU because of ‘Croatia’ s national celebration’ of the \textit{Operation Storm}, which he called ‘an act of genocide’ against Serbs in Croatia. Tanjug, ‘Marković: Hrvatskoj zbog genocida zabraniti ulazak u EU’, 4 August 2012, \textit{Blic}, http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/ Politika/336449/Markovic-Hrvatskoj-zbog-genocida-zabraniti-ulazak-u-EU, (accessed 12 May 2013). This example shows how differently Serbia and Croata view the events during the \textit{Operation Storm}.
hundreds of thousands of Serbs were ethnically cleansed.\textsuperscript{505} The ICTY’s surprise judgement divided the five judges of the ICTY’s Appeals Court, with two out of five judges opposing the verdict, and Presiding Judge Theodor Meron (among the three in majority) even provided a separate opinion.\textsuperscript{506} The verdict also created ‘a gap in Serbia’s and Croatia’s historical narratives’.\textsuperscript{507} The acquittal of Croatian generals, who were the leaders of controversial military onslaught against Serbs, was perceived by many Serbs to be a demonstration of bias against Serbs by the ICTY.\textsuperscript{508} These perceptions at the discursive level still serve to legitimise Serbian victimhood narratives, heightening perceptions about Serbian ‘otherness’ or remoteness from the West, and high levels of mistrust in the instruments and forums of international justice.

The ethnically divided city of Vukovar became a symbol of humanitarian disaster, but also a reference point for Croatian nationalists. This place is where the conflict in Croatia officially began on 25 August 1991, six weeks before the nine-month siege of Dubrovnik was initiated by the Montenegrin armed forces.\textsuperscript{509} In Vukovar, the Yugoslav army overran the city, killing

\textsuperscript{505} Human Rights Watch, ‘World report 2013: Croatia’, http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/croatia, (accessed 1 March 2014). While a number of Croatian army members have been sentenced in Croatia, the absence of international convictions against high-ranking military leader Gotovina and other former non-Serb war crimes indictees was received in Serbia as a ‘proof’ of the ICTY’s anti-Serb bias.


hundreds of civilians and driving out many thousands. The coastal Croatian town of Dubrovnik has become, like Vukovar, a symbol of humanitarian disaster, despite the fact that its Old Town was classified as a world heritage site and still heavily shelled.\textsuperscript{510} Serbia’s current Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ivica Dačić, became in July 2014 the first and only Serbian politician ever to have publicly condemned the siege of Dubrovnik. The Croatian Minister for Foreign Affairs Vesna Pusič described Dačić’s statement as ‘yet another evidence of dramatic changes’ of inter-state relations in the Western Balkans in recent years.\textsuperscript{511}

According to scholar Srđa Pavlović, the siege and a naval blockade of Dubrovnik by the Yugoslav National Army ‘helped redefine the perception of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia’, as international public opinion turned against the Milošević regime.\textsuperscript{512} Many international observers, including members of the ECMM, had access to Dubrovnik during the siege, and they documented the conflict. The EU (within the framework of the ECMM) un成功fully tried to mediate in peace talks between the Yugoslav and Croatian armies to stop the conflict. The ECMM was briefly suspended after five EU observers (Italian and French nationals) were killed in January 1992 when the Yugoslav forces gunned down a helicopter in which they were. Eight days after this incident, on 15 January 1992, the EU recognised Croatia and Slovenia as independent states.

The victimhood narratives adopted by the Croats and Serbs following the Balkan conflict still mention the aforementioned battles as key reference points to justify various forms of nationalism and even discrimination against ‘the other’, seeing as a ‘historical’ enemy. In

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{510} Tapon, op. cit., p. 327.
\end{itemize}
2013, City Council of Vukovar decided to grant special status to its territory for the victims of ‘Homeland defence war’ (the term used in Croatia), and banned the dual use of the Serbian alphabet and language in the municipality. Some Croats from Vukovar believed that if the local authorities were to grant equal language rights to the Serbian minority in Vukovar this would be a symbol of giving in to a former enemy in war. This is an example of how the political legacy of recent wars continues to influence policy-making in the Western Balkans, even at the local level. For both Serbia and Croatia, the treatment of their citizens is an important consideration of bilateral relations.

**EU sanctions as a coercive diplomatic strategy**

The EU introduced sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) as a coercive instrument of its foreign policy in an attempt to limit the conflict. Council Regulations (EEC 1432/92 and 2656/92) implemented UN sanctions restricting trade and financial dealings of EU members with the FRY and with Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In April 1993, the EU introduced further restrictive economic sanctions. One interviewee for this thesis, Professor Slobodan Samardžić, said that the EU sanctions adversely affected academic life in Serbia, as universities could not obtain overseas material (including journals, new textbooks et al.) and had to rely on outdated textbooks from the communist era for teaching. The US sanctions were introduced in 1991, and were strengthened by additional measures in 1992 and

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515 Interview with Slobodan Samardžić, academic and Member of Parliament, Belgrade, July 2010.
1994.\textsuperscript{516} The effectiveness of the sanctions was greatly reduced as they were not applied coherently and their objectives and strategies were in constant flux (from the objective to put pressure on Milošević, to a strategy of offering concessions to Milošević).\textsuperscript{517} In the view of Clara Portela, EU sanctions against Yugoslavia had a mixed record, and they were not as effective as the EU had originally hoped.\textsuperscript{518}

International sanctions prohibiting the supply of arms to the region in 1991 established structures of informal alliances and preference-formation, including within the EU, and the rise of smuggling networks. Branković suggests that the sanctions actually empowered and enriched the ruling elite in Serbia.\textsuperscript{519} Despite the sanctions, the Serbian Government sourced highly sought after oil and other goods (including military equipment) through illegal channels in neighbouring states and the ports in Montenegro. These items had to pass through adjacent countries and waterways, including of EU member states, to reach the parties involved in the conflict.\textsuperscript{520} Regional smuggling networks that were created during the 1990s to circumvent international sanctions still present a security risk for EU members, as the transnational criminal enterprises that were established during the 1990s in Serbia continued to operate internationally.\textsuperscript{521}

\textsuperscript{516} UN mandatory sanctions were introduced by UNSCR 713 on 25 September 1991, which lasted until 1 October 1996, text of which is available at http://www.nato.int/ifor/un/u910925a.htm (accessed 1 May 2013).


\textsuperscript{520} The three major warring parties, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, developed extensive informal linkages with external actors in order to source highly-sought military equipment and other goods during the arms embargo.\textsuperscript{521} For example, Darko Šarić, a Serbian underground figure who was arrested earlier this year, led a transnational criminal network that ‘smuggled drugs from Latin America to the Balkans and EU countries’. M. Poznatov, ‘Serbian police arrest high-profile drug lord’, Euractiv, 19 March 2014, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/serbian-police-arrests-high-prof-news-534232, (accessed 14 May 2014).
During the Yugoslav wars, Serbia had access to a large arsenal of the Yugoslav federal army, which gave it a considerable advantage over rival groups at the onset of the conflict.\footnote{Z.T. Irwin, ‘Yugoslavia’s foreign policy and Southeast Europe’, in Paul S. Shoup (ed.), Problems of Balkan security: Southeastern Europe in the 1990s, Washington DC, The Wilson Center Press, 1990, p. 158.} Despite international sanctions (UN, US and EU sanctioning measures), Milošević’s regime subsidised the war effort through corrupt banking schemes that had established links in Cyprus and many other countries.\footnote{BBC news, ‘Cyprus helps trace Milošević millions’, 13 March 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1218177.stm (accessed 10 March 2013). The links between Milošević-era elite and organised crime networks are analysed by Tim Judah, ‘Analysis: Gangsters’ paradise lost’, 2 November 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1003770.stm (accessed 1 November 2013).} US reports indicated that in the period 1993–1995 alone, Croatia imported $308 million worth of weapons, first from Eastern Bloc countries, then from Argentina and Western arms producers; these reports also estimated that the value of imported weapons in Bosnia between 1994 and 1995 was between $500–800 million.\footnote{Marko Hajdinjak (2002), ‘Smuggling in Southeast Europe: the Yugoslav wars and the development of regional criminal networks in the Balkans’, Smuggling in Southeast Europe report, no. 10, Sofia, Center for the Study of Democracy, pp. 10, 11.} During the same period, it is estimated that between 20,000 and 30,000 small arms were trafficked by Albanians from Kosovo and surrounding areas.\footnote{Debbie Hillier and Brian Wood, Shattered lives: the case for tough international arms control, Amnesty International and Oxfam International, 2003, pp. 16; 46.}

However, as the situation in Kosovo was deteriorating, the EU reinstated sanctions in December 1997 against the Milošević regime.528

In the West, the Balkan conflict during the 1990s was generally blamed on Milošević’s regime and his policy of asserting Serbian hegemony over other republics in which Serbs lived. His policies were often compared to Hitler’s actions during the Second World War, although such a comparison also reflects bias by those who framed it in this way due to many historical inaccuracies that distinguish Serbia’s war actions from the actions of Nazi Germany. For their war efforts, ethnic Croats managed to secure US support and diplomatic backing from Germany, Italy and Denmark, which were among the first states to recognise Slovenia and Croatia as independent states. After the Bosnian conflict started in 1992, Bosniaks, under the leadership of the anti-Yugoslav activist, Alija Izetbegović, resorted to his extensive linkages in the Muslim world. Izetbegović managed to secure the support from mujahedin fighters, whose alleged war crimes have not been prosecuted to this day.529 A widely-held perception of Serbian war crimes against the Bosniaks, in particular in the town of Srebrenica, had practical manifestation in several Muslim countries after the Yugoslav wars, as Serbs (just as the nationals of Israel) were not welcomed in Malaysia.530

Consequences of Yugoslavia’s dissolution

Apart from securing a diplomatic victory for self-determination proponents in the West, the immediate consequences of Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration included huge material destruction, more than one hundred thousand casualties, a displacement of millions, environmental degradation, the presence of landmines and NATO’s usage depleted uranium in Bosnia-Herzegovina that was only uncovered a decade later. In 2013, Croatia, as the EU’s 28th member state, introduced a land mines issue to the EU, which became a topic of concern to Members of the European Parliament. This shows how the legacy of Yugoslav wars is still relevant for European politicians. Key consequences of the war also included: negative images of the Balkans and Serbia in particular; competing perceptions by rival ethnic groups regarding the conflict; the evolution of the EU’s crisis response mechanisms, and the emergence of liberal, anti-Milošević discourses in Serbia. These normative ideas continue to influence the decisions made by EU and Serbian policy-makers whose normative frameworks and memories of the Yugoslav wars can influence decisions about Serbia’s European integration.


533 Proponents of democratic discourses included the founders of the Democratic Party in 1989. These intellectuals included Zoran Đinđić, Dragoljub Mićunović, Ljubomir Tadić (father of President Boris Tadić), Desimir Tošić, Kosta Čavoški and Vojislav Koštunica.
**Bad name for the Balkans**

Violence in the Balkans during the 1990s put the very word ‘Balkans’ into disrepute. Bideleux and Jeffries argue that, in writing about the conflict, Western scholars resorted to ‘cultural, religious, national, and ethnic caricatures’ and stereotyping of the supposed ‘behaviour’, ‘conduct’, ‘mentalities’, ‘attitudes’, ‘syndromes’ and ‘mindsets’ of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula’. In their opinion, this was not so much deliberate as out of laziness, arrogance and ignorance, deflecting attention from the larger roles that ‘Western powers plus Russia and Austria’ have played in ‘reconstructing the human and social geography’ of the Balkans for many centuries.534

The Balkan conflict perpetuated impressions of the Balkans and Serbia more specifically as the anti-European other. It ‘gave’ the peoples of Yugoslavia, especially the Serbs, a negative image. The Milošević era in Serbian politics generated more negative stereotypes about Serbia, depicted in the popular literature as the ‘villain of the Balkans’; a ‘Balkan powder keg’; and a new Nazi Germany, and an extreme nationalist state. US historian Samuel Huntington saw it as a place of primordial and extreme nationalist hatreds, and archaic passions, and Serbs as an ethnic group that sought to impose its own religious and territorial supremacy over neighbouring communities. Ethnic groups in the Balkans, and particularly the Serbs, were presented in the European press during the 1990s as the antithesis to everything European supposedly stood for: civilised, post-national, tolerant and cooperative, orderly and values-based. This perception continues to exist among European voters, who have increased their opposition to Serbia’s EU entry since 2008, as will be discussed in the later chapters. In Serbia, it is still widely believed that nationalism in breakaway republics was the principal cause of

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the conflict, rather than the Yugoslav National Army’s military response to the independence proclamations by Slovenia and Croatia.

**Evolution of the EU’s crisis response instruments**

The Yugoslav wars adversely affected the EU, with large numbers of refugees pouring into the EU countries. The arrival of thousands of refugees seeking asylum in Austria, Germany, Italy and other European states imposed significant costs on the national governments of EU members. It also put additional pressure on the local authorities that were in charge of accommodating those new arrivals whose status was unclear. The Yugoslav conflict presented a security challenge for EU member states, as their territory was used by the three parties to the conflict (Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks) as a transit point for the smuggling of military equipment and foreign fighters, and for other transnational criminal activities (such as money laundering) used to finance war efforts. At the time of the Yugoslav crisis, the EU had its own share of internal security problems with an unresolved territorial dispute in Northern Ireland, and activities by pro-independence groups in Spain. The Cyprus issue was also often on the EU agenda, especially since Greece joined the EU in 1981. Its neighbourhood policy was turned towards newly independent states, to many of which the EU offered the prospect of membership, which was not offered to Yugoslavia. Despite other (economic) steps to bring Yugoslavia closer to the EU’s orbit, the conflict that erupted in former Yugoslavia demonstrated that Serbia was still far from sharing the EU’s normative framework of peaceful co-existence and democratic values.

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535 Many of the refugees that came to the EU and other European countries were eventually resettled in third countries, such as Australia, with many also returning to the Balkans after the conflict. Some asylum seekers, including Roma people, were repatriated under re-admission agreements signed between EU members (such as Germany) with Balkan states. A minority succeeded in obtaining permit rights to stay in the EU.
The wars in the Balkans in the 1990s, according to Douglas Webber, negatively affected European integration by lengthening the ‘time horizons in which former Yugoslav states could aspire to join the EU’, and prevented the EU’s expansion in Southeast Europe.\textsuperscript{536} While the Yugoslav wars demonstrated the EU’s inability to act coherently as a single actor in foreign policy domain, its CFSP instruments gradually evolved as a result of the conflict in the Balkans. The EU’s failure to adequately respond to Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration helped it to later improve its approach to inter-ethnic disputes, for example, in its development of a comprehensive program which aimed to increase trust and build confidence between rival factions in Northern Ireland.\textsuperscript{537}

**The rise of liberal democrats in Serbia**

The period between 1991 and 1998 was a difficult period for anyone opposing the Milošević regime or supporting the West in Serbia. Opponents of the Milošević regime ranged from ethno-nationalists (the Serbian Renewal Party, led by Vuk Drašković), anti-communist conservatives (the Democratic Party of Serbia, led by Vojislav Koštunica), to pro-EU politicians (for instance, Zoran Đinđić and Boris Tadić of the Democratic Party). Serbia’s opposition parties were disunited, but also engaged in an informal dialogue with the EU through personal contacts, embassies of the EU member states and representatives from the

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An example of this collaboration will be discussed in the next chapter.

Serbian pro-Yugoslav intellectuals and Milošević-aligned political elites specifically targeted Western-leaning politicians, university professors, journalists and prominent individuals for their links with the West and criticism of the governing regime. Articles and archival footage from the Serbian media (both state-controlled and independent news outlets, such as B92) are witness to the memory of the first half of the 1990s which was associated with the world’s worst hyperinflation, a lack of basic goods in supermarkets and international isolation, including in academic life. Culturally, it was marked with the advent of ‘turbo folk culture’ (a strand of music that was used for propaganda purposes by Milošević’s supporters). References to these social issues are still found in anti-EU discourses in Serbia, representing another obstacle for closer relations between the EU and Serbia through their influence on political attitudes among the Serbian people.

Politically, there was a clear divide that emerged in Serbia during this period between pro and anti-government protesters. Serbian opposition was certainly not united, but mass student-led protests were common throughout this decade, the significance of which will be explored in

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538 Personal interviews with the Serbian Ambassador, Canberra, 2012.
539 Some political murders specifically targeted critics of the Milošević regime.
542 It is difficult to directly measure the influence which anti-EU groups have on Serbia’s European integration process. The public prominence of their ideas can be observed in the media content (including social media), public protests and targeted campaigns against what they regard as ‘European’ as opposed to traditional ‘Serbian’ values. Their representatives also label Serbian politicians as traitors or foreign stooges. By doing so, they also seek to reinvoke a debate on the need to preserve Serbia’s political and military neutrality, and intensify cooperation with Russia, as an ‘alternative’ to pro-EU course of the Serbian Government.
the next chapter. The historical legacy of the Milošević period is also marked by the emergence and consolidation of criminal structures in the Balkans, some closely related to state organs in Serbia, such as the Interior Ministry and Defence Department. This goes beyond corruption, which many authors cite as a key challenge for full integration of the Balkans into the EU. The close links between transnational organised crime networks from the 1990s can be seen in the re-emergence of these structures in the business and political sphere. The political assassination of the Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Đinđić, in 2003 was carried out by people who, were during the 1990s, were part of the state security structures. The legacy of the wars of the 1990s is still debated on the Serbian political scene, including in accession discourses, with the question of war crimes generating opposition to Serbia’s potential entry into the EU.

**Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter investigated Milošević’s period in Serbian politics, which coincided with the break in formal relations between Serbia and the EU. The discursive legacy from this era continues to influence political views in Serbian contemporary politics, both in the nationalist and liberal camps. The chapter described how several factors contributed to the lack of cohesive action by the EU towards the Yugoslav crisis, including the lack of unity amongst EU members and the EU’s under-developed CFSP mechanisms. Serbia’s international isolation during the 1990s opened the way for particularistic interpretations of Serbian nationalist mythology to be redefined and used for propaganda purposes. The Serbian Government’s support for the maintenance of the status quo (the Yugoslav centralist idea) was used to justify Serbia’s military role in the region. This led to the emergence of narratives of Serbian regional hegemony (‘Greater Serbia’), which was supported by Serbian right-wing groups but rejected by all of its neighbours.
Yugoslavia’s violent disintegration deeply influenced the development of the EU’s CFSP instruments, leading to the evolution of EU crisis management capabilities and early warning mechanisms, as in the case of Northern Ireland’s program for reconciliation. The Balkan conflict reignited negative perceptions of the Balkans, and presented serious security challenges to the EU. The next chapter will investigate the conflict between the Milošević regime and NATO over Kosovo. In this period, a dialogue developed between Serbia’s pro-EU/liberal opposition groups and EU as part of a broader evolution process of the EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia.
CHAPTER FOUR

Serbia’s confrontation with the West: the Kosovo war

The Kosovo problem needs to be understood in terms of its history as a contested territory, claimed with equal fervour by Serbs and Albanians. The more recent past is notable for the failure of the Yugoslav authorities to address the problem effectively following the Second World War.\textsuperscript{543}

In 1999, Kosovo, a small territory in Southeast Europe with around two million inhabitants (the vast majority of whom were ethnic Albanian by the time of Yugoslavia’s disintegration in the early 1990s), became a major focus for the UNSC and EU. The Yugoslav Government’s repressive policies towards Albanian separatism in Kosovo and its border regions in Southern Serbia drew widespread condemnation.\textsuperscript{544} EU members saw Milošević’s militaristic approach to separatism in Kosovo as a major threat to regional security in the Western Balkans. Dannreuther described the ‘problem’ of Kosovo as one of the most ‘divisive dilemmas and contradictions in contemporary international relations’, which involved a clash of incommensurable nationalisms and competing historical claims.\textsuperscript{545} A prominent German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, stated in 1999:


\textsuperscript{544} The number of people actually killed during this phase of the conflict, from 1997 to NATO’s intervention in March 1999, remains disputed. Estimates range from several hundred to several thousands, with as many estimated missing.

Kosovo could be our military euro, creating a political and defence identity for the EU in the same way as the euro is the expression of economic and financial integration.\textsuperscript{546}

Beck’s comments reflected the public sentiment in Germany, and the political inclinations of many European leaders. However, instead of uniting the EU members, it created divisions amongst them. Not every EU member supported a military offensive against another sovereign nation in Europe, which was facing a crisis of legitimacy and credibility due to Serbia’s forced displacement of Albanian civilians during the Kosovo conflict.\textsuperscript{547}

This chapter seeks to explain the importance of Kosovo-related discourses and Albanian/Serbian historical political discourses, which all impacted on Serbia’s European integration. It will aim to contextualise normative ideas that have translated into informal political structures and widely held belief systems, which continue to impact political attitudes and EU decisions regarding successive enlargement rounds in the Western Balkans (after Croatia’s EU accession in July 2013).\textsuperscript{548} The start of NATO’s intervention against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) on 24 March 1999 provided a trigger for larger-scale ethnic cleansing (in the form of forcible expulsion from places of residence) and human rights abuses by the federal security services and Kosovo Albanian armed insurgents during and after the


\textsuperscript{547} The Kosovo conflict could be compared to the conflict that was raging between the Sri Lankan military and the Tamil resistance. The response by the Sri Lankan Government was similar to the Serbian Government’s militaristic approach to a territorial and inter-ethnic dispute, but the Sri Lankan situation did not trigger an external military intervention. Neville Ladduwahetty wrote about similarities between the situation in Kosovo and the Sri Lankan situation. N. Ladduwahetty, ‘Kosovo’s Independence and Sri Lanka’, 26 February 2008, http://www.protectsrilanka.nz.wb.gs/Archives.html#Section3230992 (accessed 12 March 2013).

\textsuperscript{548} Orešković argues that the accession of the remaining Western Balkan countries to the EU ‘should be understood not as enlargement, but as a consolidation of what is already European territory, given the fact that the area in question is relatively small and surrounded by EU member states, not to mention the fact that the region is of vital strategic significance to the European Union’. L. Orešković, ‘Croatia and the EU: revisiting the conditionality principle’, \textit{Huffington Post}, 18 March 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/lukaoreskovic/croatia-and-the-eu-accession_b_4974793.html (accessed 19 March 2014).
Two discourses that have influenced this conflict are Albanian and Serbian victimhood narratives, which underlay and reinforced the nationalist attitudes on both sides in opposition to one another, actively promoted by political, intellectual and diaspora elites. A deeper analysis of the Kosovo issue is necessary to better understand the ideational structures that influence the ongoing EU-mediated negotiations between Albanians and Serbs. The role of the Albanian national question in SFRJ will be discussed in the context of state responses to Albanian demands for more autonomy and self-determination.

Kosovo as a contested space

The opening quote is suggestive of the highly emotional and symbolic nature of the Kosovo conflict between Albanians and Serbs, whose dispute is sometimes compared to the Palestinian-Jewish struggle over the status of Jerusalem within present-day Israel. Pavković called it ‘Kosovo/Kosova—a land of conflicting myths’. This multiethnic region is contested as a geographical, religious, cultural and political space between the two largest communities inhabiting it, Albanians and Serbs, whose ancestors have co-existed there for centuries. As argued in the previous chapter, historical interpretations of past events are part of national identity and collective consciousness. These factors as well as grievances over mistreatment

549 During the NATO military campaign, hundreds of thousands of Albanians crossed into Albania and FYROM. Prior to the war, in 1998, it was estimated that tens of thousands of Albanian civilians were displaced as a result of the KLA’s conflict with the Serbian security organs.


have served as key elements in the construction of ethno-particularistic narratives of Kosovo Albanians and Serbs.\textsuperscript{552}

The international commentators have also tended to describe the Kosovo issue in dichotomist terms. Observers of the Albanian-Serbian dichotomy tend to exhibit a predilection for one of these group’s political stance. They would support the claim that their chosen group had primordial or historical rights to Kosovo more than the other group. To justify this position, they would cite their chosen group’s longer period spent in the area, archaeological evidence, and monuments, moral and even ‘divine’ (God-given) rights. A quote below demonstrates this point. Elsie stated in 2004:

Kosova is many things to many people. It is now a free country longing for formal political independence after decades of unrelenting oppression under the Serb yoke, an ethnically Albanian territory \textit{since the beginning of time}.\textsuperscript{553}

Elsie imitates Albanian nationalist discourse first formulated by the nineteenth-century nationalist movement, the League of Prizren. The League submitted an eighteen-page memorandum (with a list of political demands for self-determination) to the British mission at the Congress of Berlin in June 1878.\textsuperscript{554} A part of the League’s submission to the 1878 Congress of Berlin read:

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\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{552} The role and perspectives of Kosovo’s other ethnic minorities in this conflict (such as Romani, Gorani, Turkic, Jewish, Ashkali and Egyptian), dominated by Albanian and Serbian dichotomist discourses, are generally left out of academic debates on this subject.


To annex to Montenegro or to any other Slav state, countries inhabited *ab antiquo* by Albanians who differ essentially in their language, in their origin, in their customs, in their traditions, and in their religion, would be not only a crying injustice, but further an impolitic act, which cannot fail to cause complaints, discontent and sanguinary conflicts.⁵⁵⁵

The historical continuity of the discourses advanced by this movement can be observed in contemporary commentary. In 2012, Kosovo’s Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi said on the occasion of the 134th anniversary marking the founding of the League of Prizren:

By decision of the San Stefano Treaty, after the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans, most Albanian lands, divided in Ottoman Vilayets, were unjustly given to neighbouring states: Serbia, Montenegro and Greece. At the Congress of Berlin, the **historic injustice** was deepened when the Great Powers decided, without considering the will of the Albanian people, to implement partition. In this manner, Albanians were presented with three threats: territorial fragmentation, assimilation and physical extinction. On 10 June, 1878, representatives of all Albanian areas gathered here in Prizren and created a political, military and executive organization, the Albanian League of Prizren, which would oppose the fragmentation of Albanian lands with all means.⁵⁵⁶

The reproduction of ‘historical injustice’, mistreatment of Kosovo Albanians, and their political goal for achieving self-determination still influences the political thinking and attitudes of

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Kosovo Albanian politicians, just as Serbian victimhood narratives affect decision-makers in Serbia. This phenomenon underscores that normative factors, especially collective memory of one political community and its historical consciousness as promoted by dominant political elites, exert an important if under-analysed influence on regional discourses and policy-making towards external powers, especially the EU.557

For Serbs, on the other hand, Kosovo is regarded as a holy land from their folk poetry, compulsory reading in the primary school curriculum in Serbia. The so-called Kosovo cycle of epic poems describes in emotive terms Serbia’s historic defeat, the Kosovo battle of 1389 fought between Serbs and Ottomans. This battle was represented in many different ways through literary and art works (one of the most famous being the Kosovo Maiden epic poem and Uroš Predić’s painting of 1919 on this theme). For many Serbs, Kosovo signifies a historic loss of national independence, first in the late 14th century, and also in the early 21st century after Kosovo proclaimed independence.558 Therefore, the dichotomy of Albanian-Serbian ‘primordial’ claims to Kosovo as a territory and place of living and belonging to was socially and politically constructed. As Judah points out, Serbs and Albanians have tended to ‘manipulate’ statistics to their own advantage to assert their group’s rights over the future of Kosovo, instead of focusing on finding the best way forward to peacefully live side-by-side.559

557 Kosovo Albanians are pro-EU and pro-Western in general, as they see the West as partners in the process of realising their main political goal of independent statehood. Several public places in Priština today carry the names of US presidents, which is a sign of the gratitude by Kosovo Albanians for political support they received from many Western countries to achieve independence.


Albanians, including those living in Kosovo, claim descent from the ancient Illyrians who are presumed to have lived in Europe around four millennia ago. They call themselves ‘shqiptarë’, meaning ‘sons of eagles’, and their country ‘Shqipëria’. Interestingly, a two-headed eagle is the national insignia also for Serbs, although with different colours and symbolisms attached to the eagle’s representation on the flag. The Albanian language is considered to be Indo-European, but is quite different to the Slavic languages in the surrounding territories. A desire to bring all Albanians together in one state was formulated by the Albanian nationalist movement, the League of Prizren, to the Congress of Berlin in 1878. For many Albanians living in the three successive Yugoslavias, the harsh policing approach by Yugoslav and Serbian security services was a key impetus behind strengthening their push for self-determination. Bayraktar recalls the slogan coined by Albanian nationalist Vasa Efendi to overcome religious differences among Albanians: ‘The religion of Albanians is Albanianism’, which became the ‘pillar-stone upon which Albanian identity was constructed’. According to Albanian historians, the name ‘Kosovo’ derives from ‘an Illyrian root Kasa, which means valley’.

Serbs, on the other hand, claim that the name of Kosovo, Serbia’s heartland, derives from ‘Kos’, meaning blackbird in Serbian. This mountainous and resource-rich territory is held

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564 Bayraktar, ‘Mythifying the Albanians’, December 2011, op. cit.
dearly in the collective memory as it fell within the borders of the first Serbian Kingdom. Kosovo is home to the medieval Serbian heritage with centres of learning and monasteries commissioned by Serbian rulers in the 13th century (many of which were heavily damaged after 1997). In Kosovo Field (‘Kosovo Polje’), the Ottomans beheaded the Serbian leader, popularly known as Tsar Lazar, during the battles of 1389 known as the ‘Destruction of the Serbs’. His martyrdom is still revived as a symbol of resistance among Serbs, including by right-wing groups opposing Serbia’s European integration. Positioned as a mythical or sacred place between East and West, Islam and Christianity, the ethno-centric narratives constructed by Albanians and Serbs have, therefore, by and large marginalised each other’s competing claims to political rule that was seen as a manifestation of the ethnic supremacy of one group over the other during different historical periods.

Explaining Albanian-Serbian political dichotomy on Kosovo

Political discourses, including those of a dichotomist nature, are not pre-determined or given. They are historically conditioned, socially and politically constructed, multiplied and reaffirmed through the activities of local political, intellectual, religious and economic leaders, and other eminent individuals or groups. Those inherently social agents are involved in the horizontal (societal-level) and vertical (state-level) processes of knowledge creation,

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568 The patron saint of 1389 (a nationalist, right-wing movement in Serbia which is campaigning against Serbia’s European integration) is St. Lazar’s Day. The author of this thesis observed ahead of the Serbian 2012 parliamentary elections print material (stickers and posters) of this group, strategically placed on the interior of public buses in Belgrade, with a slogan ‘No to the EU’ and ‘Alliance with Russia’. Srpski Narodni Pokret 1389, http://www.1389.org.rs/onama.html, (accessed 4 June 2014).
569 Dichotomist refers in this case to two distinct sets of narratives created by social actors in opposition to one another. They may share similar characteristics (such as ideas of victimhood, marginalisation, oppression and trauma) and methods (violence, propaganda, assertion of supremacy of the validity of ‘Big or smaller Truths’, and alliance-seeking to impose a dominant normative set of assumptions over rival viewpoints).
dissemination and institutionalisation. These processes can occur through government agencies (for instance, by enactment of legal norms), religious authorities, non-state actors (that apply pressure on the governing elites) and media organisations—all of which influence voters and public opinion. Socially-constructed sets of narratives form distinct discourses, such as those found in opposition to Serbia’s EU accession. These kind of dominant discourses have shaped attitudes towards the Kosovo issue. The Albanian-Serbian dichotomy influenced decision-makers, individual or group preference-formation, processes of deliberation and formal negotiations on complex intra-state (domestic) or inter-state (international) issues, such as the status of Kosovo after NATO’s intervention in 1999 or on the rights of ethnic minorities living there. This dichotomy was also internalised within SFRJ and later FRY, and externalised through the creation of support groups worldwide for Kosovo’s independence.

Many Western observers, the NATO and the majority of EU countries (23 out of 28) dispute Serbian claims to Kosovo and support the Albanian position. The Albanians are viewed as the overwhelmingly dominant group demographically (roughly comprising 90 per cent of Kosovo’s population in 1999), and the Serbs as discredited by successive attempts by the Milošević regime to suppress by violence Albanian demands for restored autonomy, and increasingly for independence. In Serbian academia, a reverse trend can be observed through Serbian narratives of victimhood and legal tenure sustained over centuries.

This thesis views the Albanian-Serbian conflict in Kosovo, which erupted into an armed irredentist struggle several years before the Kosovo war, not as an inevitable consequence of SFRJ’s policies, but as a failure of Albanian and Serbian community leaders, principally at the local level, to adopt the principles of power-sharing. State leaders in the three Yugoslavias have equally failed to recognise both major groups’ rights and desire to participate in governing over
this contested, impoverished and now even ecologically contaminated space. After Yugoslavia’s disintegration, a political contest was waged in Kosovo between two dominant and competing discourses, both of which aimed to assert the supremacy of one perspective over its ‘undesirable other’. The ‘Other’ for Albanians and Serbs alike was portrayed in violent, marginalising and de-humanising terms, as villains, assailants and evil people. Increasing self-determination demands by Kosovo Albanians, like in the previous cases of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, continued to present a dilemma for European governments after the Dayton Accords brought the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina into stabilisation mode after 1995.

Some Western commentators saw Kosovo as a new battlefield between the East (epitomised by Russia in this case) and the West (US/EU/NATO and their allies). Political leaders in other areas where sovereignty was contested between different ethnic groups, such as the secessionist leader of Georgia’s Abkhazia region, looked at the Kosovo model as one to emulate. The circumstances surrounding Kosovo’s independence were invoked in March 2014 during Crimea’s referendum for independence. The EU and the US reject Russia’s comparison of Crimea to Kosovo. This example is a manifestation of how Kosovo’s dichotomist discourses have affected political discourses in other regions. The Kosovo conflict brought into international spotlight a myriad of questions regarding international law,
sovereignty, self-determination, and the position of ethnic minorities with opposing normative frameworks and statehood claims.

**Kosovo/Kosova: identities constructed through ‘appellation’**

The dichotomist nature of Albanian-Serbian conflict can be observed through the official designations of this contested territory. The Yugoslav 1946 Constitution confirmed the name Kosovo–Metohija (‘Kosovo i Metohija’), or ‘Kosmet’. In 1968, the Yugoslav Government introduced the designation of ‘Kosovo’, following additional amendments to the revised 1963 constitution.\(^{575}\) This move was a concession to demands by Kosovo Albanians for more autonomy. It was an important symbolic act in the series of affirmative programs introduced after violent student demonstrations engulfed Kosovo in November 1968. The name ‘Kosovo’ was confirmed by the federal Yugoslav 1974 Constitution that gave more rights and powers to Kosovo’s regional and local authorities.

The word ‘Metohija’, which derives from Greek and means ‘monastic estates’, was officially reintroduced in the updated Serbian Constitution of March 1989, which restricted Kosovo’s autonomy. In May 1990, Belgrade took direct control over Kosovo, which led to dissolution of the provincial assembly and regional executive council.\(^{576}\) Successive Serbian Governments have again, since 1990, used the term ‘Kosmet’ to describe the region from Serbia’s centralised perspective, while Albanians used the word ‘Kosova’. ‘Kosmet’ emphasises Kosovo’s Christian legacy and in particular, Serbian attachment to its religious heritage in Kosovo.\(^{577}\)

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\(^{577}\) K. Mihailović, ‘Kosovo–Metohija: past, present, future’, Papers presented at the international Scholarly Meeting held at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 16–18 March 2006, p. 116. Some Albanians are also Christian, including Orthodox, but the majority of Kosovo Albanians are non-practicing Muslims.
The word ‘Kosova’ was frequently used by academics who supported Kosovo Albanian demands for independent statehood.\textsuperscript{578} It emphasises the Albanian cultural heritage in that region. The appellation for this contested space is part of popular narratives which have, over the years, informed policy positions on the Albanian-Serbian conflict. These discourses also encouraged the reproduction of different historical perspectives about the conflict (such as through discussions about historical rights or one group’s dominant rule in the region). They lend support to dominance/subordination discourses advanced by both groups, but without providing an inclusive solution that would address the needs of both groups equally.

**Serbian victimhood narratives**

The official position of the Serbian Orthodox (SO) Church became anti-EU oriented, especially after the NATO intervention in 1999. Following the withdrawal of the Serbian army from Kosovo, with a mass population move of Kosovo Serbs northwards, the SO Church lost unhindered access to its property in Kosovo. Much of the SO Church’s monastic property in Kosovo was damaged in reprisal attacks, especially when over thirty of the SO Church’s parishes and buildings were attacked during the Kosovo Albanian riots in 2004. One parish lodged a lawsuit against Italy, Germany, France and the UK before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for allegedly failing to protect the SO Church’s property from indiscriminate attacks.\textsuperscript{579} The Serbian Orthodox graveyards have also been desecrated.\textsuperscript{580} The Serbian Government in January 2014 referred to Kosovo as ‘Europe’s last apartheid’, primarily


because many Orthodox Serbs were prevented from attending church services in Kosovo without an armed escort. Segregation between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs in Northern Kosovo especially remains a serious problem. Victimhood narratives are frequently used by more radical members of both ethnic groups to justify physical attacks on the ‘Other’. The attacks on Serbian religious property in Kosovo are another manifestation of the lack of trust between the two communities.

The political role of the SO Church in Serbia’s European integration process has been a complicating factor for Serbia’s dialogue with the EU. The SO Church influences public attitudes regarding Serbia’s EU accession, and conservative political parties, such as the DSS and Dveri Srpske. The SO Church issued a statement in 2011:

Membership of the EU is a positive ambition which can be justified by geopolitical, economic and civilizational reasons. But if the abandonment of Kosovo–Metohija, indirectly or under pressure, whatever be the case, is the price to pay for membership in that alliance … then [Serbia] should openly and honourably give up its candidacy and seek other models for its future in a multipolar world order.

In a comparative case from neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 2013 all gathered religious leaders except for the SO Church’s representatives signed a joint declaration supporting Bosnia-Herzegovina’s ambition to join the EU. The absence of an official endorsement from

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583 Two priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church were observers at this gathering. Radio Televizija Srbije, ‘Verski lideri za BiH u Evropskoj Uniji’, 10 June 2013,
the SO Church was probably linked to the complex political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is politically divided between the Croat-Bosniak federation and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska. This also demonstrated the SO Church’s sceptical attitude towards the EU.\(^{584}\) Klaus Buchenau observed that there are two currents within the SO Church: the ‘anti-Westerners’ who reject Western values, and moderates who nominally accept dialogue with the West.\(^{585}\) The SO Church plays an important normative role in Serbian discourses on Kosovo, in part because its property and clergy were directly affected and religious leaders displaced in the aftermath of the Kosovo war.

The Serbian victimhood narratives in Kosovo have been reinforced with graphic footage of the attacks on the SO Church’s religious symbols and tombstones by Albanians. A similar narrative can be seen from the SO Church’s position after 1968, when its representatives started to document damages inflicted on its medieval property in Kosovo. The Serbian religious leaders viewed vandalism inflicted against the SO Church’s property during the 1968 riots through the prism of dichotomy, expressing concern for religious architectural property through narratives of ‘ethnic alterity’.\(^{586}\)

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\(^{585}\) Value, according to Buchenau, is an abstract notion of what one finds desirable, but in order to be understood in a political context, values need to be interpreted. In Buchenau’s view, the debate on pro- and anti-Western values in post-communist Serbia has been more polarised than in other Balkan countries because of Serbia’s confrontation with Western states during the 1990s, especially over Kosovo. K. Buchenau, ‘Orthodox values and modern necessities: Serbian Orthodox clergy and laypeople on democracy, human rights, transition and globalisation’, in O. Listhaug, S.P. Ramet, and D. Dulić (eds), *Civic and uncivic values: Serbia in the post-Milošević era*, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2011, p. 113.

\(^{586}\) ibid. The same narratives emerged during riots in 1981 and demonstrations in 1989. Bardos suggests that local church hierarchs in Kosovo since the 1999 war have been internally divided over how best to deal with the international presence and Kosovo Albanian authorities in the province. G.N. Bardos, ‘Patriarchal Orthodox Church of Serbia’, in J.A. McGuckin (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, vol. 2, 2011, p. 569.
In November 1968, Albanian students of the then recently established branch of Belgrade University in Priština demonstrated with slogans ‘Down with colonialism in Kosovo’, and ‘We want a republic’, with protests becoming violent and spreading into the Albanian populated areas in Macedonia (today’s FYROM). Amongst other things, protestors demanded the removal of ‘Metohija’ from the province’s official name; the right to fly the Albanian flag, and the establishment of an independent university with teaching in Albanian language. The Serbian parliament adopted a new constitution for Kosovo in January 1969, allowing for the establishment of more cultural and educational institutions. Kosovo was also given the right (together with Vojvodina) to be represented in the federal parliament. Despite these concessions, the policy of repression by the Yugoslav security organs continued in Kosovo, creating a vicious cycle of mutual distrust, violence and hatred between Albanians and Serbs.

The Albanian national question within Serbia

Political and normative differences in Kosovo between Albanians and Yugoslav/Serbian institutions pre-date the creation of socialist Yugoslavia. During the Second World War, Hitler separated Kosovo from Serbia and annexed it to Albania under the supervision of the Italian Fascist regime (as per Map 2 in Appendix One). Many anti-fascists from Kosovo were summarily executed during the Second World War by occupying armies and collaborators. When the partisans reclaimed Kosovo, they were accused of killing many prominent Albanians, especially those they accused of being ‘fascist collaborators’. Collective memory of these purges was one reason for which Kosovo Albanians were against Yugoslavism. It is important to note that the Yugoslav Government did not exclusively target ethnic Albanians,

588 ibid., p. 54.
but all individuals and groups whom they regarded as opponents of Yugoslavia’s communist establishment. Like other peoples in Yugoslavia, Albanians were also subjected to forced collectivisation between 1945 and 1953, a policy which was eventually abandoned but not without increasing Albanian normative opposition to the Yugoslav state.\textsuperscript{589} 

During SFRJ, defining moments for the Albanian self-determination discourse were the Yugoslav Government’s purges after the Second World War; dismissal of SFRJ’s security services head, the ethnic Serb Aleksandar Ranković (who was extremely unpopular among the Albanians); rapprochement between SFRJ and Albania after USSR’s incursion into Czechoslovakia in 1968; the Albanian riots of 1968, 1981 and 1989; and the emergence of Kosovo Albanian armed insurgency with transnational linkages. These developments influenced the creation of dichotomist discourses between Albanians and Serbs in the 1990s, hardening their respective leaders’ positions towards each other. Political compromise between these groups has proven to be unsustainable without external security guarantees, and this still remains the case.\textsuperscript{590} 

The memory of communist repression in Kosovo has influenced Albanian resistance many decades after the Second World War. Family histories and experiences of living under Communism have left a profound mark on Albanian intellectuals, especially since ethno-particularistic narratives were banned in SFRJ during Tito’s life. Poet and political leader Ibrahim Rugova, regarded by many Kosovo Albanians as ‘Father of the Nation’, had victims of Communist crimes among his closest family circle.\textsuperscript{591} His father and paternal grandfather

\textsuperscript{589} Kola, \textit{The search for Greater Albania}, 2003, op. cit., p. 105. 
\textsuperscript{590} This is why the EU has taken a more active role in recent years and invested in confidence-building measures at the highest level between Belgrade and Prishtina. 
\textsuperscript{591} In 1988, Rugova was elected chairman of the influential Kosovo Writers’ Union (KWU). As one of the most prominent Kosovo Albanian intellectuals, he initially advocated for Albanian self-determination through peaceful means.
were reportedly killed by the Yugoslav Communists in January 1945. In 1989, Rugova established the Democratic League of Kosovo in response to Milošević’s increasing anti-Albanian policies. He organised a system of parallel educational, health and local government facilities, which, according to The Guardian, were paid for by the Albanian diaspora living in the West. Rugova also organised the government-in-exile for Kosovo Albanians that shifted between West European capitals, while spending most of his time in neighbouring Albania, laying the groundwork for a broader resistance movement.

The repressive methods used by the highly centralised bureaucratic structures in all three Yugoslavias did not quell Kosovo Albanian discontent, which after the 1960s spilled over into open demands for greater autonomy, and from the 1990s, into campaigns for independence including by violent means, which translated into secession. According to Pavković and Radan, secession is ‘an assertion of the superiority of both territorial sovereignty and national determination principles over any other political or ethical principles of political organisation’. Secession discourses were strengthened by Albanian perceptions of victimhood and marginalisation by the Serbian state and religious authorities.

The top-down measures taken by government in the successive Yugoslavian systems seemed to further aggravate the animosity between Albanians and Serbs at the local level. One of the key top-down measures was to allow a greater number of Kosovo Albanians to work in the public sector and local administration in Kosovo after autonomous status was conferred to it in

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593 Ibid.
the 1974 Constitution. Official policies rarely involved a broader inter-cultural dialogue towards finding better understanding and accommodation between the Albanians and Serbs. Due to their distinctive cultural and linguistic identity, and their unfulfilled political aspirations, the majority of Kosovo Albanians did not support Yugoslavism. For economic and political reasons, many dissatisfied Kosovo Albanians emigrated overseas and after 1974 they were also able to travel to Albania to access education and imbibe political influences in Albanian. Vickers also points out that the security services put pressure on the Yugoslav Albanians to emigrate overseas between 1954 and 1966 some 235,000 Albanians left Yugoslavia for the West.

The Albanian minority as part of Yugoslavia’s ‘ethnic question’

Vickers observes that a turning point in the ‘status and role’ of Albanians in Yugoslavia came with the dismissal of the heir-apparent to Tito and Vice-President of SFRJ’s League of Communists, Aleksandar ‘Leka’ Ranković, whose removal from the political scene in 1966 emboldened Kosovo Albanians to demand more rights and a greater degree of autonomy. In Yugoslavia at that time, Kosovo Albanians were treated as a ‘nationality’ rather than as a ‘nation’—a policy which they regarded as unjust. As the head of Yugoslavia’s secret police (UDBA), Ranković was considered responsible for, amongst other things, the campaign to confiscate weapons from Albanians in 1956. Those who resisted were severely punished by Yugoslavia’s security organs. The surprise dismissal of Ranković in 1966, the third most

595 The majority of Albanians in the late 1970s and 1980s also chose to boycott the national census in Yugoslavia as a form of social protest, which today makes any numerical assessment of this region more difficult.
597 ibid.
599 In late 1944 and early 1945, Kosovo Albanians rebelled against the partisans, assassinating Miladin Popović, ‘then acting party leader for Kosovo and Metohija’. For this reason, the Yugoslav state viewed the situation in

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important figure in Yugoslavia, was hailed by the West and Kosovo Albanians as a sign of liberalisation, but met with displeasure by Serbs who feared reprisal attacks in Kosovo. A de-classified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report from 5 August 1966 described Ranković’s dismissal as SFRJ’s biggest single crisis since the split with the USSR in 1948; the report also signalled this was possibly a premeditated move and not merely an inter-factional struggle by Yugoslav communists, as Tito described it in one speech.

An ethnic Serb, Ranković aroused deep suspicion amongst Croats, Bosniaks and Slovenes. In Vickers’ view, militant Albanian nationalism was fuelled by a greater awareness of their national rights after Tito offered them concessions. Kosovo Albanians were emboldened by it in the lead-up to mass protests in Kosovo in 1968. They demanded a republican status for Kosovo, while a minority also called for unification with Albania. Ranković’s dismissal paved the way for Tirana’s closer relations with Belgrade, as Albania saw Yugoslavia after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 as a possible partner.

After the mass protests by Kosovo Albanians in 1968, Tito said that Kosovo ‘should become the concern of Yugoslavia as a whole’. However, despite the increased concern, Kosovo remained the poorest region in SFRJ. Kosovo Albanians started to develop more intensive

Kosovo in the war’s aftermath as a security problem, to which secret police responded with force. A tough-handed approach to Kosovo Albanians did little to solicit their allegiance to the state. Shoup recalls that ‘there are no census figures that give a completely accurate account of their numbers’, as many of them boycotted the national census in an act of social protest. Their unfulfilled social, economic and political grievances and continued repressive treatment by the state strengthened their resistance to the Yugoslav Government’s policies.


ibid., p. 193.

linkages with Albania after revised domestic regulations allowed them to travel to Albania. While Serbian and Albanian ethno-nationalist and victimhood narratives were generally forbidden and discouraged when Tito was alive, they re-emerged more openly in public discourses after Tito’s death in 1980, as part of the general decline of Yugoslav state socialism. The leaked 1986 draft ‘Memorandum on the Serbian national question’ by the Serbian Academy of Science and the Arts revived discourses of Serbian victimhood supported by influential intellectuals such as Dobrica Ćosić. Meanwhile, Albanians under Rugova were organising clandestine organisations as a symbol of defiance against official policies, while Rugova adhered to a pragmatic doctrine of non-violence. This change in approach provided a fertile ground for the development of an armed resistance campaign in the form of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which will be described in the next section.

**Armed rebellion by Kosovo Albanians**

In response to the deeply unpopular policy by the Serbian Government of abolishing Kosovo’s regional autonomy, Kosovo Albanians proclaimed independence in September 1991. They called their new legal code the Kačanik Constitution. The Serbian Government responded to this development with further repression, mass arrests and by abolishing many Albanian cultural institutions. In a so-called ‘Christmas warning’, US President George Bush Senior responded to the deteriorating political situation in Kosovo in 1992 by stating

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607 This proclamation received little international recognition, with Albania at the helm of diplomatic efforts to recognise Kosovo’s independence. M. Klemenčič and M. Žagar, The former Yugoslavia’s diverse peoples, 2004, op. cit., p. 330.
In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper.609

Until the mid-1990s, Kosovo Albanians pursued the strategy of a largely passive resistance, although violent clashes were sporadically occurring between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, which were suppressed by the state security organs. By 1996–97, the resistance escalated into an armed rebellion against the Serbian Government as there was no real attempt to engage in dialogue.610 While the EU put significant diplomatic efforts in post-conflict reconstruction in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was no effort to mediate any dialogue between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians before the situation dramatically escalated. This was probably because the EU and the US were focusing their attention to aiding pro-democracy groups in Serbia, rather than attempting to engage with the Milošević regime. This ‘Western’ strategy backfired as it gave Milošević a free hand in Kosovo, which in turn encouraged Kosovo Albanians to develop a sophisticated transnational network of support for their armed resistance cause that aimed at securing independence. Scholars Branson and Doder comment:

By 1997, the newly formed Kosovo Liberation Army had started the struggle which, for the most part, meant warfare in the shadows, ambush, assassination, murder, and torture, leaving in its wake a trail of destroyed towns, burned villages, and wrecked

families. A year later, the guerrilla activities had reached significant proportions and elicited brutal Serb countermeasures.\textsuperscript{611}

In January 1997, an Albanian journalist Fehim Rexhepi observed shortly after the Dean of Serbian University in Priština Radivoje Papović was assassinated that there was ‘a widespread belief’ among Kosovo Albanians that the Serbian Government was responsible for all security issues in Kosovo. He added that if this assassination had ‘Albanian roots’, then the first cycle of violence in Kosovo was closed, and the next one could promise to be only more deadly.\textsuperscript{612} In 1998, the KLA began to attack civilian targets in Kosovo, including émigré Serbs (thousands of whom were refugees from the 1991–95 wars and were seen by Kosovo Albanians as part of the Milošević regime’s plan to alter the ethnic balance in Kosovo) and against those Kosovo Albanians who the KLA identified as ‘traitors’.\textsuperscript{613}

As an unofficial ‘KLA historian’ (whose book relied on close association with former KLA commanders) Henry H. Perritt attributed the success of KLA tactics to the low likelihood of defection, held in check by ‘strong Albanian cultural bonds’, even if the KLA rebels were captured. He also observed that KLA attacks on civilians were inconsistent with the ‘historic Albanian culture of resistance’, in particular the aims of the resistance manifesto of 1919 (‘the Program of the Albanian General Uprising of spring 1919 in the Dukagjini Plateau’). He concluded that both the ‘Serbian incompetence’ and ‘KLA success’ in triggering Western intervention kept violence at ‘lower levels of the violence continuum’, and claims that if NATO did not intervene in 1999, the KLA was ready to resort to suicide bombing tactics—which

probably would not have received positive press coverage in the West.\textsuperscript{614} The main political goal for Kosovo Albanians during the armed clashes with the Serbian security forces was independence, which was the primary object of the KLA’s armed resistance and the main subject of their discussions with Western leaders. The KLA rebels, who were interviewed by Armend R. Bekaj, regarded the Serbian Government’s rule in Kosovo as an ‘oppressive and colonialist system’, and saw themselves as NATO’s ‘ground force’ once the conflict invited Western intervention.\textsuperscript{615}

The year 1998 was also a turning point for international mediation efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis by peaceful means. UN Security Council resolution 1160 of March 1998 imposed economic and arms trade sanctions against Yugoslavia because it was deemed that the military actions against the KLA and associated civilians could result in a widespread ethnic cleansing campaign.\textsuperscript{616} Recent historical memory of the siege of Sarajevo, the Srebrenica genocide (which the Serbian Parliament still views as a massacre rather than a genocide) and the Rwandan genocide in Africa influenced international institutional responses towards the Kosovo emergency.\textsuperscript{617} Milošević met Albanian leader Rugova in mid-May 1998 in a last-minute international effort to prevent the NATO offensive, which was averted only temporarily.

\textsuperscript{615} A.R. Bekaj, ‘The KLA and the Kosovo war: from intra-state conflict to independent country’, \textit{Berghof Transition Series}, no. 8, Berghof Conflict Research, Berlin, 2010, pp. 9; 25.
\textsuperscript{616} The text of this resolution of 31 March 1998 is available at: \url{http://www.nato.int/kosovo/docu/u980331a.htm}, (accessed 1 December 2012).
\textsuperscript{617} A librarian from the UN Library in New York observed that during 1998–99 many UN countries examined the UN’s historical documents on the Kosovo ‘problem’, especially dating back to the era of the League of Nations, to see how the Kosovo problem was being dealt with during earlier historical periods. Interview with UN Library staff, April 2010, UN headquarters, New York.

One New Year’s resolution America should make is to solve the decade-long problem of Milošević. Serbia is the last dictatorship in Europe. If we get tough with Milošević, Serbia could be Europe’s newest democracy by the year 2000.

The failure of peace talks at Rambouillet in February 1999 demonstrated the inability of the EU to resolve problems in its neighbourhood peacefully, without assistance from the US as in the case of the ending of Bosnian war.

The EU’s targeted sanctions against the FRY were intended to induce a change in behaviour by ‘parties in Serbia’ who were held responsible for ‘wrongful, unacceptable, illegal or

reprehensible behaviour’ in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{622} EU sanctions included an arms embargo, travel restrictions, an oil embargo, and financial sanctions. The European Council meeting in Vienna on 11–12 December 1998 referred to ‘full and immediate compliance by both sides’ and observance of ‘UNSC Resolutions 1160, 1199, 1203 and 1207 in order to achieve a peaceful settlement’ over the Kosovo crisis.\textsuperscript{623} The language employed in the Presidency Conclusions following this meeting made it clear that the ‘future status of Kosovo’ was the main issue at stake. This document highlighted the EU’s political efforts through envoy, Wolfgang Petritsch’s work, to ‘support the political process, to contribute to humanitarian efforts and … assist reconstruction in Kosovo, including through a donors conference’.\textsuperscript{624} Whilst not specifically asking for Kosovo’s independence, the tone of this document made it clear that the future of Kosovo was to be in the hands of international community, rather than Belgrade.

Furthermore, this document underscored EU support to the pro-reform government of Montenegro under a new leader. In February 1998, the pro-EU and anti-Milošević candidate, Milo Đukanović, became Montenegro’s President, defeating Milošević’s key Montenegrin ally, Momir Bulatović in the republican elections held in October 1997.\textsuperscript{625} LeBor notes that Bulatović was well-known for his ‘servile obedience’ to Milošević.\textsuperscript{626} Bulatović’s major act of disobedience was public support for Lord Carrington’s peace proposals in 1991–92 (under the EU auspices) while he was a member of the FRY’s Supreme Defence Council. The Carrington


\textsuperscript{624} ibid.

\textsuperscript{625} Bulatović, who in 1988 became President of the League of Communists of Montenegro, emerged as a key supporter of Milošević’s policies towards Kosovo and the breakaway republics in the wars of Yugoslav dissolution. He was Montenegro’s President from December 1990 to January 1998. His loyalty to Milošević after the electoral defeat at republican presidential elections was ‘rewarded’ with the prime ministerial position in the federal government in May 1998—a post which he held until Serbia’s regime change in October 2000.

plan sought to end the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration, and pledged millions of dollars in aid to the Montenegrin economy. Following a smear campaign against him, Bulatović retracted his acceptance of the plan and turned his support again to Milošević’s policies, including on Kosovo. His electoral defeat in Montenegro allowed for the EU to develop a different approach to democratic reforms in the republic. Finally, the document stressed the significance of conditionality in the ‘framework of the EU’s regional approach’ to the Western Balkans—which became the chief EU policy tool towards this region after the Kosovo war.

The NATO intervention

The operation by NATO against the Milošević regime was conducted around the same time as NATO’s 50th anniversary (April 1999), and the new Strategic Concept was being prepared for the Alliance. The operation against FRY was known as ‘Merciful Angel’ in Serbia, ‘Noble Anvil’ in the US (also dubbed ‘Madeline’s War’), and Operation Allied Force in official NATO documents. It was ‘the most intense and sustained military operation to have been conducted in Europe’ since the end of the Second World War. It ‘illuminated’ how the US would in the future approach the art of war in the 21st century. There was much debate at the time about the legality of NATO intervention against FRY without a clear authorisation from the UNSC. An international commission for the prevention of conflict highlighted the need for more effective diplomatic efforts in dealing similar conflict in the future:

627 ibid., pp. 195; 202.
In Kosovo, almost any kind of preventive activity—whether it involved more effective preventive diplomacy, or the earlier and sharper application of coercive preventive measures like the credible threat of ground-level military action—would have had to be cheaper than the $46 billion the international community is estimated to have committed … in fighting the war and following up with peace-keeping and reconstruction.632

The significance of the NATO intervention, without an explicit authorisation from the UNSC, to deploy offensive military force has been debated at some length, including within NATO structures. Discussions centred on the consequences for international law and selectivity in usage of the humanitarian intervention principle, which was invoked as a key normative argument for NATO intervention, to protect Kosovo Albanian civilians from Serbian state repression. Rapporteur Arthur Paecht from the Civilian Affairs Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly wondered whether the European countries would be ‘… so concerned about Kosovo if it were not on their doorstep and had not involved the risk of an enormous influx of refugees and of setting the region ablaze’.633 These were seen to be legitimate security reasons behind NATO’s intervention. Paecht also drew a distinction between this large-scale intervention that lasted without break for 78 days, and previous limited NATO air strikes in Bosnia-Herzegovina (in 1994–95) against Serbian military units.

Rapporteur Paecht referred to the NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana’s press release which was delivered on the evening before the bombing campaign began, announcing the executive order to attack the FRY. Amongst other things, Solana declared that the intent behind the bombing campaign was to prevent ‘further humanitarian catastrophe’ in Kosovo, as the Serbian Government expelled hundreds of thousands of Albanians from their homes in an act of ethnic cleansing. Solana said that another objective was ‘to support the political aims of the international community’. Solana was also careful to point out that NATO had ‘no quarrel with the people of Yugoslavia who for too long have been isolated in Europe because of the policies of their government’. This position was reiterated in the European Council’s Presidency Conclusions document following the summit on 24–25 March in Berlin:

Our policy is directed neither against the Yugoslav or Serb population nor against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or the Republic of Serbia. It is directed against the irresponsible Yugoslav leadership under President Milošević. … We would like to end the isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Europe. But for this to happen, Milošević must choose the path of peace in Kosovo and the path of reform and democratisation, including freedom of the media in the whole of Yugoslavia.

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634 At the same time in Serbia, official TV channels were screening popular Latin American soap operas, which is a testimony to the bizarre and contradictory nature of this conflict. The decision to downplay news about Solana’s executive order to attack the FRY was part of the regime’s propaganda strategy, as the citizens of Serbia (the majority of whom did not have access to the satellite TV) were kept in the dark about the nature and scale of the NATO’s offensive. Some international commentators made parallels between the NATO intervention and Serbia’s military tactics which resembled the partisan military strategy against the Nazis in the 1940s. B. Kemper, ‘Stubborn Serbs hunker down for long NATO fight’, *Sun Sentinel*, 14 April 1999, http://articles.sun-sentinel.com/1999-04-14/news/9904131132_1_nato-bombs-nato-planes-serbs (accessed 13 May 2013).


636 Ibid.

This document put the sole blame for NATO’s intervention on the refusal by Milošević to sign the Rambouillet agreement, continued attacks against Albanian civilians and greater military and police presence in Kosovo, ‘exceeding the ceilings set out in the Holbrooke-Milošević agreement of 12 October 1998’. Therefore, even though not all EU members initially agreed to support NATO’s military intervention against FRY, the Presidency Conclusions on the eve of the bombing campaign indicate that there was some degree of shared understanding among EU members whose policy predilection was for a NATO presence in Serbia to ‘guarantee … fundamental European values, i.e. respect for human rights and the rights of minorities, international law, democratic institutions and the inviolability of borders’. However, by generally agreeing to a military action that had ultimately led to the irreversible changes of borders in the Western Balkans, the EU members had thereby sanctioned a new order to emerge in that region. Such state of affairs still represents a source of bitter regional political contention between Serbia and the EU, and between Serbia and many of its neighbours.

Prolonged military action by the world’s most powerful military alliance, NATO, against the FRY in 1999 was the first time in history that this organisation had unilaterally attacked a

638 ibid. On 18 March 1999, the Rambouillet Accords were signed by the Albanian side but were rejected by Milošević, who claimed that there were ‘no direct talks’ between Serbs and Albanians at Rambouillet. ‘Document: Milošević’s rejection of Rambouillet ‘Accords’’, 22 March 1999, Emperor’s Clothes, http://emperors-clothes.com/docs/rambouillet-milosevic.htm (accessed 15 July 2013). For the Serbian side, the military annex of the proposed peace agreement at Rambouillet was seen as being similar to the ultimatum made by Austria-Hungary, the rejection of which was the casus belli for its declaration of war against Serbia in July 1914. In a parliamentary report tabled for the British Parliament, Professor Elizabeth Roberts observed that the proposal by the Contact Group at Rambouille led to station NATO troops in Kosovo ‘was outrageous, bearing in mind that Yugoslavia is a country where it had been a constitutional offence, under the Tito constitution, and since 1971 actually, to accept the presence of foreign forces on Yugoslav soil’. This report is a useful reference for the Rambouillet peace discussions, the failure of which was the casus belli for NATO’s offensive against the third Yugoslavia on 24 March 1999. House of Commons, ‘Select Committee on Foreign Affairs—Fourth Report: Kosovo’, Session 1999–2000, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmfaff/28/2809.htm (accessed on 12 March 2013). For a useful overview of the composition of the Albanian and Serbian delegations, see ‘Dan kada je propao “Rambuje”, a Srbija dobila NATO bombe’, 21 February 2014, Telegraf, http://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/politika/958642-dan-kada-je-propao-rambuje-a-srbija-dobila-nato-bombe-video (accessed 1 November 2013).

sovereign European nation that did not pose a direct security threat to any of its members.\textsuperscript{640} NATO’s military intervention was a violation of the NATO Charter (1949), which stipulates that NATO members should ‘refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations’.\textsuperscript{641} A serious incident between the West and new East, Russia, occurred on 12 June 1999 in a stand-off between NATO forces and the Russian military at Priština airport, in what appeared to be a dispute over post-conflict peacekeeping arrangements in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{642}

The issue of mainstream political participation for Albanians in Serbia was not resolved with Kosovo’s de facto separation from the Serbian Government’s control after the war with NATO in 1999. In municipalities with majority Albanian populations in the border areas with Kosovo, such as in the Preševo Valley, a new insurgency group, the Albanian National Army (ANA) began attacking police stations in pursuit of independence. In 2000–01 armed clashes occurred between a new wave of insurgency and Serbian police forces, which was defused with NATO assistance. Almost simultaneously, conflict erupted in the neighbouring FYROM, which ended with the internationally-mediated Ohrid Agreement that granted the Albanians more rights, and a bigger role in national power-sharing.\textsuperscript{643} The uncertain political status of the remaining Albanian areas in Serbia might also present future challenges for Serbia’s European integration, as the majority of areas having boycotted elections, including most recently the Serbian parliamentary elections on 16 March 2014.

\textsuperscript{640} Article 5 of the NATO Treaty stipulates that an attack on any NATO member would justify the use of force in self-defence and that other NATO members would be able to militarily assist until the UN Security Council ‘has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security’. NATO, ‘NATO Treaty, 4 April 1949’, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm, (accessed 1 November 2013).

\textsuperscript{641} ibid.


The Kosovo war narratives and Serbia’s European integration

The head of European Union section within the Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs observed in 2010 that the Kosovo issue, which had by then become the main priority for Serbian diplomats, overstretched Serbia’s scarce diplomatic resources, diverting the government’s attention away from reforms required for European integration.\(^{644}\) The Serbian Government approached the issue of Kosovo’s independence by insisting that Kosovo should be preserved within the territorial borders of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.\(^{645}\) At the same time, Kosovo Albanians were irked by the international community’s failure to provide a long-term solution and certainty regarding the province’s final status. Escalating tensions between Kosovo Albanians and Serbs indirectly led to an outbreak of violence, which the Serbian Government refers to as the ‘March pogrom’.\(^{646}\)

On 16 March 2004, Kosovo Albanian veterans from three key ‘war associations’ organised mass demonstrations with the assistance of two minor political parties, during which approximately 18,000 Kosovo Albanians protested against the arrest of former KLA leaders on war crimes charges.\(^{647}\) On 17–18 March 2004, widespread riots involving approximately 51,000 Kosovo Albanians resulted in nineteen deaths and the setting ablaze of over 550 homes and 27 Serbian Orthodox monasteries. Over 4,100 Serbs, Roma and Ashkali people were internally displaced. Human Rights Watch described this event as the ‘biggest security test’ for

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\(^{644}\) Interview with Nikola Lukić, Director of EU section, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, January 2010.


\(^{646}\) The term ‘pogrom’ was originally used to describe attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire, for example, the Warsaw Pogrom. This word is now used when referring to a violent demonstration that is aimed at persecuting an ethnic or religious group, usually a minority in a specific area.

NATO and UN police since the 1999 conflict, which ‘failed catastrophically to protect minorities during the widespread rioting’. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the attacks were an act of organised and premeditated violence—a position which was also taken by the EU. The US commander of NATO’s forces for Southern Europe, Admiral Gregory Johnson, said that attacks against ethnic minorities in Kosovo during 2004 amounted to ethnic cleansing. As a result, the trust between ethnic Albanians and members of minority groups in Kosovo reached their lowest point. In response to the violence in Kosovo, anti-Albanian and anti-Muslim riots broke out in Belgrade and Niš, and two mosques were set ablaze. The lack of direct negotiations between Belgrade and Priština has made the role of international actors in Kosovo even more important. The violent riots caused further polarisation between Serbs and Albanians, and made the task of the Contact Group much more difficult.

The first substantial effort to initiate high-level dialogue on Kosovo’s status between Albanians and Serbs came about in 2006 during Koštunica’s government. The UN appointed former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, which the UNSC approved on 10 November 2005. The first direct leaders’ summit was held in Vienna in July 2006 after several months of intense preparations. Prime Minister Koštunica did not back off from his position relating to the substantive autonomy proposal for Kosovo, which was categorically rejected by the Kosovo Albanian side. The Minority Rights report

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651 The Contact Group was first established in response to the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. It was reactivated in 2004 following the violence of 17–18 March 2004 in Kosovo.
found in 2006 that ‘nowhere in Europe is there such segregation as in Kosovo’.\textsuperscript{654} In March 2007, Ahtisaari delivered to the UNSC his final report on Kosovo in which he proposed independence for Kosovo as the best way forward out of a situation that was threatening to become a ‘frozen conflict’ in Europe.\textsuperscript{655} Politicians in Belgrade maintained that Nobel Peace Laureate Ahtisaari held pro-Albanian views, but this was to be expected as his policy suggestion ran contrary to their ambition to preserve Kosovo as a region within Serbia.

EU enlargement necessitates good neighbourly relations and in that way, demonstration of a potential candidate state’s willingness to contribute to regional stability. The policy of aid conditionality was applied Serbia and Kosovo to stimulate the leaders of both sides to engage in dialogue. The EU’s 2005 enlargement strategy paper stated:

\begin{quote}

The opening of status discussions is a challenge for the entire region, and for the international community. The strong commitment of all parties to a multi-ethnic, stable and democratic Kosovo will be essential to achieve a sustainable settlement that reinforces the security and stability of the region, and to ensure its further progress towards the EU.\textsuperscript{656}
\end{quote}

This document emphasises the security dimension of the Kosovo issue for the EU. Although remaining ‘status neutral’, the EU institutions actively supported the development of


indigenous structures of governance and legal institutions in Kosovo. The EU shared the burden of responsibility together with the UN in a state-building project.\textsuperscript{657}

The UN Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999 (the day the Kosovo war ended) provided a blueprint for international activities in Kosovo. Point eleven states that aims of the international civil presence there, amongst others, are:

- ‘organising and overseeing the development of provisional institutions for democratic and autonomous self-government pending a political settlement, including the holding of elections’; and
- ‘transferring, as these institutions are established, its administrative responsibilities while overseeing and supporting the consolidation of Kosovo’s local provisional institutions and other peace-building activities’.\textsuperscript{658}

Therefore, although UNSCR 1244 did not pre-determine Kosovo’s future status, it laid the groundwork for the emergence of new, autonomous or indigenous institutions. Albanians interpreted it as a sign of a new national beginning. Serbs, on the other hand, interpreted it as an act of acknowledgement of the FRY’s sovereignty over Kosovo.

Moreover, the Kosovo issue slowed down EU widening in the Western Balkans and hampered Serbia’s accession prospects, as most interviewees also noted. The security situation has not been resolved as yet in this territory either. Kosovo became an international protectorate under

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{657} One former UN employee, who was working in Kosovo in 2000 and chose not to be identified, observed that Kosovo’s legal traffic code was initially modelled upon a regional one from Australian states. Informal meeting for the purposes of this research in Canberra, August 2010.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
multi-national supervision. The UN, NATO and the EU shared the burden of guaranteeing stability in this region, but, in March 2004, thousands of remaining Serbs were still driven out of their homes despite an international presence. Kosovo Albanians, supported by the US, Germany and France amongst others, autonomously declared independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008, generating violent protests in Serbia that were widely reported in the international press. Ever since, Kosovo-Serbia relations have been a permanent issue for EU institutions tasked with overseeing enlargement policy towards the Western Balkans.

**Battle for recognition of Kosovo’s independence**

In June 2013 Egypt became the 100th nation to officially recognise Kosovo’s independence declared autonomously on 17 February 2008. By comparison, more than 100 nations have recognised Macedonia under its constitutional name (Republic of Macedonia), but the ongoing name dispute issue between the FYROM and Greece has prevented the former from joining NATO, and slowed down its EU accession. Thus, unresolved bilateral disputes in the Balkans have already had adverse consequences for this area’s integration in the Euro-Atlantic military (NATO) and political (EU) structures. Kosovo cannot attain a UN seat as Russia, China and five EU members, continue to oppose its independence. Germany is Kosovo’s largest

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660 Chapter Six will discuss this event in further detail, and the reactions by the Serbian Government under Vojislav Koštunica’s leadership.
661 Interview with a European Commission staff member in Serbia, 2011.
overseas development donor and most important trading partner in the EU.\textsuperscript{664} Germany’s Federal Foreign Office described their relations as ‘privileged’ partnership.\textsuperscript{665} Given this relationship, Serbia’s uncompromising position that Kosovo is part of Serbian territory (under the 2007 constitution) makes accession negotiations with the EU particularly problematic.

Most Serbian political parties, except for most notably the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Serbia’s former Deputy Prime Minister Čedomir Jovanović (2003–2004), agreed that Kosovo should remain under the Serbian Government’s jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{666} However they, disagreed on the methods to preserve this position. The Serbian Government established the Ministry for Kosovo in 2007 in a move which signalled the seriousness of the Kosovo independence issue for the Serbian Government.\textsuperscript{667} The SO Church published, in 2008, a ‘Memorandum on Kosovo’, in which it reaffirmed the region’s historical, religious and socio-cultural meaning as Serbia’s heartland, and opposed the government’s policy on Kosovo which the Church saw as being too lenient.\textsuperscript{668} Social pressures on the Serbian Government to preserve Kosovo within Serbia has become a vehicle for dissatisfaction against the government policies in other domains, and a method of expressing anti-EU sentiment. The Kosovo recognition issue has also generated policy cleavages among EU members with regard to Serbia’s EU accession.

\textsuperscript{664} Kosovo runs a trade deficit with Germany. Its imports from Germany in 2012 were worth EUR 153 million, while exports to Germany were worth EUR 16.7 million. Federal Foreign Office, Germany, ‘Kosovo’, updated March 2014, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Nodes/Kosovo_node.html (accessed 12 March 2014).

\textsuperscript{665} Since 1999, Germany appropriated ‘more than EUR 420 million’ for diverse projects in Kosovo. Germany is the second largest donor of foreign aid to Kosovo after the US. \textit{ibid.}


\textsuperscript{667} The Ministry for Kosovo was downgraded to a Chancellery after the change of government in 2012.

\textsuperscript{668} Serbian Orthodox Church, ‘Memorandum on Kosovo–Metohija’, http://www.spc.rs/old/Vesti-2003/08/memorandum-e.html, (accessed 1 December 2012).
EU officials noted that the EU did not want to have ‘another Cyprus’ with contested sovereignty in their ranks. Doris Pack, a German MEP, said in 2012:

An unresolved Kosovo-Serbia problem will mean there will be no hope of Serbian membership either. We accepted Cyprus with this problem, and it will never happen again.

A similar position was expressed by Ulrike Lunacek, European Parliament reporter for Kosovo, in January 2014. These signals from the EU’s only directly elected institution, the European Parliament, which has a say on the accession of prospective members, have sent a clear message to the Serbian Government about what the majority of EU states and political groups in the European Parliament expected it to do—resolve the Kosovo issue.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that Albanian and Serbian dichotomist discourses characterise most academic writings on Kosovo, with victimhood narratives being instrumentally used by supporters as well as opponents of Kosovo’s independence. This chapter also attempted to show that the Albanian national question was viewed first as an ‘ethnic problem’ (alongside other unresolved ethnic issues) in the SFRJ, and as a national or Yugoslav problem after violent protests in 1968. The Kosovo issue then became a ‘Serbian state problem’ in the 1980s, with

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669 The recognition of Kosovo’s independence resembled the China-Taiwan diplomatic scrabble, with non-Western members of the UN Security Council supporting Serbia’s position, as well as five EU members (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain).


government structures adopting a heavy-handed approach, to which Kosovo Albanians responded with defiance, armed resistance and their first proclamation of independence. The wars of Yugoslav succession turned global attention away from the brewing crisis in Kosovo, which erupted as soon as the Dayton Agreement was sealed. This agreement addressed ethnic conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but not the conflict within Serbian state boundaries.

The NATO intervention in 1999 and the Kosovo Albanian de facto separation from Serbia later that year spurred the rise of new types of domestic opposition in Serbia towards Kosovo’s independence, the Serbian state and the EU. Anti-EU discourses increased after the NATO intervention as part of a broader phenomenon of anti-Western sentiment, as will be discussed in later chapters. The Kosovo war left traumatic consequences for all those who experienced it, resulting in one nationalist perspective that tends to equate Serbia’s EU accession negotiations with ‘siding’ with the NATO intervention in Serbia. After the Kosovo conflict, new political actors emerged on the Serbian political scene, including the resistance movement Otpor, which grew into the largest opposition force to the Milošević regime. The EU’s engagement with Serbia’s opposition groups was, as the next chapter will argue, one of the most successful foreign policy decisions made by Brussels towards the situation in FRY.

For the EU, the Kosovo war exposed a lack of consensus and the failure of diplomacy to prevent further violence in Kosovo, or the bombing campaign itself. The consequences of this war are still being felt in Kosovo. The narratives of the Albanian-Serbian conflict are still being advanced by supporters of both groups. Ethnic segregation, underdevelopment and continued violence against ‘new’ ethnic minorities now presents another litmus test for EU policy-

makers, including on transitional justice issues. Low levels of trust, which have generally characterised Albanian-Serbian relations, have improved in recent years at the highest level due, in part, to the EU’s high-level mediation efforts (including personal dedication to this cause by EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton). However, if the prospect of EU membership is delayed further, it is possible that discourses of victimhood, hostility and ‘othering’ will resurface at the highest level between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians, making regional security in the Western Balkans, once again, a European problem.

673 The first steps to address these crimes were made under international pressure. E. Peci, ‘Kosovo Liberation Army fighters jailed for war crimes’, Balkan Insight, 7 June 2013, http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-ex-guerrillas-found-guilty-of-war-crimes, (accessed 1 March 2014).
CHAPTER FIVE

A paradigm shift towards the EU after Serbia’s regime change

This chapter will explore dominant political narratives in Serbia following the 78-day NATO bombardment, and their significance for EU-Serbia relations. As argued in Chapters Three and Four, the main normative trends that emerged in Serbia during the 1990s included, on the one hand, the rise of anti-Western political attitudes and strong Serbian victimhood discourses. On the other hand, there was an emergence of liberal and pro-EU narratives, demonstrated through anti-Milošević political activities by the Serbian opposition and student groups. These contrasting discourses profoundly affected how Serbia’s relationship with the EU was regarded among the Serbian political elites and voters at election times, especially in 2000, which was a crucial year for Serbia’s democratic changes. The anti-Western discourses in particular have, after Serbia’s regime change in October 2000, presented a normative challenge to the efforts of Serbian policy-makers to establish a constructive relationship with the EU. These normative factors made the creation of Serbia’s ‘new’ foreign policy after 2000 more complex. Its orientation heavily depended upon a comprehensive external worldview (Weltanschauung) of Serbian governing political elites.674

The political weight and presence of these divergent perspectives demonstrate that the EU accession is a highly context-dependent, normative issue for any applicant state, including Serbia. Anti-Western perspectives contributed to the sentiment of mistrust that had already been present among EU and Serbian political elites prior to the NATO intervention. These

674 According to an interviewee from the Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, this vital institution that implements and, to a large extent, influences Serbian foreign policy is divided among ‘Europhiles’ and ‘Europhobes’. The former generally favour Serbia’s EU accession over closer relationship with Russia, and the latter preferring the opposite approach, or neutrality in foreign policy. Nikola Lukić, Director of EU section, Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, interview in Belgrade, 2011.
discourses continue to influence many Serbian voters, especially who oppose Serbia’s further European integration. The reason for this, according to one perspective, is that the Serbian population is not adequately informed about the extent of benefits that its potential membership in the EU could generate. For their part, the communication strategy of the EU and the Serbian government to raise awareness of these benefits has been only partially effective.\footnote{Annual opinion polls in Serbia, conducted by the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) since 2002, show that the majority of respondents in annual surveys feel that they are not adequately informed about the EU. Republic of Serbia, ‘European orientation of the Serbian citizens: trends’, SEIO, December 2013, http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/mnjenje_decembar_13.pdf; (accessed 8 May 2014).}

This chapter will examine the EU’s differentiated diplomatic approach towards the Milošević regime, as opposed to the one pursued towards the pro-EU democratic opposition of Serbia (DOS).\footnote{The DOS coalition was formed in 2000 from the remnants of Zajedno (Together) coalition. Members of Zajedno bloc, which was led by Zoran Đinđić (DS), Vuk Drašković (SPO), Vesna Pešić (GSS) and Vojislav Koštunica (DSS), won in the 1996 local elections in over 40 shires and in most of Belgrade’s electoral units, which was the first major defeat of the pro-Milošević bloc in Serbia.} This approach involved the EU’s coercive democracy at the Track 1 level, and providing financial and political support to Serbian opposition groups (including DOS) in what appeared to be with some form of coordination with the US Government as well.\footnote{These terms will be defined later on in this chapter.} The third part will discuss a resumption of official diplomatic relations between the EU and Serbia/FRY. This breakthrough occurred because of a change of leadership in Belgrade, while the political leadership in Podgorica (the capital of Montenegro) was already pro-EU oriented (since 1998). The EU also became a mediator in creating a loose state union of the two republics during the Đinđić Government, which was bitterly resented by the Federal level of government (under FRY President Vojislav Koštunica) that had ceased to exist by 2003. The chapter concludes with a discussion of various international reactions to the Serbian Prime Minister’s assassination in March 2003. Many EU policy-makers at the time, who were also personal friends of Đinđić, in the aftermath of his murder started to question Serbia’s commitment to
European integration and the overall objectives as well as performance of the Serbian Government. Đinđić’s assassination left many in the EU with an uneasy feeling about Serbia’s unresolved political heritage from the 1990s (including the pervasive influence of the transnational organised crime and war profiteers). It reduced trust between the EU and Serbia, which became particularly manifest during Koštunica’s prime ministership.

Political discourses in Serbia following the NATO intervention

Mainstream political discourses in Serbia during 1999 and 2000 were characterised by the rise in anti-Western and anti-EU sentiment because of NATO’s military intervention. During the same period in Serbia, anti-Milošević political narratives increased. This was displayed through discourses of a Serbian student protest group Otpor and the opposition politicians. Negative perceptions of the West (including of the EU) in Serbia increased among ordinary citizens and not only nationalist political groups, as many observers would claim. In part, this was due to the psychological impact of the bombing, highly visible and widespread infrastructural damage, and civilian deaths or collateral damage from the NATO bombing that was much publicised in the Serbian media and diaspora communities. The so-called ‘collective trauma’ from the Kosovo conflict, or deep social shock because of the conflict that was taking place in Serbia, was especially evident in local political discourses.


680 While the consequences of the wars of Yugoslavia’s disintegration were certainly felt in Serbia, the territory of which was physically unaffected during the Croatian and Bosnian wars, the NATO bombing was experienced first-hand and its impact was much more immediate.
Anti-Western discourses are still reasserted at the times of annual commemoration of the NATO intervention at the bombed sites. Images of Serbia’s damaged architecture have ever since been used as a rallying point for anti-EU and anti-NATO campaigners in Serbia, including by political parties who would prefer Serbia to forge closer alliance with Russia instead of continuing with European integration. Until 2013, a Ministry of Defence building that was heavily damaged during the NATO bombardment in 1999 was completely visible from the main entrance of the Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. One interviewee noted that morale in the Ministry was often low and the mood was increasingly anti-American, and wondered if the building across the road had something to do with that.

Political pressure on the Serbian Government increased after more than 100,000 Serb civilians from Kosovo who were displaced across the country after NATO troops were stationed in Kosovo following UNSCR 1244 that provided the basis for a peace agreement. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians who have previously been displaced into neighbouring countries returned to Kosovo, which became an international protectorate after the Yugoslav security forces withdrew. Dannreuther argues that Milošević’s intent to stir an Albanian refugee crisis in neighbouring countries during the NATO intervention by ethnically cleansing Kosovo Albanians backfired as it strengthened the solidarity of NATO allies and

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682 One of these parties is Dveri Srpske, which was registered as a political party ahead of 2012 elections. The Belgrade Forum for a World of Equals, led by a Russophile former FRY Minister for Foreign Affairs Zivadin Jovanovic, opened a photographic exhibition at the main convention centre in Belgrade in March 2014 showcasing ‘humanitarian, economic and environmental consequences’ of NATO intervention. This suggests the continuity of political discourses that emerged as a result of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. N. Clark, ‘Belgrade calls for a world of equals’, Russia Today, 26 March 2014, http://rt.com/op-ed/anniversary-of-nato-aggression-yugoslavia-393/, (accessed 1 April 2014).
683 Interview with Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs employee from the UN section who asked not to be mentioned by name, Belgrade, April 2012.
684 A New York Times journalist and author estimated that at least 125,000 out of 200,000 ethnic Serb civilians were driven out from Kosovo after the NATO bombing stopped. The majority of them were prevented from returning to their homes, and reprisal attacks, including from gangs from Northern Albania that also arrived in Kosovo with NATO troops, were frequent. D. Rohde, ‘Kosovo Seething’, Foreign Affairs, May–June 2000, pp. 70; 73–74; 76.
(resolve of Western powers to be more involved in Kosovo’s post-conflict peace building. A narrative of collective rather than an individualised guilt for violence has characterised the situation between Serbs and Albanians after the Kosovo war. This sentiment was in part driven by the relatively low number of successful prosecutions for individual war crimes on both sides, and it was also fed by the perceptions about a slow arrival of justice for past crimes. At the same time, both sides started to exhibit unease about the international military presence; Albanians seeking full independence, and Serbs demanding restoration of the Serbian Government’s control in Kosovo.

Coercive diplomacy

The post-NATO intervention period was characterised by two distinct types of EU diplomacy towards Serbia: coercive diplomacy at the official (Track 1) level, which lasted until Milošević resigned, and the EU’s deepening engagement with the Serbian democrats in the DOS. By providing support for democratisation in Serbia the EU improved its use of soft power instruments. Engagement with Serbian pro-EU political groups and politicians later evolved into official cooperation after a DOS candidate, Vojislav Koštunica, became Yugoslavia’s President in October 2000. Therefore, the EU’s coercive diplomatic strategy was complemented with dialogue with Serbian democrats. The political success of DOS at the September 2000 elections in Serbia was enhanced by the Western support, both through public show of support and by financial means.

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According to Alexander George, who first attempted to systematically explain the use of threats, persuasion and force in diplomatic bargaining, coercive diplomacy entails:

A political-diplomatic strategy that aims to influence an adversary’s will or incentive structure. It combines threats of force, and, if necessary, the limited and selective use of force in discrete and controlled increments. The objective is to induce an adversary to comply with one’s demands, or to negotiate the most favourable outcome possible, while simultaneously averting the crisis to prevent unwanted military escalation.\(^{687}\)

Coercive diplomacy is also targeted at persuading an opponent to call off or undo an action that has been initiated, ‘such as giving up territory that has been occupied’.\(^{688}\) EU policy documents reveal that the Milošević regime was seen as a major threat to regional peace and security in Europe during the 1990s. Milošević was seen as the principal culprit for regional conflict, and for repression of Albanians in Kosovo. This region was, according to many Western observers, aimed at asserting Serbian ‘ethnic domination’ over Albanians—rather than at countering an irredentist political movement, from was a Serbian mainstream viewpoint.\(^{689}\) The political methods by which the EU pursued coercive diplomacy included the use of targeted sanctions, threats of collective military action against the SFRJ in 1998, and military support by more than half EU members for NATO’s military action against FRY.\(^{690}\) The most important


\(^{688}\) Deterrence threat, on the other hand, is employed to dissuade an opponent from undertaking an action that has not yet been initiated. US legal definitions, ‘Coercive diplomacy’, http://definitions.uslegal.com/c/coercive-diplomacy/, (accessed 1 March 2014).


\(^{690}\) The EU’s use of targeted sanctions and force in the context of the NATO intervention was discussed in the previous chapter.
diplomatic strategy for promoting change in Serbia was the EU’s support for democratic movements in Serbia under Milošević.

The EU’s support for Serbia’s democratic opposition

The second level of engagement involved EU efforts to support democratic transition in Serbia. One of the EU’s major projects on this front was Energy for Democracy program. The EU decision to provide financial support for anti-Milošević groups in Serbia during 1998–2000 was an innovative approach. This political decision followed a similar policy move by the US Government, both of which were aimed at encouraging democratic reform in FRY and supported Kosovo’s installed transitional authority as a chosen way forward. Informal partnerships and political contacts with the Serbian opposition and student groups which the EU developed in close coordination with the US to support regime change in Serbia had a positive learning effect for its exercise of soft power. Following the regime change in Serbia, the EU adopted a policy of political conditionality towards the Serbian Government, which was consistent with the EU’s broader regional approach to the Western Balkans.

Milošević’s regional policy in 1998–99 was regarded among EU members and allies (the US, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada amongst others) as a major threat to peace in Southeast Europe. Contrary to the belief of anti-EU proponents in Serbia, the EU did not have a single ‘grand strategy’ towards the third Yugoslavia. The EU formulated a series of steps that have later assisted with developing a more cohesive foreign and security policy, for example, towards Kosovo in the late 2000s. As discussed in the previous chapters, the EU struggled to reach a common position at the start of the Yugoslav crisis in 1991. The issue of offensive military operation without an explicit authorisation from the UNSC divided the EU members
also in 1998–99. It caused internal debates in countries such as Germany, which had been constitutionally precluded from engaging in overseas deployments unrelated to peacekeeping. This is why some observers say that the Kosovo war radically changed German security policy as legal amendments were passed to allow Germany to become one of the most active participants in the NATO-led military operation against FRY. 691

The EU adopted an experimental approach to the possibility of regime change for Serbia. Leading EU institutions learned the lessons of using a two-level strategy, which consisted of pursuing coercive diplomacy towards the Milošević regime at the official level, and engagement with the Serbian opposition at the informal level. The latter was broadened to include developing cooperative relationships with Serbian civil society and student groups. In addition, the EU gained new expertise after 1991 from the experience it gained with membership negotiations with post-communist countries. A deeper understanding of challenges pertinent to the transition from state socialism to market economy as in the context of Eastern European enlargement (which was discussed in Chapter One) strengthened the EU’s analytical capacities necessary for its future planning towards the FRY after 1999.

The Western-educated Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Đinđić (2001–03), was Serbia’s most influential opposition politician during the Milošević era. Đinđić repeatedly called for Serbia’s ‘return to Europe’. 692 This phrase was used in the CEES on the verge of their transition to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but Serbia’s transition to democracy occurred a decade later. During SFRJ, Đinđić was an anti-communist dissident who was amongst thirteen original founders of the Democratic Party in 1989. His role was vital in negotiating the

overthrow of Slobodan Milošević with a range of internal actors within the Serbian establishment, and delivering Slobodan Milošević to The Hague. After becoming Prime Minister in 2001, Đinđić lobbied intensively for Serbia’s integration into the EU. In order to improve Serbia’s international financial credibility, his Government delivered a series of unpopular economic reforms.693

There are four major lessons from the EU’s foreign policy towards FRY and Serbia following Milo Đukanović’s election to Montenegrin Presidency in 1998. First, the EU displayed a consistency in its broader approach to democratisation in post-communist Europe by supporting democratic forces in FRY. Its support for Serbia’s democrats (DOS) was consistent with its stated commitment to support Eastern European countries on their way to democracy. At the Strasbourg European Council in December 1989 (after the fall of the Berlin Wall), a declaration was adopted committing EU members to:

Take the necessary substantive and procedural decisions to ensure that the efforts undertaken to facilitate the transition taking place in Poland and Hungary and possibly in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe are co-ordinated and effective.694

Secondly, it appears that the EU foreign policy towards Serbia in 1998–2000 was developed independently from, but in close policy consultation with the US. Both actors supported the formation of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, which was formed in 1999.

693 This characteristic of transition economies is known as ‘transition recession’ and can be a cause of the fall of reform-oriented governments. Z. Stojiljković, ‘Socijaldemokratija i političke stranke Srbije’, in Z. Lutavac (ed.), Ideologija i političke stranke u Srbiji, Belgrade, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung/Fakultet političkih nauka/Institut društvenih nauka, 2007, p. 126.

Differences on Serbia displayed amongst the fifteen EU members before the NATO intervention were reduced after the war regarding the question of regime change. EU leaders reached a common understanding about the need for Milošević to leave Serbia’s highest political office. An example of this new approach was demonstrated at the US–EU ministerial summit in Washington on 9 November 1999, when the US and EU agreed to pursue ‘mutual efforts to support a democratic transition in Serbia’ by intensifying ‘dialogue with Yugoslavia’s democratic opposition’. At the non-official level, therefore, the EU decided to support more actively Serbia’s key opposition groups. This soft power approach was previously reserved for nation-states, particularly the US, and individual EU members, such as Germany and the UK. A common approach to supporting Serbia’s democratic opposition can also be observed in the joint press statements following the US-EU-Serbian opposition summit in Berlin in December 1999. US Secretary of State Madeline Albright described this event as a ‘historic dialogue’, furthermore clearly stating US support for the ambition of the Serbian opposition groups to embrace European integration. Albright states:

We must consider carefully the changes and initiatives required for your nation truly to join Europe. …. Because we cannot fulfil our vision of a Europe whole and free without the full participation of a democratic Yugoslavia.

Consistent with this policy, the European Commission piloted in the late 1990s a program in Serbia called Energy for Democracy, which was aimed at assisting Serbian opposition

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The EU’s Energy for Democracy program consisted of organising the transport of oil and other necessities to Serbian opposition-held towns during the winter months, which were purposely cut off by the regime because of their opposition to the Milošević regime. This ‘informal’ or second-track partnership emerged despite the tense situation in official relations (track 1) between EU and Serbia. The mass protests of 1996–97 created new impetus for informal partnerships to develop between the EU and Serbian student protesters, overseas student groups and opposition politicians. The EU’s new approach coincided with the US’s new approach towards the internal situation in FRY, as the EU and the US started to actively support the opposition’s activities against Milošević, in both Serbia and Montenegro.

The EU’s activism in aiding the Serbian opposition contradicts the arguments advanced in the literature about the EU’s widely perceived passivity, its internal and institutional lack of cohesion as well as diplomatic inability to prevent or stop the wars of Yugoslav succession and the Kosovo conflict. While this was true at the track one level, diplomacy at track two level presents a different picture. By forging a closer relationship with the Serbian opposition, the EU had developed new soft power instruments. Ties with the Serbian opposition have, after

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699 Interview with the Serbian Ambassador to Australia, Neda Maletić, August 2012.
701 One European Commission official who was interviewed in 2013 but asked not to be mentioned by name observed that their team was directly responsible for overseeing oil supplies from neighbouring countries to Serbian opposition-held towns during the oil blockade. In this view, the mission was novel for the EU, logistically challenging but generally regarded as a success.
Serbia’s regime change in October 2000, positively influenced the restart in EU-Serbia relations under Serbia’s first democratic government.

Serbia’s regime change

Among the members of international community, the European Commission advocated stringent financial and political measures against FRY, whilst at the track two level its officials developed partnerships with the Serbian opposition.\(^{702}\) In a close coordination effort with other international partners, particularly the US under the Clinton Administration but also the UN, the EU resorted to political conditionality and sanctions as major foreign policy tools to pressure Slobodan Milošević to embark on democratic reform. International sanctions targeted Milošević’s inner circle, but also had many adverse consequences for the Serbian economy that was already devastated by the NATO bombing, and previously, by the wars of Yugoslavia’s succession.\(^{703}\)

After the NATO intervention, key opposition activities were primarily coordinated by a newly formed Serbian student-led resistance network called *Otpor*.\(^{704}\) The Organisation of Serbian Students Abroad (OSSI), co-founded amongst others by Vuk Jeremić (who later became the youngest serving Serbian Foreign Minister and President of UN General Assembly) was assisting *Otpor* by drawing international attention to their cause. As one interviewee observed, OSSI’s London branch collected second-hand cell phones (at the time when cell phone technology in the Balkans was still very new) and transported them to a regional hub in the

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\(^{702}\) This finding was independently confirmed in interviews with three European Commission officials, two in 2011 and one in 2013.

\(^{703}\) M. Uvalić, *Serbia’s transition*, 2010, op. cit., p. 73.

Balkans where they were distributed to Otpor members.\textsuperscript{705} Freedom House, an NGO from the US, cooperated with institutions from Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to develop Serbia’s civil society networks, which were instrumental in toppling Milošević from power.\textsuperscript{706} However, external assistance provided to the under-developed Serbian civil society sector was not only criticised by Milošević’s allies but also by those who believed that Serbia should be strictly independent, without any influence from other countries. This polarisation between pro-Western/pro-EU and anti-Western/pro-neutrality and/or pro-Russia viewpoints has characterised Serbia’s mainstream political discourses ever since, representing a major obstacle to Serbia’s European integration. Following Serbia’s regime change, divisions among the Serbian democrats intensified over the sensitive political issues of Kosovo and Serbia’s cooperation with international justice institutions—which struck at the heart of public debate in Serbia about the country’s sovereignty.

Serbia entered a period of democratic transition after a mass revolt in early October 2000. Mass protests broke out after Milošević refused to accept his electoral defeat in the September 2000 presidential elections, which the DOS candidate, Vojislav Koštunica, was widely believed to have won.\textsuperscript{707} A long-standing anti-communist dissident and Milošević’s main rival, Vojislav Koštunica, on 7 October 2000 became FRY’s last President. Koštunica was pro-EU in orientation at the time of his election. Due to his disagreements with the communist regime,

\textsuperscript{705} Interview with the Serbian Government official, 2012, who chose to remain anonymous. Interviews with former OSSI activists (who were at the time of interview working for the Serbian Government and asked to be un-identified) indicated that there still is a culture of fear from retribution from political elements dating back to the Milošević-era, for those who have actively participated in Serbia’s regime change. The same appears to be the case for those who had some knowledge of the Serbian Government’s money laundering activities through overseas accounts, including in what are now EU countries (Cyprus in particular), which are still being investigated. The World Bank–UNODC, ‘Slobodan Milošević’, https://star.worldbank.org/corruption-cases/node/18665, (accessed 1 March 2014).


\textsuperscript{707} Montenegro’s pro-reform party led by Milo Đukanović boycotted federal elections in September, thereby allowing the Montenegrin socialists to win republican representation.
Koštunica was expelled from the faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade in 1974. In 1989, he became one of the original founders of the Democratic Party (Demokratska Stranka, DS). In 1992 (due to leadership disagreements within DS) Koštunica formed another party, the Democratic Party of Serbia (Demokratska Stranka Srbije, DSS). A united democratic Coalition (Demokratska Opozicija Srbije, DOS) supported Koštunica as their presidential candidate in September 2000 against Milošević. In October 2000, Koštunica became the third Yugoslavia’s President until this position was abolished by the looser arrangement of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in February 2003.

After the regime change, opposition leaders became key decision-makers in Serbian politics. German-educated leader of the Serbian opposition and Doctor of Philosophy, Zoran Đinđić, became Serbian Prime Minister on 25 January 2001. In the eyes of the West, he was a staunchly pro-EU politician, who championed a new national discourse for Serbia on its European future. Member of Parliament and leader of the pro-EU Civil Alliance for Serbia, Goran Svilanović, became Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs. Despite the regime change in October 2000, a total break with Milošević-era politics was not achieved after October 2000. Key people from the previous establishment, including Serbian President Milan Milutinović (in power from December 1997 to December 2002), remained in top political offices. The continuation of old regime structures (as a compromise deal) in post-Milošević FRY at the republican (SPS for Serbia) and federal (Montenegrin SND) levels became a deeply complicating and destabilising factor for Serbia’s gradually improving relations with the EU. Inadequate reforms affected internal restructuring, privatisation (which was organised in a hasty manner and without transparency), and the quality of Serbia’s democratic transformation, especially in the security

708 Koštunica was President of the DSS from 1992 until his party fared badly in the Serbian parliamentary election in March 2014, prompting him to resign.
sector. Incomplete reforms have adversely affected Serbia’s European integration, as well as jeopardised its pro-EU course as will be discussed in the next section.

**Different levels of the EU’s foreign policy towards FRY**

From 1998 to 2000, the EU continued to pursue a differentiated policy approach towards Montenegro, by engaging with the pro-reform democratic elites.\(^709\) This was in response to changed domestic political circumstances in FRY, and in particular, Montenegro’s political distancing from Milošević under its new President (elected in 1998), Milo Đukanović. The EU had thereby become a more pro-active diplomatic player in reacting to FRY’s changed internal political situation. This EU behaviour stands in contrast to the events of the early 1990s, when the EU did not adequately support any opposition groups in Serbia or in Montenegro towards the Milošević regime.

In the post-Milošević era, the EU also developed a new approach to Serbia using the strategy of political conditionality. This method was consistent with its regional approach to other countries in Central-East and Southeast Europe. However, by applying excessive political pressure on a newly elected democratic government in Serbia to embark on swift political and market reforms, the EU put a significant burden on pre-existing differences among parties in the government coalition that won the December 2000 elections.

Despite the fact that the transitional Serbian government also included representatives from Milošević’s party, the SPS, Serbia’s regime change had a positive impact on its official

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\(^709\) This is evident, for example, from the European Council’s Presidency Conclusions from 2000 to 2003.
relations with the EU.\textsuperscript{710} At the Zagreb Council Summit on 24 November 2000, the EU officially endorsed the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) as a key framework for regional policy.\textsuperscript{711} On 25 November 2000 President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, visited Belgrade to sign a Framework Agreement for help and support for FRY. This agreement enabled the EU to provide political and economic assistance for the country’s political and economic reforms. Serbia was also granted autonomous trade preferences (previously given to other Western Balkan countries), but which were not immediately implemented. A consultative task force between EU and FRY was established to monitor the progress achieved (later replaced in mid-2003 with the Enhanced Dialogue mechanism).\textsuperscript{712} FRY was officially included in the SAP in July 2001.

The Council’s Presidency Conclusions of mid-December 2000 confirmed the primacy of SAP process for reform in the Western Balkans:

\begin{quote}
A clear prospect of accession, indissolubly linked to progress in regional cooperation,
\end{quote}

is offered to [five countries, including FRY] in accordance with the conclusions of


Serbia’s gradual reintegration into international institutions and access to financial lending started with a decision of EBRD on 14 December to admit FRY as a member, which became effective in January 2001. On 20 December, the IMF Board of Directors approved FRY’s membership application, a decision which was applied retroactively from 14 December. The same day the IMF approved a loan to support FRY’s reconstruction. IMF membership opened the way for FRY to join the World Bank in May 2001, which opened up access to WB’s structural adjustment lending funds. Despite economic support which FRY received during early stages of its transition, political dichotomy at the federal-state level slowed down democratisation in FRY and the inflows of foreign capital.

Serbian transitional authorities also entered into negotiations with the Paris and London Clubs of Creditors to negotiate the rescheduling and cancellation of a part of its colossal external debt. However, in order to receive financial assistance, FRY had to comply with the main political condition, which was the meeting of its international obligations in relation to cooperation with the ICTY. The country’s ‘extreme dependence on international donors’ assistance’ influenced the transition strategy adopted in 2001, according to Uvalić.\footnote{Uvalić, Serbia’s transition, 2010, op. cit., pp. 121; 124–125. Professor Uvalić was working on restructuring of the Serbian economy and creating a blueprint for Serbia’s European integration office after Serbia’s democratic changes. Her contribution to Serbia’s first democratic government is reflective of a general trend prevalent at the time, when many prominent experts from the Serbian diaspora returned to Belgrade to assist with economic and political recovery.}
At the official level of engagement (Track 1 diplomacy), a thawing in the EU-FRY’s political relations came, therefore, with a new leadership team and changed internal political situation. Mainstream accounts hold that a new era in EU-FRY relations followed the resignation of Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević; Prime Minister and Milošević’s principal Montenegrin ally, Momir Bulatović, and the Serbian Minister of the Interior, Vlajko Stojiljković. On 8–9 October 2000, Koštunica participated in the Biarritz summit during the French EU Presidency where it was reported that EU members pledged 200 million for FRY’s reconstruction. The French invitation extended to Koštunica gave European recognition to the new leadership in Belgrade. A European Commission’s mission in Serbia described this act as ‘a symbolic end of isolation and blockage of Serbia which was run during the 1990s’.

In reality, however, the EU became involved in FRY’s complicated federal/republican politics, as it became a leading external actor involved in mediating negotiations on a looser state union arrangement between Serbia and Montenegro. This move, as could be expected, encountered resistance from the federal level where Montenegrin socialists disagreed with the idea of abolishing the federal government. This political act by the EU could have also been the trigger of President Koštunica’s growing animosity towards the EU, as his job was made redundant with the change in status quo. His anti-EU attitude took on a more serious policy dimension during his prime ministership in Serbia between 2004 and 2007–08, which Chapter Six will discuss.

On 9 October 2000 at a summit in Luxembourg, fifteen EU member states (MS) made a historic decision (for EU-Serbia relations) to end the oil and air services embargo against FRY. The country was, by then, one of the most isolated in the world.\textsuperscript{718} At the Luxembourg summit the EU retained sanctions against former President Slobodan Milošević and his associates. A political decision to modify the EU’s diplomatic stance towards FRY was expressed in the summit’s \textit{Declaration on the FRY}:

By implementing all of these measures without delay, the European Union intends to contribute to the establishment of democracy and the rule of law in the FRY, to the success of the major political, economic and social reforms it will introduce and to its opening up to Europe.\textsuperscript{719}

The Official Journal of the EU following the summit had also noted that the declaration provided for a ‘radical review of the European Union’s policy towards the FRY.’\textsuperscript{720} On 12 October 2000, the US also lifted key economic sanctions against FRY.\textsuperscript{721} The EU’s and US’s new foreign policy directions towards FRY had opened the way for FRY to enter the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe on 26 October 2000, and to obtain membership in the UN on 1 November 2000, thereby becoming a ‘normal’ international citizen again rather than a pariah state.


During his first visit to the European Parliament on 15 November 2000 as Yugoslavia’s new head of state, Koštunica lobbied for Serbia’s EU membership:

It is because of our firm commitment to step on the soil of European development that we wish to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union as soon as possible, and use the provisions of the agreement to direct our political and economic recovery, and subsequent development, towards European integration. Perhaps the citizens of the European Union can understand that best if they evoke their historic memory and those long-past years after World War II, when the prospects for the Continent and European civilisation itself were extremely uncertain.\(^\text{722}\)

In his speech, Koštunica appealed for Western understanding and gradual integration of the Western Balkans. Over the next two months, the new Yugoslav leadership resumed diplomatic relations with the UK, Germany, US, France, Albania, and other neighbouring states. However, one of the most important obligations that Serbia’s new leadership team was expected to meet concerned improving relations with its neighbours. With EU mediation, the former Yugoslav republics signed a Succession Agreement in Vienna on 29 June 2001 regulating their division of former Yugoslavia’s assets. Uvalić observed that this important agreement, which represented the EU’s diplomatic success, resolved ‘one of the most disputed questions’ in the relations between former Yugoslav republics.\(^\text{723}\)

The preservation of good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans still remains a key precondition for candidates in this region. The EU still acts as the main driver of this approach to all outstanding questions regarding former Yugoslavia’s dissolution through the ‘carrot’ of the EU membership. This incentive


\(^{723}\) Uvalić, Serbia’s transition, 2010, op. cit, p. 123.
also ensured that Serbia’s next parliamentary elections were conducted generally in line with international democratic standards (notwithstanding some irregularities)—which stood in stark contrast to the elections conducted during the Milošević period in Serbian politics.

**The Serbian parliamentary elections after Milošević**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called on the transitional government in Belgrade to ensure that Serbia’s legislative elections, which were due to take place on 23 December 2000, were free and fair. With the pro-European coalition of democratic parties winning 176 out of 250 parliamentary seats, an international electoral observer mission noted:

> The 23 December 2000 parliamentary elections were an important step forward in Serbia’s transition to democracy. … Notwithstanding the flaws in the legislation and certain legacies from the previous regime, the elections marked significant progress and demonstrated a clear will of the administration to dispense with the practices of the past.

The electoral results are presented in Chart One on the next page.

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Following the US’s example, the EU lifted many residual sanctions against FRY except for targeted measures against selected persons from the 1990s era. Ivo Daalder observed:

Now that he [Milošević] has gone, Europe is one giant step closer to being peaceful, undivided, and democratic—a Europe that, far from being a source of danger and concern as it was during the 20th century, is in fact becoming a strong partner of the United States in the 21st century.\(^{227}\)

Daalder’s analogy demonstrates how the West had viewed Milošević and his anti-Western allies: as a personified symbol of authoritarianism, whose policies were the single major obstacle to peace in the region. The perception of Serbia’s culpability for wars in the Balkans...
was associated with policies of the Milošević-era elite and not only Milošević himself, including other SPS functionaries; his wife, Mira Marković’s JUL coalition of parties, and the SRS, led by Vojislav Šešelj.728

In the Serbian parliamentary elections of 23 December 2000 the voter turnout was 57.8 per cent, and the DOS coalition won the majority of parliamentary seats. Major parties that did not pass the five per cent threshold (required for parliamentary representation) included the Serbian Renewal Movement (Srpski Pokret Obnove, SPO), which lost 45 seats, and the Yugoslav Left (Jugoslovenska Levica, JUL), which lost 20 seats. This reflected the public sentiment in Serbia, as the majority of voters opted for change.

After Serbia’s regime change on 5 October 2000, funding from the EU was conditional upon the formation of ‘a suitable federal government’, according to a statement by Stability Pact coordinator Bodo Hombach.729 The coalition of democratic parties made an agreement with the Radicals (SPS) and the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) on 16 October 2000 to hold the new elections in December. In the 23 December 2000 Serbian parliamentary elections, the coalition of democratic parties (DOS) won 176 seats (with DS and DSS obtaining 45 seats each), followed by Milošević’s old party SPS (37), the right-wing and anti-European SRS (23) and nationalist Stranka Srpskog Jedinstva (SSJ) bloc (14), which was founded by a notorious former paramilitary leader, Arkan.730

728 It is interesting that Mira Marković, Milošević’s closest confidante, was never charged for complicity by the ICTY Tribunal, probably because she never held any official Government function. Milošević’s biographer, Adam LeBor, observed that ‘for Milošević, Mira’s partisan pedigree offered an entrée to Yugoslavia’s elite’. ‘Mira Marković: Slobodan Milošević’s Lady Macbeth’, Independent, 13 March 2006, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/mira-markovic-slobodan-Milošević-lady-macbeth-469774.html, (accessed 1 May 2013).


The clashes of normative frameworks among Serbian democrats

Differences in normative frameworks of political parties that agreed to form a coalition government have resulted in a political paralysis and slowing down of reforms in the post-Milošević federal state. A political anomaly was produced at the federal level in November 2000 with an unlikely alliance between the anti-Milošević political camp, DOS, and the Montenegrin socialists (Socijalistička narodna partija Crne Gore, SNP)—who were long-time allies of Milošević’s party. The new federal government was composed of Prime Minister Zoran Žižić from Montenegro’s SNP, while Miroljub Labus from the G17+ party became FRY’s Deputy Prime Minister. Uvalić comments that ‘such an unnatural coalition in the federation made cooperation within the federal government extremely slow and burdensome’, rendering cooperation with the Đukanović-led Montenegrin government (where SNP was in opposition) extremely challenging.731

The federal cabinet became increasingly divided between Koštunica and Labus, with the former pursuing NATO officials for the bombing of Yugoslavia. Miroljub Labus was supporting the Serbian Prime Minister, who wanted to expand Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. A Montenegrin party, SNP, supported Koštunica given its intimacy with the Milošević-era policy-making. The parallel existence of three governments (federal, Serbian, Montenegrin) resulted in the triplication of many ministries and weak policy coordination among them. This arrangement also delayed the FRY’s engagement with the EU, as trade preferences granted by the EU were delayed due to the failure to reach a compromise on what

type of customs seal would be used for Yugoslav exports. These complex issues perpetuated political risk and uncertainty, and limited the inflow of foreign investment.\(^{732}\)

In late June 2001, EU leaders overwhelmingly welcomed the extradition of Milošević to the ICTY at The Hague. Reactions by EU leaders, including foreign policy head Javier Solana and European Commission’s President Romano Prodi were supportive of Serbia’s choice to embrace reform.\(^{733}\) The day after extradition, the EU pledged economic aid in loans and grants to assist Serbia’s economic recovery. Russian officials commented that Serbia’s deal with the ICTY was a ‘sell-out’ for Western aid.\(^{734}\) However, this policy decision represented a change in priorities and most importantly, narratives and practices for the democratic government, which relied on building closer relationships with the West in order to advance EU membership as Serbia’s key foreign policy goal.

On 25 June, the Yugoslav Government’s Justice Minister Momčilo Grubač requested that the ICTY start with the extradition formalities. He defended the federal government’s decision amid criticism that he was acting outside the government’s constitutional powers, as FRY’s Constitution forbade the extradition of Yugoslav citizens. His argument was that this did not represent the same type of extradition as the UN was an international institution, not a state.\(^{735}\) DSS leader, Vojislav Koštunica, protested the Government’s decision, while Prime Minister Zoran Žižić shortly after resigned in protest because of the breach of a coalition agreement. He

\(^{732}\) ibid., p. 118.
\(^{734}\) ibid.
said, however, that cooperation with the ICTY was in his country’s national interest, and observed:

It is only fair that through a court proceedings we can prove that we were not the instigators, but the victims in the conflict that has shaken the Balkans during the past decade.\(^\text{736}\)

The day before the extradition, *Berliner Zeitung* reported Koštunica as saying that he did not expect any extradition to go ahead before the donors’ conference for Yugoslavia on 29 June in Brussels.\(^\text{737}\) Milošević’s top-secret arrest went ahead with authorisation from the Prime Minister Đinđić, which exposed rifts in the coalition government. In a country where federal presidential powers were, until the regime change, too wide, and prime ministers were regarded as not more than loyal cronies to the regime, this development represented a radical break with past practices.

Symbolically, the day of Milošević’s extradition coincided with Serbia’s revered St Vitus Holy day, 28 June. As described in the previous chapter, according to the legend, Serbian martyrs lost their lives in the 1389 Kosovo battle and Serbia became a vassal state to the Ottomans. Prince Lazar was killed in this battle, and his youngest daughter Olivera was handed over to the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I’s harem as part of the peace settlement—an episode which most Serbs still regard as a day of national humiliation, but moral victory. The Law on National Holidays, which was among the first regulations of the 2001 Coalition Government, described


St Vitus Day as the day of symbolic remembrance of all Yugoslav nationals who had died while defending their homeland.\textsuperscript{738} In July 2001, the work on a joint EU-FRY consultative task force commenced.

A rift within the pro-EU, 18-member DOS coalition started almost immediately after the government was formed due to differences between the DSS under federal President Koštunica, and the DS under Serbian Prime Minister Dindić. The differences in their respective normative frameworks weakened the DS-led coalition government that was sworn in on 25 January 2001.\textsuperscript{739} Two major factors contributed to the escalation of political differences between these two largest parties within the DOS coalition: the extradition of former President Milošević to The Hague tribunal, and the murder of a former state-security official, Momir Gavrilović on 3 August 2001 only hours after he had visited Koštunica’s office.\textsuperscript{740} A report by the International Crisis Group described Gavrilović’s unsolved murder as a catalyst for exposing a long-hidden feud between the DSS and the DS, and the DSS’s nature as a ‘conservative nationalist party’.\textsuperscript{741} Both Gavrilović’s and Dindić’s murders were symptomatic of the severe domestic weaknesses in Serbia’s transition. They exposed the difficulty of reforming Serbian state security agencies, while Serbia suffered from its Milošević–era legacy.\textsuperscript{742} Targeted killings served to demonstrate

\textsuperscript{741} International Crisis Group, ‘Serbia’s transition: reforms under siege’, \textit{ICG Balkans Report}, no. 117, 21 September 2001, p. 1. \textsuperscript{742} During the 1990s, many people from state security organs, such as the former Special Operations Unit \textit{Red Berets}, were thought to have been associated with key mafia clans and their alleged involvement in civil wars. Members of the \textit{Red Berets} later staged a protest, in November 2001, opposing Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. In June 2002, a high-ranking official from the Serbian Interior Ministry, Major-General Boško Buha, was assassinated, and members of the \textit{Red Berets} later arrested in connection with his murder. M. Miljković and
that violence, and threats of violence against serving officials and politicians, were a reality in post-Milošević Serbia, representing a serious obstacle to pursuing the pro-European orientation of Serbian democrats.

Many in the DSS, including Koštunica, regarded Đinđić’s decision to extradite former Serbian political and military leaders to the ICTY as unconstitutional.743 Immediately after the removal of Milošević from power, Koštunica said that cooperation with the ICTY would be secondary priority, as he regarded the ICTY as having an anti-Serb bias.744 Koštunica’s former adviser Slobodan Samardžić told the author of this thesis, that ‘The Hague conditionality’ became a reflection of the ‘power and influence’ of several key EU members within the EU’s foreign policy-making structures (particularly Germany, France, the UK and the Netherlands) as these countries had pushed for the Hague conditionality to become a top priority in EU dealings with Serbia. Samardžić remarked that the EU had demonstrated ‘double standards’ in its ‘selective treatment’ of Serbs at the ICTY; there were significantly fewer court cases for the ‘under-investigated war crimes’ committed against Serbs in the 1990s, and a significantly lower number of convictions for crimes against Serbs.745 According to that perspective, ‘Hague conditionality’ was a major factor that had slowed down Serbia’s European integration, and one that divided Serbian democrats. Their rifts had eliminated any possibility of more effective


745 Interview with Slobodan Samardžić (who was when interviewed an elected parliamentarian and the head of EU studies at the University of Belgrade), Belgrade, July 2010.
functioning by Serbia’s legislative system, and precluded consensus among democrats for further reform.\footnote{The main challenges to the security sector reform in Serbia were incoherence and a focus on border management and broader defence reforms, rather than structural changes within the security agencies, which were still dominated by Milošević-era loyalists. G. Collantes-Celador and A.E. Junkos, ‘Security sector reform in the Western Balkans: the challenge of coherence and effectiveness’, in Ekergren M., and Simons, Greg (eds), \textit{The politics of security sector reform: challenges and opportunities for the EU’s global role}, Farnham, Ashgate, 2011, pp. 127–154.}

In August 2001, the DSS accused Đinđić and other members from the DS of links with organised crime, and refused to continue to support the government.\footnote{This meant that, effectively, DSS became an opposition party in the Serbian legislature, but the DOS coalition still held the majority with 131 seats. Bideleux and Jeffries, \textit{The Balkans: a post-communist history}, 2007, op. cit., p. 288.} The worsening tensions between the DS and the DSS resulted in the DS-aligned DOS Presidency to expel the DSS from its ranks in 2002, and to strip the DSS parliamentarians of their mandates. This drastic move destabilised the Serbian political scene, attracting criticism from the Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) since it was a step back from Serbia’s democratic reform and European integration.\footnote{OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, ‘Republic of Serbia parliamentary election 28 December 2003’, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation mission report, Warsaw, 27 February 2004, pp. 4.} Gemma Collantes-Celador and Ana E. Junkos observed that reforms in Serbia’s security sector (comprising defence, police and intelligence services) were obstructed by ‘military ranks loyal to the Milošević regime’.\footnote{G. Collantes-Celador and A.E. Junkos, ‘Security sector reform in the Western Balkans’, op. cit., 2011, p. 137.}

On 12 March 2003, Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić was assassinated on the external steps of the Ministry of Justice in Belgrade. Deeply anti-communist, Đinđić studied in Germany under the influential German political philosopher, Jürgen Habermas. In 1994, Đinđić became President of the Democratic Party (\textit{Demokratska Stranka}, DS) in Belgrade, the party which he help establish. The DS presented a political alternative to Slobodan Milošević’s policies that led to Serbia’s international isolation, and to, what some may call, the ‘demonisation’ of Serbia’s
Following Milošević’s resignation in October 2000, Đinđić became Prime Minister in a Coalition Government that sought to reform post-communist Serbia and bring its standards into line with those of the EU. Đinđić’s reform agenda influenced Serbia’s later decision-makers, including President Boris Tadić (2008–2012).

It is believed that Đinđić was assassinated by rogue elements of a disbanded and criminalised military unit known as the Red Berets. These units were created for special operations, but allegedly also for eliminating political opponents and silencing Milošević’s critics. Serbia’s ruling elite under Milošević was composed of: Slobodan Milošević’s socialist party (Socijalistička Partija Srbije, SPS); his wife, Mirjana Marković’s socialist alliance of the Yugoslav Left (Jugoslovenska Levica, JUL); nationalist Serbian Radical Party (Srpska Radikalna Stranka, SRS); and several other minor parties. Đinđić became Serbia’s third pro-European assassinated leader in modern history. Possible involvement of other high-ranking former officials in these and other unlawful activities, like corruption, is still being dealt with in Serbia as a legacy from its recent authoritarian past. As mentioned earlier, successful resolution of these politically motivated murders remains an important EU accession criterion for Serbia.

Đinđić’s assassination touched off a further crisis, complicated by the absence of any elected President of Serbia (after former President, Milan Milutinović’s term expired in 2002). The

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751 D. Spasojević, ‘Group named in plot on Serbia chief’, Global Policy Forum, 9 April 2003, http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/163/29244.html, (accessed 1 March 2014). One of the interviewees for this project was a survivor of one such kidnapping, but chose not to be identified by name.
752 The other two leaders included pro-Austrian Prince Mihailo Obrenović III, who was assassinated in Belgrade in 1868, and the anti-communist King of Yugoslavia, Aleksandar I, who was assassinated in Marseilles during his official visit to France in 1934.
753 Previously, three presidential election attempts in 2002 and 2003 had failed as they did not meet the minimum voter turnout of 50 per cent. Before the 2004 presidential election, this requirement was abolished.
resulting confusion facilitated the rise in public support for parties that were less enthusiastic about Serbia’s European integration.\textsuperscript{754} Several members deserted the democratic bloc (DOS) by November 2003 as the Serbian Government was facing a no-confidence motion it was likely to lose. This caused further fracturing of the pro-reform bloc, triggering calls by the opposition for early elections.\textsuperscript{755} The EU supported Serbia’s pro-European democratic parties ahead of the parliamentary elections, which took place on 28 December 2003. It appears that the EU’s support for Serbian democrats was less than in the lead-up to Serbia’s parliamentary elections in December 2000.\textsuperscript{756}

On 12 February 2002, Milošević appeared at the ICTY facing charges of crimes against humanity. His three separate indictments were joined under a single prosecution case relating to crimes committed under his command in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.\textsuperscript{757} In May 1999, during the Kosovo war, Milošević became the world’s first serving head of state to confront these charges.\textsuperscript{758} In March 2002, the EU assisted with the signing of Belgrade treaty on the reconstruction of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the State Union of Serbia and

\textsuperscript{754} Some of these parties, including the radicals, called on Serbia to improve diplomatic and trade relations with Russia, which was now under the new leadership of Vladimir Putin.

\textsuperscript{755} The DOS coalition was formally dissolved on 18 November 2003.

\textsuperscript{756} The US and EU financially aided the DOS presidential candidate (Vojislav Koštunica) before the elections in September 2000 with millions of dollars. The Yugoslav presidential election was held on 24 September 2000 simultaneously with federal parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by the Montenegrin Government. S. Erlanger, ‘The fall of Slobodan Milošević’, in J. Wright (ed.), \textit{New York Times Almanac}, New York, Penguin Putnam Inc., 2002, pp. 59–60; p. 59. Furthermore, Western assistance included funding for both Serbian opposition parties and the popular student revolt movement, Otpor. This was the beginning of the EU’s new practice of cooperating with Serbia’s opposition groups, including pro-European political parties, ahead of major elections, which was a similar line of policy to that of the US. USAID stated that it assisted Otpor in 2000 with $25 million, but the overall Western funding for Serbia’s regime change has never been publicly stated by either the US Government or the European Commission. The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, \textit{Annual report 2000: Human rights in Serbia 2000}, p. 3, http://www.helsinki.org.rs/reports_t10a01.html (accessed 1 March 2014).


The politically motivated assassination of Serbia’s top and most pro-Western politician plunged the Coalition Government and parliamentary groups into an institutional and political crisis. Declining levels of trust on the Serbian domestic political scene amongst dominant political players were manifested through parliamentary debates. The DS were pitted against the DSS parliamentarians, which had a flow-on effect on the public. The repercussions and internal political bickering that ensued in Serbian politics have impeded its European integration processes. A perceived backsliding in Serbian democracy highlighted the need for the EU to keep a close eye on the security situation in the Western Balkans, which it specifically referred to as a fragile region in its first security strategy, the *European Security Strategy* of 2003.

The Serbian Government’s initial response to the assassination might have led to private or party retributions, thus shifting the country’s focus away from broader and substantive political and economic transformation. Under enacted emergency measures, the first democratic Serbian Government conducted a major anti-organised crime operation known as *Operacija Sablja*, and 4,000 people were detained for questioning. Like the political vacuum after Tito’s death in March 1980, Đinđić’s murder opened space for intra-factional spills and showed a growing divide between the Serbian political parties. Overall, this sequence of events set back Serbia’s European integration as several political parties (SRS in particular) reverted back to ethno-particularist narratives such as the victimhood narrative. Calls for independence in foreign

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policy increased, which was manifested through growing opposition to the Hague tribunal seeking the remaining Serbian indictees at large. Two trends emerged in relation to the EU’s responses to the murder: a growing concern about Serbia’s democratisation and its future commitment to European integration.

Global reactions to Đinđić’s assassination at the public discursive level certainly raised doubts about Serbia’s democratisation and the substantive commitment of its political elites to European integration. The lack of certainty regarding the causes and motivations behind the PM’s murder is in 2014, a decade later, on the agenda of EU policy-makers who have listed it among Serbia’s accession priorities in the wider and ongoing process of EU political conditionality towards the Western Balkans. This issue demonstrates how past political events matter in accession negotiations, as well as the extent to which an unsatisfactory resolution of a major domestic political issue in the candidate state can later adversely affect that country’s European integration.

EU accession for Serbia had become a deeply internalised political process, in which the ideas and perceptions of a candidate state for the EU become pivotal for a successful closing of negotiating chapters of the acquis. The murder of Serbia’s pro-EU Prime Minister brought back memories of political coups in Serbia domestically, and the perception of Serbia’s instability. Pettifer observed:

As in all high profile assassinations, the death of the leader concerned is likely to have a symbolic importance that easily exceeds the actual loss of political skills embodied in that dead individual. … Coming at a time when Serbia was supposed to be becoming

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For SRS this was expected as its leader voluntarily surrendered to The Hague, claiming innocence.
less of a ‘Balkan’ country, the assassination falls into a specific and local historical tradition.\textsuperscript{761}

Đokić recalled that exactly one hundred years before Đinđić’s assassination, a pro-Austrian Serbian King Alexander Obrenović and Queen Draga were assassinated in 1903 by a group of dissenting army officers, after which many European countries cut off diplomatic relations with Serbia.\textsuperscript{762} The rival and pro-Russian/pro-French, Karadordević dynasty, under a Western-educated leader-in-exile, replaced the Obrenović dynasty. As Serbia’s new ruler, King Petar I revised the Constitution, using the model of Belgium’s Constitution from 1831, and introduced a system of constitutional monarchy.\textsuperscript{763} After diplomatic relations were restored with the majority of European monarchies, Serbia had, once again, ‘returned’ to European mainstream politics. This example demonstrates that competing perspectives of Serbia’s uneasy relationship with major Western European powers and Serbia’s friendship and close relations with Russia have resulted in tragic outcomes for Serbia during the time of national crises.

Decision-makers in the EU expressed three types of political concerns relating to Serbian politics after Đinđić. These concerns, which were presented in the European Commission’s progress reports, related to the rise in nationalism and ethno-particularist discourses in Serbia; the increasing popularity of the Radicals (SRS) whose political leader was in the ICTY facing charges of crimes against humanity; and slow security sector reform. The Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro, Maurizio Massari, observed that Đinđić’s murder came on

\textsuperscript{763} Pro-West European and pro-Russian political affiliations have characterised the formation of modern Serbian state since its de facto independence from the Ottoman rule in 1817. Serbia then became an autonomous principality in 1829, reached recognition of its independent statehood at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, and became Kingdom in 1882. Both normative affiliations can be observed regarding on the question of Serbia’s EU membership, as Chapters Six to Eight will discuss.
top of Serbia’s other regional and internal governance problems.\textsuperscript{764} Đinđić’s murder also gave an impression that influential criminal networks had some degree of political influence in Serbia. European media described the assassination as ‘the biggest setback during the normalisation processes’ between the EU and Serbia.\textsuperscript{765}

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov announced that Russia was ‘outraged’ at the crime.\textsuperscript{766} Greece, which held the rotating EU Presidency in March 2003, said the murder ‘was incompatible with a sound democratic system’.\textsuperscript{767} In expressing her shock on the day of Serbian PM’s assassination, Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs Ferrero-Waldner said that Đinđić, who was a friend, was ‘one of the fathers of Serbian democracy’ who ‘represented the new face of Serbia, turned towards Europe’.\textsuperscript{768} Javier Solana, EU foreign policy chief, said:

\begin{quote}
A friend of mine has been killed, a very good friend. I had the opportunity of working with him during the last period of time. I had a very long conversation the day before yesterday to help him make progress in the development of his country.\textsuperscript{769}
\end{quote}

These statements indicate that the improvement in relations between the EU and the Serbian Government under Đinđić was in part constructed upon close personal relationships and trust

\textsuperscript{764} Massari also noted that key domestic issues included a rising poverty and declining living standards that furthermore fed into an uncontrollable cycle of domestic corruption, and a tense security situation in the Albanian-majority regions including Kosovo. M. Massari, ‘The OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro Challenges for the Rule of Law’, \textit{OSCE Yearbook 2004}, Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, University of Hamburg, 2005, p. 124.


\textsuperscript{769} CNN, ‘World outraged by Đinđić killing’, op. cit.
forged by Đinđić with EU leaders. Đinđić enjoyed a formidable respect in many political circles within the EU, especially in Germany, where his efforts to bring Serbia back to Europe were particularly recognised and developed. This might indicate that European integration relies on a significant degree of trust developing between political leaders, which plays a vital role for the advancement of further negotiations.

US Senator, John McCain, released a statement on Đinđić’s assassination:

Those who would corrupt and destroy democracy in Serbia presumably hope by their actions to extinguish the Serbian people's aspirations to live under rule of law and in liberty as part of a secure and prosperous Europe. They have failed. Killing one man will not stop reform or diminish the passion of Serbs to be part of the European family of free nations.  

McCain’s words indicated that Serbia was still seen as being outside Europe, in its backyard, geographically close but politically still remote from the civilizational European ‘core’, the EU. Early parliamentary elections were called in 2003 during a political crisis generated by the assassination. They took place on 28 December 2003, which was one year earlier before schedule, because of Serbia’s deepening political crisis. An OSCE report (which reported on the elections) questioned the logic of including three war crimes indictees as leading candidates in the electoral roll. The OSCE said that these candidacies conveyed ‘the clear intention of some political parties in Serbia to adhere to the denounced legacy of the past’. An

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increasingly EU-sceptic politician, Vojislav Koštunica, became Serbia’s Prime Minister in March 2004 after months of negotiations between different Serbian political parties.\footnote{Zoran Živković became Serbia’s Interim Prime Minister was (from 18 March 2003 to 3 March 2004). He was Minister of Internal Affairs of Yugoslavia between November 2000 and March 2003.}

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided a contextual analysis of regime change in Serbia, which occurred in October 2000 under combined pressure from domestic and international players. The start of Serbia’s democratic transition is thus associated with the Milošević regime’s collapse in Serbia. Key narratives during the regime change period in Serbia were a return to democratic rule and to Europe, an argument employed by democrats. Serbian exclusionist ethno-centric and victimhood discourses, however, were still present in the mainstream, especially in the losing camp (Serbian socialists and radicals). Anti-Western and anti-EU discourses were also visible in the political realm through rising opposition to the extradition of Serbian citizens to the ICTY.

The EU’s use of a variety of diplomatic tools, including a soft power strategy to financially support members of the DOS coalition symbolised a maturing of its instruments of common foreign and security policy. As a result of this experience, the EU developed better equipped institutional capacity to deal with civil emergencies after the Kosovo war. One key lesson from the Serbian transition that the EU could have learned is that investing in partnerships with pro-EU groups in the context of the regime change in support of democracy was a visionary strategy that worked. It laid the foundations for trust between the EU and Serbia’s democrats, and for confidence-building measures that enabled closer dialogue once Serbia’s new leadership was established.
However, the EU possibly pushed Serbia’s Prime Minister Đinđić ‘too hard too soon’ to embark on complex reforms without much public consultation. His policies were unpopular for the tens of thousands of workers who lost their jobs. Many people in Serbia associated his economic policies with EU political conditionality, even though mass staff lay-offs from the public sector mainly occurred under pressure from international financial bodies rather than the EU per se. Social dissatisfaction with the government’s policies was in part responsible for a shift in voters’ preferences to more conservative political parties in the Serbian parliamentary elections of 28 December 2003, as the next chapter will argue.  

Đinđić certainly took Serbia out of a decade-long international isolation. He also instituted Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. Milošević’s arrest by the Serbian Government and his subsequent transfer to the ICTY’s detention facilities in mid-2001 had polarised the Serbian public, creating a normative division between the offices of the Serbian Prime Minister and federal President over the extradition of Serbian citizens to the ICTY. This caused a political crisis within the ruling coalition, culminating in the exit of Koštunica’s DSS from government, which led to the government’s restructuring in September 2001.

Đinđić’s personal contacts with Montenegrin President Đukanović, who was his closest regional ally during the purges of the Serbian opposition in 1998–99, facilitated the FRY’s peaceful transformation from a federal state to a looser state union in February 2003. This move cost Vojislav Koštunica his job, which could have contributed to his dislike of the EU. Under Đinđić’s leadership, Milošević’s extradition to the ICTY represented a milestone, including for

Serbia’s relations with the EU. It is not surprising that the then President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, noted:

Zoran Đinđić in many ways symbolised the new democratic state which is Serbia. In particular he will be remembered for his personal commitment to achieving democratic reform in Serbia and for his role in bringing Slobodan Milošević to justice.  

Milošević’s extradition, although causing internal divisions, helped restore trust from the West in Serbia’s new government. Serbia was in return for reform ‘rewarded’ with much needed development assistance. Residual socio-political discourses from Đinđić’s era, which were in part formed on the basis of performance and policy decisions by Serbia’s first democratic government, continue to influence popular perceptions and contemporary narratives about Serbia’s European integration to this day. Pro-EU and anti-EU discourses in Serbia today are unanimous on one issue: the democratic transition of 2001–2003 was a missed opportunity to comprehensively reform Serbia, as the process was cut short by Đinđić’s assassination. Insistence on some elements of political conditionality (such as through cooperation with ICTY) pushed aside equally pressing issues of weak democratic structures. Furthermore, during Đinđić’s time in power, the EU had a golden ‘window of opportunity’ to support reform process in Serbia. In responding to criticism of his economic and political decisions, Đinđić once described democratic reforms as an inevitably unpopular political move that necessitated an uphill struggle with a well-established (socialist) mentality, legacy, interests, entropy and inertia.  

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Undoubtedly, Prime Minister Đinđić’s assassination on 12 March 2003 delayed Serbia’s European integration and enabled EU-sceptic forces to rise to political prominence after the December 2003 elections. The recent historical legacy and unresolved political crimes from Serbia’s authoritarian past during the 1990s continue to influence very strongly the prospects for Serbia’s accession and perceptions within the EU about Serbia’s readiness to join the bloc. In January 2014, after the first intergovernmental conference with the EU that marked the start of formal accession negotiations, MEPs Jelko Kacin, Arnaud Danjean, Maria Eleni Koppa and Marije Cornelissen stated in a letter to the European Commission:

The rule of law in Serbia will not be established until the political background of the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić is fully and comprehensively explored.

Tanja Miščević, the head of Serbia’s EU negotiating team confirmed on 27 March 2014 that investigations into Đinđić’s murder have become an official part of the negotiations with the EU on the judiciary (chapter 23 of the accession negotiations on the acquis). MEPs also urged the EU that other unresolved political murders of prominent journalists and opponents of the regime conducted in Serbia should form part of the accession negotiations—a topic which has become a key subject of reporting in the Serbian press since January 2014, also attracting international attention. Several interviewees have pointed out that the Serbian

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Prime Minister’s assassination in Belgrade on 12 March 2003 had, ‘without any doubt’, delayed Serbia’s European integration by many years, whilst tarnishing its reform-orientated image in the West.\footnote{Interview with Serbia’s prominent political activist Sonja Licht, President of NGO Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, Belgrade, June 2010. Interview with Ivan Vejvoda, Executive Director of the Balkan Trust for Democracy and former Adviser for international relations and European integration to the Serbian Prime Ministers Zoran Đinđić and Zoran Živković, Belgrade, June 2010.}
CHAPTER SIX
EU–Serbia relations during Koštunica’s time in power

Serbia needs to redefine its national identity and statehood in order to become capable of integrating into the EU. … [Serbs] still feel isolated, misunderstood and mistreated by the West, and have not yet come to terms with the baneful legacies of Milošević’s misrule. While they want to ‘join Europe’, they do not fully trust it, and the feeling is reciprocated. Both sides need now to work to overcome their mutual incomprehension.781

This chapter will predominantly focus on analysing EU-Serbia relations under the coalition government led by the DSS leader, reformer and national conservative Vojislav Koštunica between 2004 and 2008.782 Koštunica wielded executive decision-making powers, and his policies were important for the continuation of Serbia’s democratic reforms. Roughly around the same time, a social democrat, Boris Tadić held the post of Serbian President, which was important for Serbia’s international image, which was heavily damaged by Đinđić’s assassination.783 Where applicable, this chapter will draw comparisons to previous Serbian

782 In 2004, Koštunica’s DSS party was moderately pro-EU, but also conservative and Christian democratic in its political outlook. In February 2006, DSS became a member of the liberal conservative International Democrat Union, currently chaired by the former Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard. Upon signing the acceding charter, Koštunica said that DSS shared the same values of other like-minded parties in that group, such as the respect for democracy, minority rights and, ‘most important of all, the principles of social responsibility’. FONET, ‘DSS medu konzervativcima’, B92, 4 February 2006, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2006&mmm=02&dd=04&nav_category=11&nav_id=187520, (accessed 1 February 2013).
783 Boris Tadić became President of the DS in February 2004, and was the most pro-European voice in the Serbian ruling elite during Koštunica’s time in power. He advocated Serbia’s Euro-Atlantic integration, regional reconciliation, a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo issue, and EU accession. Tadić’s popularity in the West and his constitutional duty to represent Serbia abroad (as well as to appoint or dismiss Ambassadors of Serbia) put him in a formidable position to improve Serbia’s image in the West.
Governments and electoral results to illustrate any relevant political changes that impacted on Serbia’s relationship with the EU.

Ideological differences between the DSS and the DS (and between their leaders, Koštunica and Tadić respectively) generated bitter political divides among Serbian democrats, who were the main drivers of Serbia’s reform process after the regime change. This situation allowed an anti-EU and ultra-nationalist party, SRS, to gain more parliamentary seats, which represented a legislative and normative obstacle to Serbian reforms, frequently using Kosovo as a political bargaining chip. Serbia’s uneven European integration process during Koštunica’s time in power will be, therefore, analysed in the context of a growing political influence of the SRS. The clashes in normative frameworks of Serbia’s main coalition partners generated a situation in which Serbia’s European integration was slowing down.

This chapter will also examine how the EU’s policy of conditionality encouraged constitutional changes and overall reform process in Serbia. The examples of the EU’s influence in Serbia’s presidential elections aim to show that external support for pro-European candidates appears to have led to further evolution of the EU’s regional policy in the Western Balkans. This

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784 Although both leaders were democratic, they held different values and future visions about Serbia. Especially as Koštunica increasingly came to rely on the Radical vote in Parliament to maintain power, differences between him and Tadić grew wider. H.K. Haug, ‘Kosovo in Serbian politics since Milošević’, in O. Listhaug, S.P. Ramet, and Dulić, D. (eds), Civic and uncivic values: Serbia in the post-Milošević era, Budapest, Central European University Press, 2011, p. 345.

785 Since 2001, the SRS more than tripled parliamentary representation. In the 2001 parliamentary elections, the SRS won only 23 seats, while in the 2004 parliamentary elections it obtained 82 seats, and in 2007, 81.

786 The SRS’s anti-EU rhetoric influenced political discourses in Serbia. It was probably also a catalyst for the formation of a broad spectrum of anti-EU social groups across Serbia.

787 Stefano Bianchini has argued that the EU encouraged a shift towards democratic values in Serbia after 2001, but that much of this effort was limited by the nature of Serbia’s transformation. In his view, Serbia was still a divided society, which affected its political behaviour. The author notes, however, the influence of political discourses on normative social discourses. The symbiosis of both perspectives would result in the conclusion of a mutually constitutive nature between elite-level discourses (promulgated by inherently social decision-makers) and social attitudes among the electorate (which are heavily influenced by elite-level discourses). S. Bianchini, ‘The EU in the values and expectations of Serbia: challenges, opportunities, and confrontations’, in O. Listhaug, SP. Ramet, and D. Dulić (eds), Civic and uncivic values, 2011, op. cit., p. 78.
involvement also serves to illustrate that Serbia’s European integration was a highly normative, political, and negotiated process. Its progress was heavily dependent upon compromises made by the ruling elites under the influence of EU support for pro-democratic parties. This thesis argues that a lack of consensus among Serbian democrats, during Koštunica’s Prime Ministership, slowed down Serbia’s European integration. The EU’s support for Serbian democrats at election times, which is discussed later in this chapter, helped Serbia’s pro-EU parties to provide a suitable alternative to a rising tide of Euroscepticism at home.  

**Serbia’s parliamentary elections (2003)**

The International Election Observation mission noted that the Serbian parliamentary elections of 28 December 2003 were conducted in line with OSCE commitments, but expressed concerns about the lack of reform of the legislative electoral framework that had been left unchanged since the regime change in October 2000. The US Government stated after the victory of pro-European forces in these elections:

> The government of the United States is committed to assisting Serbia and Montenegro during the difficult, but necessary, transition process and looks forward to working with the new government in Belgrade in achieving our mutual goals.

This statement demonstrates the continuity in the approach by the US that was complementary with Serbia’s European integration. The EU High Representative for Foreign and Security

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788 Such an approach included the EU’s engagement with a wider array of political actors in Serbia.
Policy, Javier Solana, conveyed the EU’s satisfaction with the election result in Serbia as well as its relief that the anti-EU party, the SRS, would not be able to form Serbia’s next government:

The extremist nationalist forces, while strengthened as a result of the elections, will not be able to form a government. I am therefore confident that the necessary basis exists for a re-launch of the reform efforts, for further progress towards Europe and for a continuation of the successful policy of good neighbourliness.791

The US and EU statements indicate that Serbia’s democratic reforms were supported by its Western partners. The West in using words such as ‘our mutual goals’ showed solidarity with the pro-democratic camp in Serbian politics.

Chart 2: Serbian parliamentary elections, 28 December 2003792

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792 This chart, which was created by the author, shows election results, by party and percentages won in the Serbian parliamentary elections of 28 December 2003.
The DSS formed a minority government with democratic centre-right parties in March 2004, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) led by anti-Milošević and pro-democracy nationalist Vuk Drašković, who became Foreign Minister; the New Serbia Party (NS) led by the Capital Investments Minister, Velimir Ilić; and the pro-EU G17+ party led by Deputy Prime Minister and liberal economic reformer, Miroljub Labus. The DSS-led government also secured votes from SPS (22) for passing vital legislation, which meant that the DSS could not be seen to be too interventionist against former SPS-appointed public officials. The new governing coalition sidelined liberal democrats (including LDP and DS), but it also excluded the SRS to the great relief of Serbia’s pro-European bloc and the West.

The SRS had won the highest number of seats (82) in the 2003 Serbian parliamentary elections, gaining 59 additional parliamentary seats since the December 2000 parliamentary elections. This represented the highest increase for any single political party in Serbia. This was a cause for concern among many observers, as the SRS was part of the SPS-led government from 1998 to 2000—during the Milošević-era. Kristina Galjak, a spokesperson for the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, commented after the December 2003 elections that the EU would continue to support Serbia’s pro-reform parties, but that they needed to unite to overcome personal differences among their leaders to defeat the influence of ultra-nationalists.

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793 Košutnjica was elected Prime Minister on 4 March 2004 with 130 votes for, 113 against, and 1 abstention out of 244 MPs present in the chamber. These figures indicate that parliamentary opposition against him was relatively high (just over 40 per cent).


The rise in the radical (SRS) vote appeared to have ‘more to do with social protest than resurgent nationalist extremism’; the voter behaviour appeared to be driven by public perceptions of ‘elite corruption, abuse of power, association with organised crime, ineffectual government performance and the inexplicably bitter divisions between the “democratic” parties’. Researcher Máire Braniff has posited that democratic changes in Serbia in October 2000 were, by comparison, also fuelled by domestic factors (widespread dissatisfaction with the Milošević regime) combined with international pressure following the NATO bombardment. Serbia’s recent history of armed conflict made international observers, including in the EU, much more cautious about the electoral success of the SRS, prompting the EU to pledge more public support for pro-EU parties (DS in particular) in the lead-up to Serbia’s next elections.

**Serbia’s presidential elections (2004)**

The EU put pressure on the Serbian political elites ahead of the presidential elections in June 2004 in an attempt to encourage cooperation by the pro-EU forces among the feuding democrats. The EU’s support for the democrats (especially the DS) was aimed at neutralising ultra-nationalists, whom the EU did not trust, believing the SRS would take Serbia back into international isolation. The SRS was also formally presided over by an ICTY indictee.

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798 Braniff, *Integrating the Balkans*, 2011, op. cit., p. 124. Post-transition disillusionment in other post-communist European states and a turn to the political right was also observed in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia.

799 Ibid., p. 126.

Vojislav Šešelj, who endorsed Tomislav Nikolić as SRS’s official presidential candidate.\(^{801}\) The balance of power became more favourable for pro-EU parties when a DS presidential candidate, Boris Tadić, was elected president in Serbia’s first successful presidential elections after three failed attempts to hold an election.\(^{802}\) Under EU pressure, Serbia had abolished the requirement for a compulsory 50 per cent voter turnout for the electoral result to be valid. This regulatory change facilitated a successful outcome in electing a new Serbian president, especially since the voter turnout was again below 50 per cent.\(^{803}\) International observers concluded that the elections was conducted in line with OSCE commitments and Council of Europe standards, hailing the initial steps the Serbian Government had taken towards electoral reform.\(^{804}\) Thus, Serbia passed its first major procedural test of democracy in presidential elections, and the voters elected Serbia’s first non-communist president.

The EU’s pre-election policy aimed at encouraging Serbian voters to choose a moderate, pro-EU candidate and proved in this case to be a success. Methods to which the EU resorted included providing positive incentives such as more political commitment to Serbia’s European integration (reflected in bringing about a European partnership program for the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro); issuing pro-Tadić statements in the Serbian and European press, including through diplomatic signalling via a third party (Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister); and by favouring one candidate over the other by publicly welcoming the pro-EU candidate in

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\(^{801}\) \textit{NIN} journalist Stevan Nikšić observed that as a presidential candidate Nikolić attempted to position himself as a moderate nationalist who was willing to talk to the international community and focus on economic issues. However, his association with ultra-nationalist Šešelj made his prospects of receiving EU support non-existent, at that time. S. Nikšić, ‘Serbia chooses Europe’, \textit{Cord Magazine}, July 2004, p. 4.

\(^{802}\) As federal Defence Minister, Tadić initiated Serbia’s significant reforms in the defence sector, which was still filled with staff loyal to Milošević—many of whom resisted the reforms.


Brussels before the final round of the elections. The importance of electing a pro-EU president in Serbia lay in the need for the West to have a reliable partner in Serbia to push for more democratic reform, sideline SRS influence and to counter-balance already existing nationalist tendencies within the Serbian Government coalition.

Tadić’s main rival in the 2004 presidential elections was the SRS candidate Tomislav Nikolić, who sought to create a new image for the SRS by calling for regional disarmament. In the first round of the presidential elections, which was held on 13 June 2004, Nikolić came first, followed by Tadić. This result indicated the need for more EU pressure to convince Koštunica (who did not declare his support for Tadić before the first round of elections) to support the DS candidate. The second round of elections was scheduled for 27 June. On 14 June, the Council adopted the first European Partnership for Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo under UNSCR 1244. This document reaffirmed the Thessaloniki Summit’s decision that conditionality within the SAP framework would continue to guide further European integration in the Western Balkans.

Gergana Noutcheva has noted that the EU interfered strongly in the elections as it could not allow the SRS candidate to win, suspecting that the SRS in power would derail Serbia’s reforms and jeopardise the EU investments in Serbia. Noutcheva has also observed that, paradoxically, the EU at that stage shared with the SRS, DS and SPS a predilection for the preservation of the

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Serbia and Montenegro federal state. This move was resisted by the pro-independence Montenegrin Government, and the G17+ party within the Serbian Government (especially the Deputy PM, Miroljub Labus, who was President of the G17+). The Robert Schumann Foundation found that despite the fact that the DS presidential candidate, Boris Tadić, who was ‘the political heir to former Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić’, enjoyed Western support and support of most Serbian democratic parties, ‘heavy international pressure’ was needed to convince Koštunica to publicly declare support for Tadić over Nikolić before the second round of elections. The then Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Drašković from the SPO, one of the key coalition partners of the DSS, conveyed a pre-election message following discussions with EU ministers about his country:

No one in Europe wants Serbia and Montenegro to remain outside Euro-Atlantic integration. They don’t want to have an empty hole between Slovenia and Thessaloniki. It is in Europe’s interest that the hole gets filled with a truly European quality of life.

The SPO’s support for the DS candidate possibly also stemmed from a personal issue Drašković and his wife had with the SRS’s political legacy. The SRS was part of the Milošević-led government when assassination attempts were made on Drašković’s life in 1999 and 2000. His close associates (including his wife’s family members) were killed in October 1999 in a road incident that was blamed on the regime’s security agencies. Apart from third party

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812 At a trial in 2013, former Heads of Yugoslav security services and the special forces unit JSO (the same notorious unit that was behind PM Đinđić’s assassination) were implicated in these politically motivated murders. V. N., ‘Novi dokazi na sudenju protiv šefova DB-a za atentat na Draškovića’, *Novosti*, 27 November
diplomatic signalling (through Drašković) and individual statements by EU foreign ministers, the EU’s support for Tadić’s presidential bid also came from the European Council.

The European Council’s Conclusions on 17–18 June 2004 specifically mentioned the Serbian presidential election. This document reiterated, firstly, the importance of the 1 May 2004 enlargement, which ended Europe’s traditional East/West divide with the accession of eight post-communist states (alongside two island states, Cyprus and Malta). This invocation of other successful examples of accession by post-communist countries was a diplomatic incentive for Serbia and Montenegro to pursue European integration; it was also a signal of support for Serbia’s democratic forces and Tadić. The EU also lent support for reforms at the State Union level, which was a common policy goal of the DSS and the EU (despite Montenegro’s objections). In this way, the EU stated its position was to preserve the joint state, but it also acknowledged the individual efforts the Serbian and Montenegrin republics needed to make towards further democratisation and economic reform. The EU encouraged Serbian voters to participate in the election, and ‘in doing so, to ensure that Serbia moves decisively away from the isolation of the past and towards European integration.’813 In the same statement, the EU emphasised that cooperation with Serbia should rest on ‘the basis of a shared commitment to European values’; hence stating support for the DS candidate who already shared EU values and was more willing to cooperate with the West (EU, US and NATO) than the SRS candidate.814 The compatibility between their normative frameworks made their cooperation easier when Tadić was elected as Serbia’s new President.

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814 Ibid.
Apart from common institutions, top EU foreign policy bureaucrats, including the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten also publicly expressed support for Tadić before the second round of the presidential elections on 27 June 2004. On 21 June, Javier Solana received Tadić in Brussels, declaring:

The European Union will not be completed unless Serbia, as a very important country, will be a member of the European Union. Serbia needs a president who brings Serbia closer to the EU and who shares the same values and for this will be a friend amongst friends.\(^{815}\)

For his part, Commissioner Patten remarked that the Serbian people were facing a choice at the ballot box between joining the European family or Belarus.\(^ {816}\)

Following Tadić’s victory, Solana announced:

Boris Tadić is a friend of Europe and I am looking forward to working with him in his new functions. The people of Serbia have clearly expressed their desire for a European future for Serbia. The EU stands ready to help them to achieve this objective. … I also


expect the new President of Serbia and the Serbian Government to continue being fully engaged in the process of solving the pending issues at the State Union level.  

Words such as ‘friend’ used by a top EU official suggest like-mindedness in diplomatic relations, indicating that a significant degree of trust had developed by that stage between the EU and the DS. Trust refers to a willingness to take risks regarding the behaviour of others based on the belief that potential trustees will ‘do what is right’. The EU saw Tadić as a Serbian reformer, with whom it was possible to negotiate and cooperate. Its pro-DS statements indicated solidarity, but also expectations about the DS’s reliability and responsibility. These were virtues that the EU expected to see from the Serbian leaders in their dialogue with Montenegro within the fractious State Union, with Bosnian Serbs (some of whom wanted independence from Bosnia-Herzegovina), pro-independence Kosovo Albanians and with anti-independence Kosovo Serbs.

The election of Serbia’s pro-EU president, Boris Tadić, demonstrated the effectiveness of the EU’s soft power in Serbia, as the EU’s supportive statements for Tadić’s candidacy yielded results. Serbia’s other democratic parties that were by no means supporters of the DS (particularly the DSS, the SPO and the G17+) recognised, under the EU’s pressure, the importance of a more united democratic front against the Radicals ahead of the second round of presidential elections. The effectiveness of EU foreign policy in the Western Balkans,

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818 Trust at the leaders’ level in diplomatic relations generally reduces transaction costs. As a normative construction (which Yu et al. also call ‘informal institution’) trust can have a positive aspect on trade and other aspects of any bilateral relationship. S. Yu, J. De Haan, and S. Beugelsdijk, ‘Trade, trust and institutions’, CESifo Working Paper Series, no. 3571, September 2011, p. 1.

therefore, notably improved when compared to the EU’s incoherent, slow-to-respond, reactive rather than pro-active, and generally sluggish performance only a decade earlier. It has become more strategically oriented in a broader effort to bring about structural changes in the third country. Keukeleire et al. defined structural diplomacy as a process of ‘dialogue and negotiation with third countries aimed at sustainably influencing or shaping political, legal, economic, financial, social, security and/or other structures’ in target countries. By directly supporting a pro-EU candidate over a nationalist one, the EU diversified its diplomatic involvement in Serbian politics. The European Commission’s pro-active attitude made an impact on the voters and encouraged more cohesion among Serbian democratic parties during the second round of Serbia’s 2004 presidential elections, because they elected Tadić as Serbia’s next president. As Serbia remained the test-case for EU diplomacy, the victory of Tadić (who was generally open-minded about pursuing further EU-oriented reforms) resulted in a political cohabitation between the pro-EU DS, with the President’s position, and conservative DSS democrats under Prime Minister Koštunica. These two leaders held different normative frameworks, as the DS was a social democratic party, and the DSS was a Christian democratic party that was, in general, more conservative on social issues.

**EU relations with Serbia within the State Union**

The new Serbian DSS-led government, which was formed on 4 March 2004, committed Serbia to European integration on the basis of three pillars. In his speech on 2 March, the Serbian Prime Minister-elect said that there was no alternative to European integration of his country.

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Koštunica also recalled how in the late 19th century Serbia and Montenegro, as independent states, were well-integrated into mainstream European politics. This had remained the case, in his view, until the communists stopped this development after seizing power and creating a communist Yugoslavia with an iron fist.822

The first pillar of the new government was the pledge by the DSS leader to maintain the State Union with Montenegro.823 However, the Montenegrin ruling party (Demokratska Partija Socijalista Crne Gore, DPS) was in favour of independence, believing that a quicker path to Montenegro’s EU accession would be achieved if pursued independently from Serbia—a claim which both the EU (at that stage) and Koštunica disputed. Under EU pressure, Serbia and Montenegro signed the Belgrade Agreement on 14 March 2002, which resulted in the name-change for the joint state from Yugoslavia to Serbia and Montenegro. Their leaders also agreed to adopt the Charter on the State Union in early 2003.824 The EU was originally involved in the Charter’s drafting stage.825 On 4 February 2003, a highly decentralised joint state came into existence; the position of FRY President (then held by Koštunica) ceased to exist, and a pro-independence Montenegrin politician, Svetozar Marović, became President of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.826 Both the Belgrade Agreement of 2002 and the Constitutional Charter of 2003 provided an option for the withdrawal of either republic (or both) from the

822 ibid.
823 This was in agreement with EU expectations, as the same condition was formally three months later presented to the Serbia and Montenegro in its first European Partnership agreement of June 2004.
824 First European Partnership for Serbia and Montenegro, op. cit., p. 23.
825 The final draft charter was a watered-down version of the EU’s draft. A.S. Trbovich, The Legal geography of Yugoslavia’s disintegration, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 399.
826 Marović’s position as the State Union President was a compromise solution to appease the Montenegrin side. He was also the Deputy President of the leading pro-independence Democratic Party of Socialists (SDP) headed by Montenegrin Prime Minister Đukanović (then and now in that position). Marović supported Milošević until Đukanović broke ranks with Milošević and won the Montenegrin elections in 1997. Marović delivered an apology to all Croatian and Bosnian citizens for any harm done to them by citizens of Montenegro and Serbia did any harm. In September 2005, Montenegro threatened to pull all Montenegrin staff from the joint institutions in response to a dispute between Marović and the Serbian Minister of Finance from G17+ over a controversial defence contract, causing a major political crisis. ‘Povlačenje Crnogoraca iz Beograda’, B92, 16 September 2005, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2005&mm=09&dd=16&nav_id=176643, (accessed 1 March 2014).
common state after a three-year moratorium expired and a referendum on independence had been held. This meant that from effectively February 2006, any republic could hold the independence referendum. For the referendum to take place, it was important to obtain the EU’s consent given that European integration remained the primary goal of the joint state, which rested (according to Article 3 of the Constitutional Charter) on the political compromise between Serbia and Montenegro. However, due to the earlier existence of distinct economic systems in Serbia and Montenegro, economic integration at the federal level was impossible to achieve in a short period of time, and the country’s official dialogue with the EU was becoming uneasy over this issue.

The second pillar of the incoming DSS-led Government concerned Serbia’s relations with Kosovo, which was an autonomously-run protectorate outside direct Serbian control and under international administration (UNMIK). Koštunica advocated the safe return of all displaced persons from Kosovo, and more autonomy and better protection for the remaining Serbs in Kosovo. Paradoxically, only two weeks later, Serbs and other non-Albanians suffered the biggest spate of violence during the anti-Serb riots (on 17 March 2004) that only served to harden the Serbian Government’s attitude towards Kosovo’s administration. The third pillar rested on the strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law, and legal

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827 As a disincentive for separation, the Constitutional Charter specified that a republic which decided to leave the common state, would not be able to inherit the international legal personality of the State Union, and would need to apply for membership of international organisations on its own, which was a costly process.

828 The State Union’s common institutions included the President, Parliament of 126 seats (91 for Serbia and 35 for Montenegro), a constitutional court and council of ministers (in areas such as: foreign affairs, defence, internal and external economic relations (including those with the EU), and protection of minority and human rights). However, the two republics maintained separate fiscal and monetary policies, including central banks and currencies. Montenegro’s currency had been, since 2001, the German deutschmark; later on, it adopted the Euro as its national currency even though it was not formally part of the Eurozone, the reserved domain for EU members. Serbia’s currency is the dinar. Montenegro maintained a separate Minister for Foreign Affairs, had its own diplomatic missions abroad and participated also in common missions. The only exclusive areas of Union competence were defence and human rights. J. Kim, ‘Serbia and Montenegro Union: prospects and policy implications’, CRS report for Congress, 2 February 2005, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21568.pdf, (accessed 1 March 2014).
harmonisation with a colossal volume of EU regulations— an enormous task with which the EU was ready to assist. Koštunica also called for a formal affirmation of the State Union’s status in its relationship with the EU.

At that stage (in March 2004) there was no contractual relationship with the EU. Political and technical dialogue was conducted through the Enhanced Permanent Dialogue mechanism, which had replaced the ‘Consultative Task Force’ framework. The Enhanced Permanent Dialogue met only several times a year, and held its first meeting at the ministerial level in June 2004. Its main task was to ‘encourage and monitor reforms on the basis of the European Partnership adopted by the EU Council in June 2004 and updated in January 2006’. As a mechanism of dialogue it was to remain in place as a transitional arrangement until a formal agreement, the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, was signed and ready to bring Serbia’s relationship with the EU to a higher level.

The political inability to harmonise the economic systems of Serbia and Montenegro by the second half of 2004 stalled the State Union’s dialogue with the EU on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. In order to avoid further deadlock, the EU proposed the so-called ‘twin-track approach’, which separated cooperation with each republic into two parts: autonomous regulatory areas (trade, economic and sectoral policy) and activities with the State Union in exclusive areas of the Union’s competence (particularly international political

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829 The consultative task force was a framework for dialogue between the EU and the FRY between 2001 and July 2003, when it was succeeded by the Enhanced Permanent Dialogue mechanism.
obligations and human rights). On 5 October 2004, EU Commissioner Chris Patten visited Belgrade together with High Representative Javier Solana to announce the new approach, as well as a feasibility study to report on the State Union’s capacity to start negotiations with the EU on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. His message was that full cooperation with the ICTY ‘remains a fundamental prerequisite for deepened relations with the EU’. For 2005 and 2006 combined, the EU budgeted €90 million for the joint State Union’s institutions. This financial commitment demonstrated the EU’s policy of seeking to maintain the State Union, despite the fact that the Montenegrin Government was against this policy, and some Serbian democratic parties (the G17+) too.

The visit to Belgrade by senior EU officials provided a political incentive for the Serbian Parliament to pass a resolution on 14 October 2004 committing Serbia as a matter of ‘the highest and undisputed political priority’ to the European integration process, as well as stating its intention to join NATO’s Partnership for Peace program. This resolution was welcomed by a number of regional organisations including the OSCE, as it demonstrated that Serbia was becoming more committed to European integration. It also gave a mandate to the Serbian Government to prepare a national strategy for accession to the EU, as well as committing it to report to Parliament every three months about the progress of reforms. Furthermore, the political conditionality that was embedded in Commissioner Patten’s study resulted in better cooperation between the Serbian judiciary (the Special Court for War Crimes) and the ICTY’s

Prosecutor’s Office, which was recognised by the UN and EU.\textsuperscript{838} Although the two most important indictees remained free (Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić), thirteen former officials ‘voluntarily surrendered’ by late April 2005, their assets were frozen and some were even allowed (with the Serbian Government’s guarantees) to return to Serbia to await trial.\textsuperscript{839} The latter development demonstrated a higher degree of trust by international legal institutions in the DSS-led Serbian Government when compared to previous years. It was a sign that the Serbian Government had earned the ICTY’s trust, and the EU’s dual approach of combining political pressure with incentives (the so-called ‘carrot and stick approach’) yielded positive results.

On 7 April 2005, the EU agreed for amendments to be made to the Constitutional Charter, to extend the mandate of the joint parliament, which had been in crisis since March 2005, when its mandate expired.\textsuperscript{840} Commissioner Patten’s completed feasibility study, which the Council endorsed in April 2005, observed that the State Union was sufficiently prepared to start the Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations. Patten’s report, however, stressed that negotiations should be suspended if the State Union or either of the two republics did not honour their commitments. Satisfied with the major recommendation from Commissioner Patten’s study, the DSS emerged as the largest democratic party in Serbian politics.\textsuperscript{841} In a sign

\textsuperscript{838} The UN’s opinion mattered greatly to the EU, which was committed to multilateralism and made the ICTY’s positive assessment of Serbia’s cooperation a precondition for Serbia’s European integration.


\textsuperscript{840} This agreement, which extended the mandate of the State Union Parliament, was signed by the President of Serbia and Montenegro, Svetozar Marović, Serbian President Boris Tadić, Montenegrin President Filip Vujanović and the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana. The two republics had been unable to agree on the organisation of direct elections, with Montenegro refusing to hold elections before a referendum on independence in 2006. It demonstrated the EU commitment for the continuation of the State Union. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2005), ‘The world of Parliaments’, http://www.ipu.org/news-e/19-9.htm, (accessed 1 March 2014).

\textsuperscript{841} DSS’s legislative clout was also strengthened by a merger of two minor parties, the People’s Democratic Party (NDS) and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), into the DSS.
of solidarity with European values, the DSS and G17+ joined the European People’s Party (EPP) in June 2005 as associate members. Their symbolic affiliation with an influential European party federation of Christian-democratic, conservative and people’s EU parties granted them privileged status in relation to other parties in Serbia, especially ‘from the aspect of obtaining European legitimacy and new possibilities for lobbying’. By comparison, the DS was admitted as an observer to the Party of European Socialists in December 2006. A deeper engagement of the DSS with European institutions was an important step for both the EU and Serbia under the Koštunica Government, which signalled that Serbia was deeper integrating in Europe.

Commissioner Patten’s recommendations provided the basis for the European Commission’s drafting of negotiation directives on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. These directives were presented to the Council in July 2005, which formally endorsed them on 3 October 2005. The EU officially opened negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the State Union on 10 October 2005 in Belgrade. Symbolically, this reaffirmed the commitment of the EU and State Union representatives to European integration. For Koštunica and the majority of Serbian democrats (except for the G17+), the preservation of the State Union had particularly powerful symbolism of unity with the Montenegrin people, whom they considered fraternal, in spite of the Montenegrin Government’s pro-independence stance. The official ceremony was attended from the EU side by the EU Commissioner for

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843 For the DSS, it was a reward for deeper engagement with the EU, and had an effect of a positive incentive for Serbia’s further Europeanisation.
845 For similarities and differences between Serbia and Montenegro, see Michael. A. Schuman, Serbia and Montenegro (Nations in Transition), New York, Facts on File Inc., 2004. For commentary about the
Enlargement and EU Neighbourhood policy, Olli Rehn, and UK Ambassador David Gowan. The Serbian Prime Minister appeared satisfied with what seemed like, at last, a clear demonstration of the EU’s commitment to his country’s European integration.

The Kosovo issue as an obstacle to deeper EU-Serbia relations

Despite an improvement in EU-Serbia relations under the DSS leadership, in November 2005 significant changes relating to the Kosovo situation were a catalyst for a gradual slowing down of Serbia’s European integration. The UN’s decision to open discussions on Kosovo’s future status was received coldly by the Serbian Government, which considered Kosovo to still be Serbia’s autonomous province; Serbian leaders kept emphasising the democratic character of post-Milošević Serbia as a reason for which Kosovo should not be granted independence. Their normative position was that Kosovo is part of Serbia and should not create an international precedent for secession. However, the Serbian Government’s perceptions of Kosovo’s status stood in stark contrast with the reality on the ground in Kosovo, where the Serbian Government’s rule was held legitimate only by the Serbs, who represented less than 10 per cent of Kosovo’s citizens. In addition, many Western governments and international entities, including the UN and the EU, supported Kosovo’s democratic reforms after the 1999 war on the basis of its de facto governance model that was independent from Serbia’s jurisdiction.

On 21 November 2005, the Serbian Parliament adopted a resolution which stressed that Serbia’s territorial sovereignty is inviolable. Prime Minister Koštunica in his introductory


\[\text{The UK held, at that time, the rotating Presidency of the Council. Moreover, Olli Rehn was the EU’s Commissioner for Enlargement from 2004 to 2009.}\]

remarks in parliament said that the resolution represented a ‘historic day’ for Serbia, as regards ‘Kosovo and Metohija’, which ‘is part not only of Serbian history, but also … its people, territory, tales and culture’. The importance of this resolution, he said, was highlighted by the fact it was dealing with Serbian ‘roots and identities’. Koštunica also said that by adopting this resolution, the parliament would demonstrate to all external observers that it was committed to finding a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo situation but within Serbian territorial borders. Any other solution, he said, would constitute a ‘forced partitioning’ of a historical part of Serbian territory.848

Such an emotive terminology shows how much attachment Serbia’s democratic parties, including the DSS, had wedded to the idea of Kosovo as Serbia’s inseparable heartland. This attitude, which exists among anti-EU and pro-EU parties alike, with the notable exception of LDP, is part of Serbia’s identity politics and religious discourses, which are only strengthened by reports of human rights abuses against Serbs in Kosovo after the NATO intervention. It represents a complicating factor for the EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia, which postulates that a demonstration of good neighbourly relations is expected of all applicants for EU membership, including Serbia and Kosovo.

Upon receiving the mandate from the parliament to proceed with political dialogue on the Kosovo question, the Serbian Government assembled a negotiating team on Kosovo in December 2005 to represent Serbia’s position in the multilateral dialogue being held under UN auspices. The negotiating team, which adopted its first working program a month later, was co-chaired by President Tadić and Prime Minister Koštunica, which shows the high level of

importance of this issue for Serbia. Interestingly, on this one issue Serbian democrats appeared to be united, pledging to oppose Kosovo’s independence by peaceful means through the UN. The negotiating team’s formation was, in a way, Serbia’s response to the Kosovo report of October 2005 by Ambassador Kai Eide, a Norwegian diplomat. The UN Secretary-General appointed Eide to undertake a comprehensive review of the situation in Kosovo following the mass unrest in Kosovo in 2004 that left more than a dozen people dead and thousands of Serbs displaced.

What appeared to be an emerging consensus in the West regarding Kosovo’s final status has become a major divisive domestic issue in Serbia, and a challenge for the unity among Serbian democrats. The Serbian Government’s unfulfilled promise to its constituents that Serbia would quickly join the EU disappointed many voters in Serbia as the date of promised accession kept shifting. At the same time as advocating neutrality regarding Kosovo’s status, in multilateral institutions the EU expressed support ‘for a secure, democratic, prosperous and multi-ethnic Kosovo with its place in Europe’; however, the EU representatives only briefly referred to the UNSC resolution 1244 in their statements. This resolution was the basis for the Serbian Government’s position, as it recognised Serbia’s sovereignty in Kosovo.

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851 Ambassador Eide’s report assessed that the status quo in Kosovo was unsatisfactory. He recommended that the international community (including the EU) use the leverage of future status talks as an incentive for further reform, whilst also noting the fragility of inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. Ambassador Eide’s report is attached as an Annex in a letter from UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. ‘Letter dated 7 October 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council’, S/2005/635, p. 7, 7 October 2005, http://www.unosek.org/docref/KaiEide report.pdf, (accessed 13 March 2013).
In his article in *The Washington Post*, Serbian Prime Minister Koštunica warned about the domino-effect that Kosovo’s independence proclamation could have on other cases:

> Resolving the problems of national minorities through self-determination (especially in the case of nationalities that already have their own countries nearby) inevitably leads to border changes and all the dangerous complications that this entails.\(^{854}\)

In defending Serbia’s position, Koštunica remarked:

> Democracy, in Serbia as anywhere else, is essentially based on the equality of all and, no less important, on trust. … And where faith is lost, there can be no democracy.\(^{855}\)

In the second quote, Koštunica was referring to the trust and faith Serbia was placing in international institutions and international law as a ‘guarantor’ of the principle of inviolability of national borders.\(^{856}\) Since norms are also socially constructed and based on a system of shared meaning and understanding of these norms, Koštunica in his deliberations on Kosovo and Serbia did not take into account the emergence of *humanitarian intervention* and *responsibility to protect* concepts, which were developed in response to a dire security situation in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Moreover, Koštunica’s normative framework precluded him from applying the same conclusion for Kosovo Albanians, who did not trust or have faith in the Serbian Government after the Kosovo conflict—just as the majority of Serbs from Kosovo did not trust Kosovo Albanians. The Serbian democrats were not seen as being

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\(^{855}\) ibid.

\(^{856}\) The selectivity of narratives, including in his emphasis on Serbian victimhood narratives can be observed from this article. ibid.
significantly more ‘legitimate’ in the eyes of Kosovo Albanians, despite the fact that they actually never lived under the Serbian rule since Serbia became a democracy. In November 2006, President of the Democratic Party of Kosovo, Hashim Thaçi, stated that he was assured by US officials that the decision for Kosovo independence was agreed upon between the EU and other international officials.857

Immediately after the Kosovo conflict ended, and the UN established new administrative order in Kosovo, no serious effort was made by the EU or other international actors to support confidence-building measures between Serbs and Albanians at the people-to-people level; or between the Serbian Government and the transitional authorities in Priština—which saw the other side as rivals for international recognition.858 Since efforts from the EU were principally focused on providing humanitarian assistance, technical and legal advice and on institutional engineering, inadequate attention was being paid to the issue of trust between the two rival communities.859 Their unaddressed tensions caused a further escalation of violence on 17 March 2004, which was less than five years after Kosovo became de facto separated from Serbia. This event many in Serbia perceive as a repetition of the infamous Croatian Operation Storm.860

858 Both the Serbian democrats and Kosovo Albanian leaders sought recognition in international forums for their own respective positions on the Kosovo issue. On the one hand, Serbia would emphasise its constitutional and historical ‘right’ to rule over Kosovo, as Košćunica’s article in The Washinton Post demonstrates. On the other hand, Kosovo Albanians would invoke their ‘moral right’ to have a state after living under repressive regimes and Serbian rule which has resulted in large-scale violence, triggering NATO intervention.
This view regarding the assumed ‘complicity’ of Western governments in several ethnic cleansing campaigns of Serbian civilians in the region presents a normative obstacle to Serbia’s European integration. It is shared by many members across different Serbian political parties, not just those which oppose Serbia’s European integration and advocate closer relations with Russia. Especially those Serbs who were directly affected by the ethnic cleansing campaigns still feel that their grievances have not been addressed—especially those relating to human rights and crimes against humanity committed against themselves and those known to them. This victimhood narrative has a wide resonance among the Serbian voters. A tendency by Serbian political and religious leaders to over-emphasise this aspect of Serbia’s recent past has slowed down Serbia’s reforms, as the Serbian Government’s limited energy and resources were heavily invested in making this narrative known to international audiences. An additional item on the list of grievances in this perspective was Montenegro’s independence referendum. The EU’s role before the referendum was held strengthened this discourse about the ‘West’ recreating boundaries and dividing societies in the Western Balkans, the leaders of which all strive to join the EU.861

Montenegro’s referendum on independence

The EU held a political dialogue at the ministerial level with State Union representatives in February 2006. This was same month when the three-year probation period expired after which either republic could seek the EU’s support to hold referendum on independence. The Montenegrin Government was, by that stage, in full swing preparing for the referendum.862

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861 This perspective that criticises overly-intrusive, managerial role of the West (defined as NATO and EU members in the context of the Western Balkans) in regional affairs, coupled with Serbian victimhood narratives is particularly advanced by the SRS, DSS, Dveri Srpske, but also members of pro-EU political parties. See, for instance,

According to a report produced by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, three key contentious issues relating to the referendum were majority requirements for the referendum to pass, the participation in the referendum of Montenegrins residing in Serbia, and the composition of the referendum administration.\footnote{V. Canas (General Rapporteur, Portugal), ‘Independent Montenegro: early assessment and prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration’, 2007 annual session, http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=1162, (accessed 13 March 2013). This report also noted that Montenegrin voters had turned against maintaining the State Union after a large funeral in Belgrade was held for the deceased Slobodan Milošević, and the stalling of progress in relations with the EU due to Serbia’s lack of compliance with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The pro-independence Montenegrin camp, which won in the referendum by a small but significant margin, invested many resources in their campaign which would later see Montenegro proceed with the NATO integration at a faster pace than Serbia.}

Responding to the worsening relationship between the Serbian and Montenegrin governments, the EU appointed a mediator, special envoy Miroslav Lajčak from Slovakia, who introduced a requirement for a 55 per cent majority vote as a minimum requirement for the referendum to pass. This was a threshold that the Montenegrin Government claimed was too high.\footnote{I. Traynor, ‘Montenegro fights to change rules for independence vote’, 27 February 2006, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/feb/27/eu.balkans (accessed 1 March 2014).}

According to Kenneth Morrison, it was under EU pressure that Montenegro introduced an electoral regulation that Montenegrins who resided outside Montenegro for more than three years could not vote. Many of them, in Morrison’s view, would have voted against the independence.\footnote{K. Morrison, Montenegro: a modern history, London, I.B. Tauris, 2009, p. 200. For a more recent assessment of Montenegro’s post-independence politics, see K. Morrison, ‘Change, continuity and consolidation: assessing five years of Montenegro’s independence’, LSEE Papers on South Eastern Europe, issue 2, February 2011, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48039/1/_Libfile_repository_Content_LSEE_Change, per cent20continuity(author).pdf, (accessed 13 March 2013). In the aftermath of Montenegro’s independence, thousands of Montenegrins who were residing in Serbia had to choose which citizenship they would hold, as dual citizenship was not permitted as political relations between Serbia and Montenegro soured after the independence. J. Džankić, ‘Montenegrin mists: politics, citizenship and identity’, Citizenship in Southeast Europe, 29 March 2011, http://www.citsee.eu/citsee-study/montenegrin-mists-politics-citizenship-and-identity, (accessed 30 May 2013).} The EU’s role in this referendum is still criticised by nationalist intellectuals and right-wing parties in Serbia as the reason why Serbia should abandon European integration.
By that stage, discontent and animosity towards the EU were growing among Serbian politicians. This was principally because of the ambiguous role of the EU in appearing to encourage Kosovo independence while on the other hand still reiterating the importance of UNSCR 1244. The Serbian leadership hence appeared to be losing faith in the EU’s declared intention to remain status-neutral regarding Kosovo. Many Serbs and anti-independence people in Montenegro blamed Brussels for succumbing to Montenegro’s moves towards and international lobbying for independence, instead of focusing on serious corruption issues in Montenegro. Apart from the Kosovo issue and the complications in EU-Serbia relations as regards Montenegro’s preparations for the referendum on independence, the nature of Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY had become a major challenge in Serbia’s relationship with the EU.

**Delays to Serbia’s European integration: the ICTY issue**

In February 2006, UN war crimes chief prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, appealed for more EU assistance to the ICTY in order to pressure Serbia into complying with the agreed cooperation goals, warning of the consequences of non-cooperation:

> The conditionality imposed by the European Union in the context of the negotiations on a stabilization and association agreement is of key importance. Serbia knows that negotiations may be suspended or may never conclude if Belgrade fails to cooperate fully with the ICTY. I need now a stronger support of the European Union to have Mladić in The Hague very soon. Clear deadlines associated with clear sanctions will produce early results.\(^{866}\)

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This statement is illustrative of how political conditionality towards Serbia was closely associated with the ICTY’s assessments. It had never happened in the history of European integration (before Croatia’s and Serbia’s accession) that a UN body influenced EU accession processes to such an extent. By linking the issue of Serbia’s accession with its cooperation with the ICTY, the EU’s pressure on the Serbian Government produced divisive results for Serbian internal politics. A division among Serbian democrats, including within the governing coalition, slowed down the pace of Serbia’s European integration.

In February 2006, Rasim Ljajić, the Minister for Human and Minority Rights from a minor coalition party (Democratic Party of Sandžak), and President of the National Council for Cooperation with the ICTY declared:

The Hague Tribunal is an obstacle because of which, if we do not remove it, we cannot move forward [in European integration]. It is an obligation which we must fulfil. It is like a millstone around our neck, or a weight hanging on our legs. With [these obstacles], we cannot run towards Europe.

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completion strategy of the ICTY are threefold: the financial needs of the Tribunal, the timely arrest of the indictees at large, and the support needed to establish credible domestic jurisdictions. All three are beyond the Tribunal’s control, but they can and must be addressed by the international community. UN ICTY, ‘Address by Carla del Ponte, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, to the United Nations Security Council’, The Hague, 30 June 2004, http://www.icty.org/sid/8404, (accessed 1 March 2014).

867 This agency was originally established as a subsidiary body of the Council of Ministers of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. On 31 May 2007, following the dissolution of the State Union, the Serbian Government decided to establish a new agency for Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. Beta, ‘Osnovana Vladina kancelarija za saradnju sa Tribunalom’, Blic, 4 June 2007, http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/5099/Osnovana-Vladina-kancelarija-za-saradnju-sa-Tribunalom, (accessed 21 April 2013).

The normative convergence between the EU and the ICTY regarding what kind of behaviour was expected of an EU membership aspirant was displayed when the EU linked Serbia’s European integration with Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY.869 Following a negative assessment by the UN chief prosecutor of Serbia’s level of cooperation with the ICTY, the EU ceased negotiations on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the State Union on 3 May 2006. The EU’s decision was made just before the third round of negotiations was due to take place several days later. According to international human rights NGO Amnesty International, this was a signal from the EU that impunity for war crimes accused must finally end. Amnesty International also called on the Serbian Government ‘to provide the Tribunal with unrestricted access to military and other archives requested by the [ICTY’s] Chief Prosecutor, in line with their international obligations’.870 Tardiness in providing information to the ICTY that was considered to be from top-secret or restricted material was widely interpreted as a lack of political will on Serbia’s part.871

The suspension of talks with the EU related to Serbia’s failure to locate and arrest one of the key ICTY indictees at large, Ratko Mladić—a Bosnian Serb military leader. The EU’s decision came about after a negative report from the chief ICTY prosecutor Carla Del Ponte regarding Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY.872 The EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, said that the reason for Mladić’s successful evasion of arrest lay in the fact that ‘security

871 Serbia has still not made available its communist-era archives of the state security services. It is also the only post-socialist country that did not deliver a resolution denouncing the crimes of its totalitarian, communist past. Tanjug, ‘SPO ponovo traži otvaranju tajnih dosijea’, 4 January 2014, http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Politika/432190/SPO-ponovo-trazi-otvaranje-tajnih-dosijea, (accessed 3 March 2014).
872 On 11 August 1999 with the UNSCR 1259, Carla del Ponte was appointed as the ICTY’s chief Prosecutor for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.
services and especially military intelligence have not been fully under the civilian, democratic
control of the Serbian Government’. The EU’s deadline for Mladić’s arrest was the end of
April 2006. In addition to the EU suspending talks on a vital new agreement (SAA) with Serbia,
the US Government suspended $7 million in assistance to the Serbian Government (but not
$62 million in humanitarian aid and assistance for democracy promotion).

This move demonstrated similarities between the EU and the US Government’s foreign policy
approaches in conditionality towards Serbia. Julie Kim from the Congressional Research
Service correctly observed that ‘to varying degrees, conditionality policy has held up Euro-
[Atlantic] integration processes in the Western Balkans that would otherwise likely have gone
forward’. This approach appeared to risk delaying Serbia’s application for NATO’s
Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, despite the fact that Serbia had achieved significant
reforms in the defence sector since 2001, and formally applied to join the PfP in 2003. Western
conditionality on this issue also deepened an already existing political divide among
Serbia’s key political parties, as the halt in accession talks was a major source of political
instability between coalition partners.

The principal negotiator with the EU, Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Miroljub Labus from the
G17+, resigned immediately following the EU’s decision to suspend the negotiations. Labus

873 T. Küchler, ‘EU suspends talks with Serbia’, EU Observer, 3 May 2006,
http://euobserver.com/enlargement/21498 (accessed 1 March 2014). It was widely believed at the time that
Mladić was hiding in Serbia and that he received tip-offs from within the Serbian Government that helped him
avoid being arrested.
874 ‘US aid to Serbia-Montenegro suspended over Mladić’, Southeast European Times, 1 June 2006,
http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2006/06/01/feature-01,
(accessed 1 March 2014).
876 ibid., p. 6.
877 This created significant problems for Serbia’s capacity to negotiate with the EU. The new lead negotiator was
appointed in June. As negotiations continued to be stalled that negotiating team also resigned. This shows that
the EU’s decision to stop negotiations with Serbia had a detrimental effect on Serbia’s negotiating team, which
also asked fellow G17+ members (who were government ministers at the time) to follow suit, which they did. The timing of the Serbian Government crisis during the campaigning for the upcoming Montenegrin referendum possibly strengthened the pro-independence camp as it signalled to Montenegrin voters that their future in the EU may indeed be jeopardised because of Serbia’s problem with the ICTY. The independence referendum was held on 21 May 2006, and passed by a slim margin of 0.5 per cent (the total vote for independence was 55.5 per cent).\textsuperscript{878}

The Montenegrin republican parliament declared independence from the State Union on 3 June 2006. Serbia’s first official reaction came from the president’s office, as Tadić stated his preference for a common state but accepted the will of the Montenegrin people.\textsuperscript{879} Koštunica, who campaigned against Montenegro’s separation from the State Union, was deeply disappointed, and in his first public statements on this issue only focused on the practical question of Serbia’s legal succession to the State Union.\textsuperscript{880} The Serbian Parliament declared independence on 5 June 2006, and recognised Montenegrin independence on 15 June 2006. This ended three years of political uncertainty regarding the joint state, which had encountered many problems from the start.

party (SDP) and a loyal coalition partner to the Montenegrin President, Milo Đukanović’s DPS, commented that the joint state delayed Montenegro’s European integration and jeopardised democratisation in that republic. Đukanović himself considered that independence was the only option as early as 2001. Đukanović criticised external pressures to maintain the State Union and even linked it to the Kosovo issue:

[Because there is] an absolute absence of vision in the international community for solving the Kosovo problem, Montenegro is being asked to give up its plans to be an independent state.

Others had called the State Union a ‘quasi state’, which was artificially created and kept alive with external assistance. Some Montenegrin independence supporters believed it was an act of appeasement in relation to the Serbian Government under the DSS (which resisted the idea of Montenegro’s separation from Serbia) in return for their compliance on issues such as cooperation with the ICTY, and flexibility on Kosovo. Montenegro also refused to harmonise tariffs and other aspects of the two republican economies, such as creating a single currency. Marko Papić suggests that the EU went far beyond conditionality in using the leverage of the promise of EU membership to become involved in the day-to-day constitutional problems of the joint state. The EU’s insistence on maintaining the joint state, the constitutional troubles of which were evident from the start, also diverted much-needed energy, political will and

884 The joint state did not even have a shared national anthem.
885 The EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia was strengthened by that approach. M. Papić, ‘Rolling up the sleeves: how EU policy towards Serbia and Montenegro acts as the glue that holds the State Union together’, Review of European and Russian Affairs, vol. 2, no. 2, 2006, p. 63.
resources from more pressing issues of European integration, including institutional reform, and engagement with the wider electorate to explain to them the potential benefits of EU accession.

After the State Union’s dissolution, the EU differentiated official political dialogue with Serbia and Montenegro into two separate paths. The European Commission, backed by the Council, indicated to the Serbian Government that the accession talks could resume once full cooperation with the ICTY had been established. The EU retained Serbia’s preferential trade status (which was put in place after Serbia’s regime change), the pre-accession financial assistance (which for Serbia in 2006 was €167 million) and allowed Serbia to continue its participation in cross-border programs with neighbouring EU members.886

In order to re-establish its credibility, the Serbian Government adopted and presented to the Council of Ministers, in July 2006, an action plan on cooperation with the ICTY, which received a positive response from the EU when President Barroso of the European Commission conveyed the EU’s satisfaction with the plan.887 The second political dialogue meeting at the ministerial level took place on 16 October 2006 in Luxembourg, ahead of Serbia’s referendum on a new constitution. The main topic was the continuation of Serbia’s dialogue with the EU, subject to Serbia’s full cooperation with the ICTY. The Foreign Ministers of the UK, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries were particularly adamant that the dialogue would

continue only when the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, was completely satisfied with Serbia’s performance.\textsuperscript{888}

In December 2006, Serbia joined NATO’s PfP program, which was a US initiative launched in 1994 with the purpose of establishing ‘strong links’ between NATO, its new democratic partners in the former Soviet bloc, and some of Europe's traditionally neutral countries ‘to enhance European security’.\textsuperscript{889} As a partner country to NATO in the PfP program, Serbia gained access to specific funds for the modernisation of its military. NATO also opened a Military Liaison Office in Belgrade.

**Serbia’s constitutional changes**

After Montenegro’s independence, Serbia was put under more pressure by the EU to change its old constitution (dating from 1990) to reflect democratic changes and the country’s pro-European integration. The Serbian Parliament adopted a draft constitution on 30 September 2006 in a hasty process for which the official justification was to ‘preserve’ Kosovo within Serbia.\textsuperscript{890} The draft constitution was put to a referendum, held on 28–29 October 2006, where 53.04 per cent of voters supported its adoption.\textsuperscript{891} All major political parties, including the DSS and the DS declared their support for the draft constitution (although framing it in different terms). This demonstrated a shared commitment by the majority of political parties in Serbia

\textsuperscript{891} ibid., pp. 5–6.
to keep Kosovo within Serbia under its constitution. The new constitution was officially adopted on 8 November 2006, and contained a preamble that stated: ‘The province of Kosovo and Metohija is an integral part of the territory of Serbia’, with substantial autonomy.

The language used in the term ‘Kosovo and Metohija’ again invoked Serbia’s claims to Kosovo, and religious heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church (‘Metohija’). Following the adoption of Serbia’s new constitution, the prime minister called for early parliamentary elections, which took place in January 2007. They resulted in a political cohabitation arrangement between the DSS, the DS and the G17+. This was a government during which Serbia’s negotiations with the EU on the Stabilisation and Association Agreement started, but because of the Kosovo issue, Serbia’s overall relationship with the EU became more complicated.

The Venice Commission adopted a draft opinion on the new Serbian Constitution in its session on 17–18 March 2007. The Venice Commission noted that there was a lack of public discussion before the draft text was adopted. It also observed that large parts of the constitution were difficult to amend as it lacked a clear distinction between the legislature and judiciary. In the Venice Commission’s opinion, the constitution contained complicated rules.

892 The only Serbian political party that argued that Kosovo was forever lost to Serbia was the Liberal Democratic Party, led by Čedomir Jovanović who had become (after the prime minister’s assassination in 2003) Deputy Prime Minister in the DS-led Serbian Government.
894 The European Commission for Democracy through Law (also known as the Venice Commission) is the Council of Europe’s primary advisory body on constitutional matters. One of its principal tasks is ‘to help states wishing to bring their legal and institutional structures into line with European standards and international experience in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law’. The draft opinion of the Venice Commission on the 2006 Serbian constitution is used as a reference point in the European Commission’s progress reports for Serbia.
on restrictions to fundamental rights. It was also critical of the role of political parties in the Serbian legislature, whose powers and influence on the judiciary were deemed to be too wide.\footnote{However, the Venice Commission also acknowledged that the number of articles dedicated to fundamental rights is ‘quite remarkable in absolute and in relative terms’, and that the Constitutional Court could apply these rights in full conformity with European standards. The Commission’s final conclusion was that much would depend on the implementation.}

Marijana Pajvančić provides a useful, independent analysis of the Serbian Constitution.\footnote{This extensive report analysed every article of the constitution. M. Pajvančić, \textit{Komentar Ustava Republike Srbije}, Belgrade, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2009, \url{http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_22016-1522-1-30.pdf?110224180850} (accessed 10 June 2013).} Article 1, which states that Serbia is founded on the basis of ‘belonging to European principles and values’, does not specify which ones are particularly European as opposed to universally accepted democratic principles and values (as defined by other international and UN treaties).\footnote{ibid., pp. 12–13.} Pajvančić also observed that the word ‘belonging’ rather than ‘adherence’ or ‘acceptance’ of European principles and values promotes linguistic inconsistency in the constitution and makes the ‘belonging’ appear extremely vague. However, Article 16 which relates to Serbian foreign policy, refers to international law and makes no mention of European principles or legal traditions.\footnote{Article 16 of the constitution states that Serbia’s foreign policy is based on ‘universally accepted principles and regulations of international law’. It also states that all concluded international treaties ought to be compatible with the national constitution, ibid., p. 24.}

At first glance, it would appear that Serbia could not officially recognise Kosovo’s independence as this territory is regarded in the constitution as part of the Serbian state, unless Serbian citizens opted for a referendum.\footnote{Kosovo appears in this context in the Preamble, and in Articles 114 and 182, which treat Kosovo and Metohija as an autonomous region within Serbian national boundaries, ibid., pp. 9, 148, 232.} However, in Pajvančić’s opinion, a public referendum would not be a compulsory measure. In this view, the part of the constitution that discusses Kosovo’s status (Article 182) is situated within the section on territorial organisation...
of the state. Since the constitution does not specifically mention territorial organisation as the question over which, in the process of constitutional amendments, there would need to be a compulsory referendum, Pajvančić concludes that any this measure would, therefore, be optional and subject to the decision of the Serbian Government, but not compulsory under the new constitution.\textsuperscript{901}

\textbf{Serbia’s parliamentary elections of 21 January 2007: the second Koštunica Government}

The EU supported the DS-led bloc in the Serbian parliamentary elections as it wholeheartedly supported Serbia’s European integration, and future in Europe. The DS campaign was entirely premised upon Serbia’s European integration, including the symbolism attached to its flag colours (blue and yellow, the same as EU’s colours) and a campaign slogan ‘Because life cannot wait’ that promised a better future for Serbian families with Serbia in the EU.\textsuperscript{902} The results were encouraging for pro-EU parties as the DS gained an additional forty-one seats. The number of parliamentary seats won by parties in these elections, and the percentage of parliamentary representation, are displayed in the chart that follows.

\textsuperscript{901} ibid., p. 233.
\textsuperscript{902} N. Rajković, \textit{The politics of international law and compliance: Serbia, Croatia and The Hague Tribunal}, Hoboken, Taylor & Francis, 2011, p. 90.
Since the December 2003 parliamentary elections, the DSS lost ten seats, while the SRS lost only one. The G17+ lost twelve seats, while the SPO lost all thirteen seats and was unable to enter parliament. The SPS lost six seats, while the LDP gained eight seats. The minority political parties gained an additional representation. This could have been a sign that Koštunica’s approach to promoting the role of national minorities yielded results.

The public support for the Radicals (SRS) remained strong, possibly as a result of Milošević’s sudden death while in the Hague Tribunal’s custody (in May 2006), which strengthened anti-Hague and anti-Western feelings among the Serbian voters. A Dutch toxicologist claimed that a combination of medications that Milošević was taking, one of which was difficult to

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903 This includes two new seats for Sandžak in the European Serbia party; one for the Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley; one for the Roma Union of Serbia, three for the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, and one for the Roma Party.


obtain in the Netherlands, could have potentially ‘killed’ him. This claim increased anti-
Western sentiment among some Serbs, especially those who were already against cooperation
with the ICTY.

Those groups and individuals in political, media, NGO and academic circles in Serbia who
vehemently oppose Serbia’s European integration sometimes refer to the ICTY’s alleged bias
against Serbs as the reason why Serbia should distance itself from ‘Western institutions’,
especially the EU and NATO. In March 2014, Živadin Jovanović (a former Minister of Foreign
Affairs of FRY from January 1998 to November 2000) from the Belgrade Forum for the World
of Equals observed:

The Hague Tribunal is an instrument of power-projection by NATO members, which
shifts the responsibility for Yugoslavia’s dissolution and war crimes that occurred
during the 1999 NATO aggression [against Yugoslavia] from NATO leaders, who are
real culprits, to Serbs, who are victims. In a broader sense, the Hague Tribunal is an
instrument of forced obedience and dictatorship in international affairs.

One can discern Serbia’s victimhood narrative in the paragraph above, with a constructed
dichotomy of ‘us’ (‘just Serbs’) versus ‘them’ (‘unjust Westerners’). A perception of Serbia’s
denial of war crimes, marginalisation by the West, and a desire for Serbia to have more

906 In the days before his death, Milošević complained in a letter to the Russian embassy that he was being
‘poisoned’, and that he had not been receiving the right medical treatment for his heart condition. M. Simons,
‘Expert suggests Milošević died in a drug ploy’, New York Times, 14 March 2006,
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/14/international/europe/14Milošević.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, (accessed 1
March 2014).
908 Ž. Jovanović, ‘Srpsku “demokratiju” pripremili “stelt” bombarderi i “tomahavk” rakete’, Nova Srpska
Politička Misao, 1 March 2014, http://www.nspm.rs/srbija-i-nato/srpsku-demokratiju-pripremili-stelt-
‘freedom’ in international relations can be also identified from Jovanović’s statements above. This dichotomy of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ is not helpful for a candidate country like Serbia, as it seeks to legitimise anti-Western viewpoints. It will be important for the Serbian Government to receive public support for the membership of the EU before it can accede. Serbia’s European integration process might be further delayed in the future if anti-Western narratives become more widely shared by the Serbian public.

The SRS, as the political party that had won approximately a third of parliamentary seats in the 2007 elections was another ‘norm entrepreneur’ as regards Serbian victimhood narratives.\footnote{Tanjug, ‘Šešelj otkriva: “Zapadne zemlje sklopile zaveru protiv Srbije”’, http://www.24sata.rs/vesti/aktuelno/vest/otkriva-zapadne-zemlje-sklopile-zaveru-proтив-srbije/29544.phtml (accessed 1 March 2014). See also Velika Srbija, Novine Srpske Radikalne Stranke, no. 2994, December 2007, http://www.srpskaradikalnastranka.org.rs/pdf/vs/2994.pdf (accessed 1 March 2014).} They influence public debates regarding Serbia’s European integration, creating more public opposition towards the prospect of Serbia’s membership in the EU. In the future, these discourses might complicate Serbia’s relationship with the EU even more, especially if the government decides to hold a referendum on Serbia’s membership of the EU.

After protracted negotiations, the DS, the DSS and the G17+ agreed to form government on 15 March 2007, only minutes before the midnight expiry of the constitutional deadline, and to retain Koštunica as prime minister.\footnote{M. Stojić, ‘Election briefing 50: Europe and the Serbian parliamentary elections of May 2008, European Parties Elections and Referendums Network, 2008, p. 2, https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=epern-election-briefing-no-50.pdf&site=266 (accessed 1 March 2014).} The slowness of this deal showed the fragility of the new government, which pledged to preserve Kosovo within Serbia; to advance Serbia’s European integration process, and to improve Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. The Serbian Government welcomed the EU’s decision of 13 June 2007 to resume accession talks with
The requirement of Serbia’s ‘full cooperation’ with the ICTY was replaced with the need to have official guarantees by the Serbian Government in the form of a written ‘executive agreement’. This shows that the Dutch opposition had, at least for a brief period, eased off to allow the EU to continue with its negotiations with Serbia.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia was officially initiated on 7 November 2007. The final approval from the EU was delayed for a year under pressure from the Dutch Government, which insisted that it would not approve the SAA until the remaining Serbian indictees wanted by the Hague Tribunal were captured. This EU decision to postpone the next phase of the SAA talks dealt a diplomatic blow to the Serbian pro-EU reformists, especially the DS. It demonstrated that some EU members (the Dutch) did not have confidence in the Serbian Government’s promises that they would actually arrest the remaining indictees at large. The EU’s decision to postpone the SAA with Serbia was a case in which one EU member (the Netherlands) was not satisfied with the candidate state’s performance in one subject area of the negotiations. The delay in Serbia’s European integration at that time was another manifestation of the ‘problemic partners’ issue that can occur in European integration, which was discussed in the Introduction. At the same time, international negotiations over Kosovo’s status under US-EU-Russia umbrella talks, broke down. This provided another setback for the pro-EU agenda of the DS in particular, as Tadić ran against Nikolić, for the second time, in Serbia’s presidential elections.

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913 In 2002, the Dutch Cabinet resigned after a report was published, criticising the Dutch Government’s role in the Srebrenica genocide, which is believed to have been masterminded by Ratko Mladić. Due to this sensitivity, the Netherlands was often insisting more than some other EU members on Serbia’s full cooperation with the ICTY.
Serbia’s presidential elections in 2008

Political discourses ‘contribute to the build-up of social relationships between people, and … help to construct systems of knowledge and belief’. Dominant political discourses, including pro-EU and anti-EU narratives, serve to attract popular legitimacy for their proponent’s viewpoints. Before the first round of presidential elections, the SRS candidate Tomislav Nikolić was emphasising Serbia’s choice for a political alliance with Russia. The DS candidate, Boris Tadić, framed the elections in his campaign material as a choice for Serbia’s future ‘in’ or ‘outside’ the EU. Discourses that the two candidates advanced in their campaigns related to Serbia’s European integration. Moreover, Koštunica refused to support Tadić’s candidacy—which was a departure from the position he adopted ahead of the second round of the 2004 presidential elections, when the EU managed to convince Koštunica and other democrats to unite against the SRS candidate. In early 2008, differences between the Serbian Government and the EU over policy towards Kosovo were widening, as Koštunica was beginning to advocate that Serbia would need to find an alternative to its pro-EU orientation.

In the first round on 20 January 2008, Nikolić was the preferred candidate, followed closely by Tadić. On 1 January 2008, the visa facilitation and readmission agreements between the EU and Serbia entered into force, which added an additional impetus for the DS candidate. Before the second run-off on 3 February 2008, the EU flagged a special visa abolition package for Serbia and an improvement in economic relations, which also boosted Tadić’s candidacy.

915 This was an over-simplification of European integration, as this attitude did not take into consideration difficult compromises which Serbia would need to make in the process of negotiating its EU membership.
916 The difference was that in 2004 Serbia was part of the State Union with Montenegro. At that time, the EU and Serbia both wanted to maintain the federal state, which increased the EU leverage over Serbian prime minister.
In the second round, the DS candidate won over his rival from the SRS with 50.31 to 47.97 per cent of the vote, but with a slimmer margin compared to the second round of the 2004 presidential elections in which the outcome was 53.97 to 46.03 per cent in favour of Tadić. The slimmer margin achieved by the DS against the SRS was possibly a sign of a growing anti-Western/EU attitude among the Serbian electorate as the issue of Kosovo’s independence was at the forefront of public discourses in Serbia. It was also for this reason that the EU needed to offer a stronger membership promise to Serbia.

Following the victory of a proven pro-EU Serbian President (Tadić was sworn in on 15 February), a revised European Partnership for Serbia was adopted on 18 February 2008. On 29 April 2008, the EU and Serbia signed the SAA and the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-related issues, seven years after the SAA was signed with Croatia. Before the parliamentary elections, the European Commission handed over to Serbia the ‘roadmap’ on visa liberalisation, which was aimed at achieving visa-free status for Serbian citizens travelling to the Schengen zone for a short stay and with biometric passports. Symbolically, this liberalisation indicated Serbia’s break with its legacy of isolation, which began in the early 1990s. This was another sign of the EU’s continuing support for Serbia’s European integration, which was increasingly internally resisted by Prime Minister Koštunica because of the Kosovo issue.

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In his address to the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly on 2 October 2007, Koštunica called for a negotiated solution between Albanians and Serbs. Amongst other things, he said that ‘The proposal we [Serbia] have presented in New York says that Serbia is ready to offer the Albanian national minority the status of the most privileged national minority in the world’. Koštunica appealed to ‘fundamental European values’ and called on the member states of the Council of Europe not to break their promise to respect UNSCR 1244. As some countries were preparing to recognise Kosovo’s independence, Koštunica criticised this policy referring to it as a ‘violent and unilateral solution’, which threatened ‘not only the Balkans but the entire international order’ that was supposed to safeguard state sovereignty and territorial integrity of all UN members.919

The EULEX mission and Serbia’s reactions

At the Council meeting in late 2007, the EU leaders noted with ‘deep regret’ the breakdown of ‘Troika’ negotiations. These talks between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian Government lasted four months and were jointly mediated by the US, Russia and EU. They had failed to find a mutually acceptable solution on the Kosovo issue that would satisfy both Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian Government.920 At that meeting, the EU leaders declared a plan to create a civilian mission of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which became known as the European Union Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The Republic of Cyprus weakened the unified approach by abstaining from the vote.921 By agreeing to send a civilian

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mission to Kosovo (which later became the EU’s third largest ESDP mission), the EU implemented a key recommendation from the Ahtisaari Plan.922

The Ahtisaari Plan was based on a policy proposal according to which Kosovo’s supervised independence provided the best way forward for regional security and long-term peace in the Western Balkans; despite the adverse implications it would have for a unified EU foreign policy or the Serbian Government. This situation was an example of a time when normative frameworks of Serbia and the EU diverged. Serbia was insisting on the need to continue with the multilateral negotiations. This position was upheld by Russia in the UNSC discussions on 19 December 2007, but several EU members and the US took a view that further talks would be futile and blocked Russia’s proposal.

On 26 December 2007, the Serbian National Assembly adopted a Resolution on the protection of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of the Republic of Serbia. This resolution make it clear that the Serbian Government held the view that the deployment of EULEX would represent a breach of Serbia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, which Koštunica called ‘illegal’.923 He also stated:

Serbia owes a debt of gratitude to Russia because it has been a firm and principled ally all the while, defending international law and Serbia’s right not to have its territory usurped.924

924 ibid.
Koštunica’s choice of words such as ‘ally’ alluded to the other side of the argument, to the position that the EU was not an ally, at least not on this issue that was regarded as central to Serbia’s national interests. The Serbian Minister for Kosovo and Metohija, Slobodan Samardžić, also accused the EU and the US for ‘demotivating Kosovo Albanians’ during the Troika negotiations by ‘promising independence’ to their leaders. In an interview for this thesis, Samardžić reiterated this view by observing that Serbia was unable to successfully bargain with the Kosovo Albanians within the Troika framework because of intense ‘external pressures’.

The Ahtisaari Plan that recommended a supervised independence for Kosovo ran against the policies of all major parties in Serbia, not just the DSS. Outside of Serbia, it was cautiously greeted by a number of NGOs, including the International Crisis Group. Furthermore, it contained elementary provisions of Kosovo’s future constitution, which would have superseded any previous laws applicable to Kosovo passed in Belgrade. This meant that the new Serbian Constitution, which treated Kosovo as an autonomous but not independent territory, located within the Republic of Serbia’s national boundaries, would be effectively contradicted. Kosovo’s proclamation of independence would embarrass the Serbian Government (with Russia as its main supporter on the Kosovo issue in international forums).

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925 ibid.
926 Interview with Slobodan Samardžić, Belgrade, July 2010.
928 It was not clear what kind of autonomy for Kosovo the Serbian Government was proposing. The relationship between the Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian Government was characterised by a deep mistrust and unresolved human rights issues. One of Koštunica’s suggestions was to extend autonomy to Kosovo with ‘international guarantees’, but he did not go into detail as to what would happen if Kosovo Albanians refused to accept his proposal. Demokratska Stranka Srbije, ‘Obraćanje Predsednika Vlade Srbije Vojislava Koštunice Narodnoj Skupštini Srbije’, 26 December 2007, http://dss.rs/obracanje-predsednika-vlade-srbije-narodnoj-skupstini-srbije/, (accessed 1 March 2013). It was also unclear how the Serbian Government thought that Kosovo Albanians would accept the rule from Belgrade as legitimate after the conflict in 1998–99 forced hundreds of thousands of Albanians into exile, the majority of whom were still traumatised by that experience. The majority of Serbs from Northern Kosovo refused to negotiate with the Kosovo Albanian authorities, which presented a policy dilemma for the EU that was focused on the creation of democratic institutions in Kosovo.
The government would be regarded as a weak and ineffective promoter of ‘Serbian national interests’ among its constituents, as more than 100,000 Serbs from Kosovo fled following the 1999 conflict, and many more Serbian voters could trace lineage from that region.\textsuperscript{929} Public opposition to Kosovo’s independence could not be ignored by any of Serbia’s major political players, as it would have equated to, as one observer described it, political suicide.\textsuperscript{930}

The EU’s position led to a breakdown of the trust Serbian leaders had in the EU institutions, as the DSS called for Serbia to realign its foreign policy towards Russia.\textsuperscript{931} Externally, the ideological rift among Serbian democrats that became more pronounced in early 2008 over Kosovo made many observers wary about Serbia’s long-term commitment to the EU.\textsuperscript{932} Kosovo’s proclamation of independence on 17 February 2008 adversely affected political relations between the EU and Serbia as Serbia withdrew ambassadors from EU member states which had recognised Kosovo’s independence, and which were, by May 2008, in a majority in the European Council (17 out of 27 members).\textsuperscript{933}

At the same time as differences were increasing between Serbia and the EU on the question of Kosovo’s final status, the EU urged Serbia to continue with reforms that would help create a

\textsuperscript{929} All post-Milošević governments in Serbia, including the present-day government, regarded Kosovo’s preservation within Serbia’s territorial borders as a key national interest.


more favourable political climate for the SAA talk to proceed. By doing so, the EU was reminding the Serbian Government of its membership goal to join the EU. Among other countries in the Western Balkans, the FYROM and Croatia had achieved by that stage official candidate status, while Serbia was clearly lagging behind. The reasons for which Serbia’s association agreement with the EU was delayed were linked to political differences between the Serbian and EU leaders regarding Serbia’s role and place in the region, which will be discussed in the next section.

Divisions among Serbian democrats

A key regional public opinion polling group, Median Gallup, provided a useful snapshot of political attitudes towards the EU in Serbia. In 2004, Median Gallup found that 22 per cent of the respondents in Serbia were ‘Euro-enthusiasts’; 35 per cent were ‘Euro-realist’; 29 per cent were ‘Euro-sceptic’ and 13 per cent were ‘Euro-phobes’. They conducted in the same year another survey for members of Serbia’s major political parties. The survey found that members of the DS under Boris Tadić were more committed to the EU than members of the DSS. Thirty-seven per cent of DS members were ‘Euro-enthusiasts’, while 42 per cent were ‘Euro-realists’. DSS supporters were 51 per cent Euro-realist in outlook, while 24 per cent of them were Euro-

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935 Euro-enthusiasts identified with the following statement: ‘Europe is very close to me and I think that we must make every effort to join it, which includes fulfilling all the conditions that it sets’. Euro-realists identified with this statement: ‘I can’t say that Europe is particularly close to me, but I see integration in the EU as necessary and we must work on that’. Meanwhile, Euro-sceptics opted for the following statement: ‘I am doubtful about the intentions of Europe and the West in general and I think we must go very cautiously and slowly in possibly integrating into its structures’. Euro-phobes identified with the following view: ‘Integration with Europe would mean the domination of European and other powers over our nation; Serbia does not belong to that world and so we should nurture our traditional values and not get caught up in the European rat-race’. Batt, ‘Serbia on the eve of the elections’, 2 November 2003, op. cit., p. 4.
 sceptic. Euro-enthusiasts in the DSS comprised only 17 per cent. Given these results, it was not surprising that in times of diplomatic crises or impasse relating to EU issues, political differences between the DS and the DSS became even sharper.\footnote{Dušan Spasojević has described this period in Serbian politics when differences were pronounced over the question of European integration (2003–2008) as an era of polarised pluralism. D. Spasojević, ‘Odblokirana tranzicija–političke podele u Srbiji nakon 2000. godine’, Godišnjak Fakulteta političkih nauka, vol. 5, no. 5, 2011, p. 121.}

Four particular domestic issues presented significant normative challenges for the functioning of the DSS-led government, involving the EU. These included political and normative domestic clashes of views regarding Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY; divergent viewpoints of the majority of EU members and Serbia regarding Kosovo (including its status, the partition proposal and its treatment in the new Serbian Constitution); security crises (including in particular the anti-Western and anti-Albanian riots in Serbia following Kosovo’s proclamation of independence, which worsened Serbia’s image in the West), Serbia’s ambiguous relationship with NATO, and the Serbian parliamentary resolution on military neutrality.

Differences in views between Koštunica and the EU regarding Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY deepened rifts among Serbian democrats. The EU insisted on Serbia’s full cooperation with the ICTY. The European Commission’s Ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Michael Humphreys, accused the Serbian Government in 2004 of not doing all it could to arrest the remaining ICTY indictees at large, who were suspected of being hiding with the assistance of the Serbian military and former generals.\footnote{‘EU official: top Bosnian Serb war crimes fugitives moving across border with Serbia-Montenegro’, Southeast European Times, 25 February 2004, http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2004/02/040225-SVETLA-001, (accessed 1 May 2013).} Koštunica insisted that as with the case of many Croats being tried in Croatia for war crimes, more indicted Serbs should have been allowed to
face trials in domestic courts. Koštunica’s DSS, but also the SRS and the SPS regarded the ICTY as a political organisation that seemed biased against Serbs, while they believed the Hague Tribunal showed more flexibility towards cases involving the citizens of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. A clash of normative frameworks between the Serbian Government and the EU on this issue led to a temporary suspension of negotiations with the EU in 2006. However, the issue was politically resolved after the Serbian parliamentary elections in July 2007 with the formation of a reformist Serbian Government, which included the DS, the DSS and the G17+.

Differences in views over Kosovo’s separation from Serbia had threatened to derail Serbia’s progress towards achieving candidate status for EU membership. Kosovo’s declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 triggered a political crisis in Serbia. Although the EU did not officially recognise Kosovo’s independence, the EU working documents and other policy papers (including for funding purposes), addressed and funded Kosovo as an independent entity. Several EU countries, including Germany, France, Italy and the UK, who are collectively the largest contributors to the common EU budget, publicly expressed support for Kosovo’s independence in the years preceding the proclamation, which the Serbian Government was resisting. Serbia’s formal proposal to the UN seeking, for the first time, ethnic

939 In his role as the third Yugoslavia’s President, Koštunica observed in an interview in 2002 that in his view, the Hague Tribunal was one-sided. He believed that The Hague did not respect the promise made to four indictees who handed themselves over to the court, which held that they could represent themselves while on bail, rather than being in detention until the end of court proceedings. Serbian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ‘Koštunica: The Hague does not respect given promises’, Bilten, 9 December 2002, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/Srpski/Bilteni/Srpski/b091202_s.html, (accessed 11 May 2013).
partition of Kosovo in late March 2008 showed its lack of trust in the Kosovo authorities and the EU’s role as a conflict mediator.\(^{941}\)

After Kosovo declared independence, anti-Western riots erupted in Serbia on 21 February 2008. The riots in Belgrade, in particular, received extensive media coverage in the EU as the embassies of several EU states and candidate states (Croatia) and the US embassy were attacked. This event adversely affected Serbia’s standing abroad and in turn, worsened the EU’s political dialogue with the Serbian Prime Minister Koštunica, who decided to withdraw ambassadors from countries which had recognised Kosovo’s independence.\(^{942}\) The riots and the removal of Ambassadors cast doubts on the genuineness of Serbia’s desire to join the EU. Public opinion polls also showed a decline in support within the EU for further EU enlargement in the Western Balkans, and Serbia’s accession in particular.\(^{943}\)

Serbia’s military neutrality also caused divisions among the Serbian democrats. On 26 December 2007, the Serbian Parliament passed a resolution (with 220 for, 3 abstentions and 14 against) that confirmed Serbia’s military neutrality, and preservation of Serbia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. No other EU aspirant from post-communist Europe had previously done so.\(^{944}\) Serbia’s unique position under Koštunica’s prime ministership differentiated it from other post-communist candidate states and its neighbours, the majority of whom followed the pattern of Euro-Atlantic integration by firstly joining the UN, then the OSCE, NATO and the EU. During the second Koštunica government, anti-Western narratives became more


\(^{942}\) As at April 2014, many of the withdrawn ambassadors have not been replaced. The decision not to replace ambassadors could have been a cost-saving measure, but one that would not have been received well in the EU countries without a diplomatic representation from Serbia at the highest (ambassadorial) level.

\(^{943}\) Another reason for a decline in the support for further enlargement, or enlargement fatigue, is the protracted economic crisis in the EU.

prominent in Serbia, and calls increased for Serbia to retain its military and political neutrality from the West (NATO and the EU), just as it did during Tito’s era. The DSS, the SRS and the SPS displayed a strong antagonism towards the Atlantic component of European integration, principally because of NATO’s bombardment campaign in 1999, and towards the EU because of its perceived role in Kosovo’s independence. Koštunica stated in a speech following Kosovo’s proclamation of independence:

Now it is more than clear that the merciless destruction of Serbia in the NATO bombing had only one goal, and that is to turn Kosovo into the first NATO state in the world.945

The DSS’s anti-Western statements in the Serbian media before Serbia’s next parliamentary elections caused more divisions among Serbian democrats, and became another factor destabilising Serbia’s democratic consolidation.

**Conclusion**

This chapter sought to present an overview of the challenges at the republican and the State Union level regarding Serbia’s relationship with the EU. While the EU used the language of closeness with the Serbian Presidency under Boris Tadić in 2004, it had managed to develop a pragmatic working relationship with the DSS-led Serbian Government under Koštunica in 2004 and 2005 in particular. The EU also insisted on the preservation of the State Union, to Montenegro’s irritation, as it preferred a regional approach to their individual paths towards European accession. Serbia and the EU respected the result of the Montenegrin referendum in May 2006 and Montenegro’s peaceful separation from Serbia, which Tribovich described as

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‘an immense and insufficiently recognised’ foreign policy success of the EU towards this region after 2000.946 The energy spent on maintaining the common state and the EU’s level of involvement on constitutional day-to-day issues in the State Union was possibly too much investment in a defunct state. That effort potentially deflected much-needed resources away from other reform-focused priorities of European integration, such as judicial and administrative reform in both republics.

Further, the DSS-led government between March 2004 and July 2008 was criticised on a number of accounts. Criticism covered various issues, for instance, Serbia’s inability to establish democratic civilian control over the army and police; the Serbian leaders’ inability to arrest the two remaining ICTY indictees at large, and the lack of adequate human rights protection mechanisms in the new Serbian Constitution. Serbia’s proclamation of its military neutrality and the secession of one part of its constitutional territory during Serbia’s European integration made this country different from other regional post-communist states and possibly more vulnerable to external security shocks. Kosovo’s proclamation of independence was a challenge for future cooperative dialogue between the EU and Serbia, especially after several embassies of EU members and formal candidates were attacked in contravention of international diplomatic protocols. The violent protests sent a negative signal to the EU institutions and the general European public about Serbia’s readiness to accept the Euro-Atlantic orientation in its foreign policy.

The Koštunica factor in the EU’s relationship with the State Union proved on the whole to be a factor of stability and commitment to the foreign policy goals of the EU in 2004 and 2005, which aligned with those of the DSS. At the same time, the EU applied political pressure at

crucial moments in 2004 and 2005, which resulted in significant improvements to Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY. This indicated that as a higher degree of trust started to develop between the EU and the DSS, the EU’s carrot-and-stick approach was accomplishing results. Despite many inter-party differences, a broad consensus was achieved among Serbia’s democrats during Koštunica’s era that marginalised the political influence of the Radicals. The co-habitation agreement between the DSS and the DS lasted until 8 March 2008, when Koštunica publicly stated that the coalition government had fallen over the issue of Serbia’s continued European integration, and called for early parliamentary elections on 11 May 2008. The EU’s soft power had ultimately failed to win over the DSS whose position on Kosovo’s independence could not be reconciled with the EU’s divided stance, or those key EU members who firstly insisted on upholding UNSCR 1244, then changed their policy towards supporting Kosovo’s proclamation of independence. Internal political divisions among Serbian democrats have also proven to be extremely detrimental to Serbia’s European integration. This confirms that European integration is a normative process affected by internal consensus reached among dominant political elites in the candidate state. Any major disagreement between them can delay or hinder further European integration, as happened in Serbia’s case particularly towards the end of Koštunica’s prime ministership. The EU’s inability to reach a common policy on Kosovo’s independence proclamation raises a question about the foreign policy effectiveness of the EU in the Western Balkans. The issue of trust, which is pivotal for the maintenance of close diplomatic relations (including among former foes) had once again resurfaced as a challenge for further EU-Serbia cooperation. Kosovo’s independence proclamation caused further delays in Serbia’s European integration due to differences in normative and political outlooks between the majority of EU members and Serbia over the future of Kosovo’s governance.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Turn towards Europe: EU-Serbia relations under the DS-SPS coalition

This chapter will examine the EU’s diplomatic activities ahead of the Serbian presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008, and outline the milestones and key challenges in the EU-Serbia relationship under the coalition government (7 July 2008–27 July 2012). Two dominant parties in the ‘For European Serbia’ governing coalition were the DS and the reformed SPS, which after 3 December 2006 was under new leadership.947 During this period, decreasing levels of public support for Serbia’s EU orientation, and growing opposition by EU citizens (especially in the ‘older’ member states, EU-15) to further EU enlargement were main political and social barriers to Serbia’s European integration. These societal attitudes will be examined through the analysis of key public opinion polls in Serbia, and the EU’s Eurobarometer survey results.

The significance of identity politics, as defined by Manuel Castells, will be drawn upon to highlight a major ‘values debate’ between Serbia’s pro-EU and anti-EU political standpoints—a normative rift which ensured that Serbia’s European integration path became more challenging despite the relative stability within the new coalition after the parliamentary elections in May 2008.948 The Kosovo issue and the question of Serbia’s continued European

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947 On 3 December 2006, a former presidential candidate of the SPS, Ivica Dačić, was elected President of his party. Since 2003, Dačić had become a pro-European reformer within the SPS. He marginalised the influence of the SPS’s anti-EU faction (filled with Milošević loyalists) in January 2003, after they unsuccessfully attempted to expel him from the party, and made Milošević’s position in the party rather symbolic by becoming a de facto leader. After the death of Milošević and before Serbia’s snap parliamentary election of January 2007, Dačić was elected President of the SPS. For a useful discussion of the SPS party transformation, see A. Konitzer ‘External veto actors, public opinion, and the transformation of EU-skeptic parties in Croatia and Serbia’, National Council for Eurasian and East European Research Working Paper, University of Washington, 2010, pp. 36–49.

948 In the case of the Serbian 2008 elections, these social constructs related to Serbia’s foreign policy orientation, especially European integration. Castells, The power of identity, 2010, op. cit., p. 7.
integration were factors in Serbian politics that further divided Serbian democrats, and as such, they will be examined in this chapter. The question of Serbia’s European integration during the period of analysis also caused the most significant change on the Serbian political scene with the weakening of the largest anti-EU party, the SRS. Its former Deputy President, Tomislav Nikolić and his allies, including Aleksandar Vučić, broke away from the SRS and formed a new political party, the Serbian Progressive Party (Srpska Napredna Stranka, SNS), which declared itself in favour of Serbia’s European integration.949

**The Serbian parliamentary elections of 11 May 2008**

President Tadić’s re-election on 3 February 2008 provided a further impetus to Serbia’s European integration path, which was much needed as Serbia’s SAA negotiations with the EU were blocked on 16 January 2008 by Belgium and the Netherlands over the issue of Serbia’s lack of sufficient cooperation with the ICTY. Tadić was sworn in as Serbia’s President on 15 February 2008, as Kosovo was preparing to declare independence only two days later. The EU’s closer political relationships with pro-EU parties in Serbia may have contributed to a slight increase in public support for Serbia’s EU accession (by 1 per cent), and a greater decrease in public opposition to that prospect (by 6 per cent) between November 2007 and May 2008.950 Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, rejected claims that the EU was interfering

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949 It is interesting to observe that after Serbia’s regime change, the SRS and the SPS were both internally divided between anti-European and pro-EU factions, and between those who supported the old party leaders (Šešelj and Milošević respectively) and reformers who wanted a change in the party leadership. In the SPS in 2003, Dačić managed to convince the majority of SPS members of the need for a gradual leadership change when Milošević was in The Hague. By December 2006, Dačić was elected President of the SPS despite objections from former Milošević loyalists who did not share his pro-European vision. In the SRS, Nikolić did not manage to break the party’s allegiance from the old party leader, and ICTY indictee, Vojislav Šešelj. By forming a new political party, the SNS, in October 2008 he managed to build a new image for his team of loyalists whilst advocating Serbia’s EU accession.

950 An opinion poll conducted by the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) in November 2007 recorded that if a referendum on Serbia’s EU membership had been held at the time of the questionnaire, 66 per cent of respondents would have voted for, and 18 per cent would have voted against Serbia’s EU accession. The corresponding figures in May 2008 were 67 and 12 per cent respectively. Republic of Serbia, ‘The EU perspective of Serbian citizens trends: results of a public opinion poll’, SEIO, December 2008,
in Serbian elections by favouring the DS over the SRS candidate—despite the fact that on many occasions the EU representatives cautioned against the election of Nikolić.  

In February 2008, the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Rehn, described the 2008 presidential elections as Serbia’s choice between ‘a nationalist past and a European future’.  

This had remained his position also after the coalition government fell in March 2008 in the lead-up to Serbia’s parliamentary elections in May 2008. The EU’s willingness to cooperate with Serbia was conditional upon the Serbian Government’s fulfilling political conditionality criteria, in particular locating, arresting and handing over the remaining indictees from the wars of the 1990s. Hence, Serbia’s European integration was, over a decade since the Bosnian conflict ended, still linked to its management of responsibility for the crimes authorised by individuals considered to be hiding in Serbia. The EU viewed the Serbian Government’s apparent inability to capture the remaining indictees at large as a sign of their lack of political will to recognise their responsibility, and thereby confront the culture of denial of war crimes that had taken root in Serbia.

Serbian Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremić, addressed the European Parliament’s Foreign Affairs Committee on 20 February 2008. In his speech, he criticised the recognition of Kosovo’s


independence by four EU members on that day (UK, France, Germany and Latvia). He highlighted a contradiction that he found in the EU’s attitude towards the Kosovo status with the promise of EU membership to Serbia:

Creating desolation out of the promise of a European future. This is what the governments of some of your countries have done by recognizing the unilateral, illegal and illegitimate declaration of independence of … Kosovo and Metohija. … And I am ashamed, because for all the talk about reason and Enlightenment … Europe is rapidly becoming just another place where might makes right. … Is this the way to treat friends?956

The language used in his speech was symptomatic of the tension and frustration within the Serbian Government, which was confronted with seemingly two incompatible goals of preserving Kosovo within Serbia diplomatically, and deepening integration with the EU. Despite Serbia’s disagreement, and warnings from Russia and China, more EU members progressively recognised Kosovo’s independence.957 Czech President Vaclav Klaus warned that this precedent may trigger a domino effect in Europe, which echoed sentiment Koštunica expressed in his 2006 article for The Washington Post.958 However, five EU countries hold out against recognition. EU members were, once again, not united on the question of Kosovo’s statehood, which presents a challenge for the EU’s coherence in foreign policy.

The International Steering Group (ISG) for Kosovo was formed in Vienna on 28 February 2008 pursuant to the Ahtisaari Plan to assist with the implementation of Kosovo’s final status process. The ISG included the European Commission and NATO.959 As with the Ahtisaari Plan, Serbia claimed that the ISG had no legitimate legal or political basis under international law. This position was stated in a letter of protest written by Serbia’s Foreign Minister to the UN Secretary-General on 29 February 2008.960 The EU’s role in Kosovo’s transition—from an international, UN-mandated protectorate to an EU-supervised entity—disappointed many Serbs, turning them against Serbia’s European integration. The Serbian Government’s position at the time was that the EU was overtly sympathetic towards the Kosovo Albanian statehood aspirations, while ignoring aspirations by Serbs from Kosovo to remain within Serbia’s territorial boundaries (the majority of Serbs from Kosovo was living outside Kosovo since the end of NATO’s military intervention in 1999).961 With the dispatch of the EULEX mission to Kosovo, the EU’s role became central to the day-to-day management of Kosovo affairs.962 The Serbian Government resented the EU’s technical, financial, political and diplomatic support for the Kosovo Albanian institutions. The Serbian Government was facing the prospect of domestic instability. Internal divisions arose among coalition partners over how best to


962 Until then the primacy of the US role was considered to be crucial for the maintenance of regional peace and security, especially considering the US role in negotiating the Dayton Peace Accord. The EULEX mission was a sign that EU foreign policy had evolved since the 1990s to include a pro-active role in building up Kosovo’s governance institutions.

**The ‘values’ debate in Serbia over Kosovo and EU accession**

For Serbian political parties, describing the elections as ‘for’ or ‘against’ Serbia’s European integration (DS), and as ‘for’ or ‘against’ Serbia itself (DSS-NS, SRS) was a pre-election strategy intended to boost the voters’ support.\footnote{This largest pro-EU coalition of parties was called *For a European Serbia–Boris Tadić*. It was made up of the Democratic Party (DS), G17+, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina and the Sandžak Democratic Party. The campaign was led by a democrat and long-standing anti-communist dissident, Dragoljub Mićunović, from the DS.} Their attitude towards the EU also reflected their own position on the direction of Serbia’s reform process. As widespread unemployment and poverty were serious challenges for Serbia’s economic reforms, it is unsurprising that European integration was framed in economic terms. The pro-EU parties in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections appealed to the benefits the Serbian citizens could enjoy by getting closer to the EU.\footnote{European Commission, ‘Serbia: 2007 progress report’, 26 November 2007, op. cit., p. 30.} Hence, the DS-led coalition adopted pro-European slogans.\footnote{These slogans included: *Europe means a more certain future, European means more modern education, and Europe means new working places–work can’t wait.* See also M. Stojić, ‘Election briefing No. 50: Europe and the Serbian parliamentary election of May 2008’, 2008, op. cit., p. 5.} Another pro-EU party, the LDP, used the slogan that highlighted the freedom of movement as a key aspect of that cooperation.\footnote{Their slogan for the 2008 elections was *Spread the word: Serbia without borders.* The LDP split from the DS in 2005. B92, ‘Podele i u strankama’, 28 February 2005, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2005&mm=02&dd=28&nav_id=163210, (accessed 12 September 2013).} On the other hand, parties that advocated Serbia’s greater self-reliance, limited cooperation with the EU and closer ties with Russia appealed for *Kosovo and...*
Metohija—the heart of Serbia (SRS), and Support Serbia (DSS-NSS). The Socialists (SPS) used the slogan of Rise up Serbia, alluding to Serbia’s national revival.

The significance of a national political debate with fixed positions on Serbia’s European integration was probably most clearly evident in the 2008 parliamentary elections, as at the next parliamentary elections, support for this process was more diffused among old and new political players. Apart from the economic aspects of Serbia’s cooperation with Europe, Serbian political parties debated whether and how Serbia should continue negotiating with the EU after Kosovo declared independence. EU foreign policy analyst, Karen E. Smith, observed that the EU offered Serbia many incentives to boost Serbia’s pro-EU electoral camp despite the Kosovo challenge. One of these ‘carrots’ included the EU’s offer on a revised European Partnership in February and a promise to sign the SAA before the elections, although the Netherlands previously blocked that proposal in mid-January preventing a common approach.968

During the Slovenian Presidency of the EU, which had a pro-independence approach towards the Kosovo issue, the EU had a unified position when the Council approved on 4 February 2008 the EU Special Representative and authorised EULEX’s deployment.969 EU members’ positions towards Kosovo appeared, however, disunited following the Kosovo Parliament’s independence proclamation two weeks later as domestic considerations were ‘stronger than any embarrassment’ that a divided EU foreign policy could bring.970 The lack of unity was

970 Smith, ‘Keys to facilitate the monitoring of the Spanish foreign policy and international relations in 2008’, op. cit.
evident in the Spanish Government breaking ranks with other EU members. The Spanish leaders insisted that the EULEX should proceed only with explicit consent from the UN Security Council.971

One day before the Kosovo Parliament proclaimed independence, the Kosovo Ministry within the Serbian Government conducted an opinion poll to examine public attitudes to the Kosovo issue and European integration. The results showed that 67 per cent of the respondents believed that Serbia should join the EU, while 74 per cent ‘would not trade EU integration for the recognition of Kosovo independence’.972 Two-thirds also opposed Serbia’s membership of NATO, and 60 per cent wanted Serbia to strengthen ties with Russia.973 The moves which Serbia undertook towards developing a closer relationship with Russia had become a normative challenge to Serbia’s European integration, as political discourses were re-created and advanced about the necessity for Serbia to align its foreign policy with Russia at the expense of European integration.974

Serbia regarded Kosovo’s independence declaration on 17 February 2008 as a violation of UNSCR 1244, the Helsinki Act and the Serbian Constitution. The independence declaration stated that Kosovo was a special case, but not a model for other regions.975 This element was

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971 To obtain consent was initially difficult because of Russia’s support for Serbian opposition to any changes to its constitutional and territorial borders. S. Sebastián, ‘Serbia’s parliamentary elections: domestic and regional dilemmas’, FRIDE Comment, April 2008, London School of Economics, p. 9, www.fride.org/download/COM_Serbia_Elections_ENG_abr08.pdf (accessed 16 May 2013).
973 ibid.
974 Both Koštunica and Tadić supported Serbia’s energy deal with Russia, under which the majority stake (51 per cent) of the Serbian state-owned oil company, NIS, was sold, under market value, for €400 million to a Russian company (Gazprom). This transaction was part of a wider agreement between the Serbian and Russian officials for Russia’s supply of oil and gas to Serbia. Gazprom took over its stake in NIS in February 2009, agreeing to absorb Serbia’s accumulated debt from previous Russian energy sales to Serbia.
975 The declaration was supported by all present Kosovo Albanian parliamentarians, but Serbian representatives in the Kosovo Parliament boycotted the official delivery of the declaration by being absent from the chamber.
probably emphasised to reassure some EU members, which had concerns about the potential impact on separatist groups in their countries of Kosovo’s self-determination. The issue of secession was of particular concern to Spain, Italy, France, Romania and Slovakia. The declaration, furthermore, underlined the intention by the Kosovo authorities ‘to take all steps necessary to facilitate full membership in the EU’, and to implement the reforms required for ‘Euro-Atlantic integration’, which referred to the NATO membership. It stressed Kosovo’s ‘deep historical, commercial and social ties with Serbia’, and called for more reconciliation between ‘our people’, which was in line with the EU’s approach of facilitating good neighbourly relations of different ethnic communities in the Western Balkans. Kosovo’s new flag was also adopted with colours blue and yellow symbolising its aim of belonging to the EU.

On 18 February 2008, the EU adopted a new European Partnership program for Serbia, which included Kosovo under UNSCR 1244. This was a signal of its support for the continuation of Serbia’s European integration process, although by including Kosovo in this program—one day after its proclamation of independence—it showed that EU members were divided over how best to accommodate Serbia’s opposition to Kosovo’s independence. The timing of this decision led many Serbs to believe that the EU was offering closer relations to Serbia in exchange for its permissive attitude towards Kosovo. The EU also declared that a separate program was being prepared for Kosovo, without specifically mentioning the Serbian

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978 Ibid.
979 Had all EU members been in agreement regarding Kosovo’s independence proclamation, Kosovo would probably not have been included in a partnership program with Serbia. This could have been a strategy of appeasing the Serbian Government in order to encourage Serbian leaders to continue with European integration.
Government’s role in this process.\textsuperscript{980} In the funding schemes, Kosovo was also being treated as a separate entity.\textsuperscript{981}

As key EU institutions, including the European Commission, sought to reconcile the fact that the EU did not have a unified stance on Kosovo’s independence, the tension surrounding this issue was still evident in the language that the EU was using. On the one hand, in official communication with Serbia, the EU indicated that it acknowledged Serbia’s position by including the part ‘Serbia with Kosovo under UNSCR 1244’. On the other hand, it financially aided the functioning of independent Kosovo institutions alongside other donors (UN, US, and NATO). The security situation in Kosovo was monitored by both NATO and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which was preparing to work alongside the EULEX mission once it became operational.

Many Serbian political parties, including the DSS, regarded the EU’s position as a double standard. However, since the majority of the Council’s membership supported the EULEX mission, this policy stance had contributed to a diminution in trust between the EU and major Serbian political parties. Political tensions regarding Kosovo’s status had become a major challenge for Serbia’s closer dialogue with the EU. With its opposition to Kosovo’s


\textsuperscript{981} The EU stated: ‘At the end of the Multiannual Indicative Financial Framework (MIFF) for 2009–2011 (including 2007 and 2008) Serbia and Kosovo will have been allocated €976.8 million and €395.1 million respectively. Under the CARDS program from 2000 to 2006, financial assistance to Serbia and Kosovo, including Montenegro, totalled €2.6 billion’, ibid. Despite the availability of different funding programs for Serbia, Igor Novaković, President of Palilula shire in Southern Serbian town of Niš, said that the lack of flexibility in the EU program guidelines, and the lack of local expertise outside Belgrade with how to master some very complicated applications for EU grants, made it very difficult for many Serbian NGOs and institutions to be successful in obtaining EU support. His shire, for instance, benefited more from Bulgaria’s cross border programs than from the direct EU’s funding allocations for Serbia. Interview with Igor Novaković, Niš, January 2012.
independence proclamation and violent protests in Belgrade, Serbia risked being seen again as an outsider in Europe.

On a normative level of political discourses in Serbia, Western support for the new political order in Priština was cited as the reason why Serbia must seek closer alliance with Russia. Kosovo’s independence proclamation facilitated the rise of extreme right groups in Serbia, which opposed Kosovo’s independence, including by violent means. In publicly staged and extensively promoted protests (especially through social media) right-wing groups (including ultra-nationalist groups such as Naši, Ponoś and 1389) attacked ‘European values’ which they believed threatened Serbia’s alliance with Russia and its traditional way of life. They sought to marginalise pro-EU voices in Serbian society by publicly condemning ‘foreign-financed’ NGOs. They also put pressure on the Serbian Government to keep financing the so-called parallel institutions in Kosovo, especially in the North where Serbs were in the majority. The groups that oppose EU accession often see civil society structures and critical media reporting as an act of intrusion by foreign governments. Instead of neutrality, these groups openly demand that Serbia pursues closer relations with Russia, which was seen as a protector of Serbian interest in international forums. Socially and politically constructed discourses

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982 Right-wing groups regard Serbian national identity through the normative lenses of patriotism, Orthodox Christianity and family structure. According to Castells, ‘patriarchy requires compulsory heterosexuality’, which was true for these groups that accused the EU of ‘importing gay rights to Serbia’, of financing NGOs that they considered to be anti-patriotic and thus illegitimate, and seeking to change Serbian society. Castells, The power of identity, 2010, op. cit., p. 261. Many of the values which these groups advocated, however, were imagined rather than real, because life in Serbia’s urban areas was modern rather than traditional.

983 During the next Serbian Government, parallel institutions became a major point of disagreement between Serbia and the EU in relation to the Kosovo issue, which was, during the period under investigation, the key thorn in the relationship apart from cooperation with the ICTY between EU and Serbia.


which emphasised amity between Serbs and Russians served to legitimise these groups’ opposition to Serbia’s membership in the EU.

Serbia’s right-wing groups tend to be affiliated with soccer team fan clubs. Serbian commentator Ivan Čolović described them as armed ‘hooligans’, who are extremely violent, and use symbols such as hand grenades, skulls, crosses (with the addition of their preferred soccer club emblem), and nationalist emblems, including pictures of Serbian medieval martyrs.\textsuperscript{986} In this way, not only major political parties but also minor fringe groups seek to alter public opinion about Serbia’s strategic choices, which demonstrates the extent to which the Kosovo issue influences socio-political cleavages in modern-day Serbia.

A collective memory element embodied in discussions over Kosovo emerged at the forefront of Serbian political debates ahead of the major elections, which the EU sought to remedy by providing further incentives, such as agreeing to offer a SAA agreement to Serbia under special conditions. Although numerically a small minority, the significance of right-wing elements in the Serbian electorate became even greater during the course of the next government. Their organised attacks on a gay rights march in Belgrade in 2010 revived images of the Western Balkans as a violent region, and Serbia in particular as a nationalistic and intolerant country. Before the march, the EU’s head of mission to Serbia, Vincent Degert, said: ‘We are here to celebrate the values of tolerance, freedom of expression and assembly’.\textsuperscript{987} The violent protests did not have a positive effect on Serbia’s reputation in the EU and the West more generally.

Serbia’s new coalition government and the Radical Party split

The Belgrade-based Centre for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) predicted that the SRS, an anti-EU party, would obtain the largest number of seats on a single party preferred basis.\textsuperscript{988} This prediction was not surprising given the overall public mood in Serbia following Kosovo’s independence proclamation. The tenacious popularity of the SRS provided additional motivation for EU foreign ministers to informally meet in Slovenia to overcome political hurdles before the conclusion of a major political agreement with Serbia could take place. Ian Bancroft aptly commented:

\begin{quote}
In engineering the signing of a stabilisation and association agreement (SAA), the EU has attempted to influence the outcome in favour of the more pro-European parties.\textsuperscript{989}
\end{quote}

It was probably a strategy of political communication which aimed to influence the electoral mood in Serbia by motivating the voters to take part in the elections.

The EU’s mobilisation strategy possibly contributed to the highest voter turnout in Serbian 2008 elections since 2000, for both the presidential (68.1 per cent in the run-off vote) and parliamentary (61.35 per cent) elections. However, analysts observed weaknesses in the EU’s strategy about how to bring Serbia closer to the EU without undermining the conditionality framework, problems of credibility given the growing enlargement fatigue in the EU, and confusion among EU officials about how to deal with the Serbia-Kosovo dispute.\textsuperscript{990}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
On 29 April 2008 in Luxembourg, Serbia and the EU signed the SAA as well as an Interim Trade Agreement. The then Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić described it as ‘a historic day’ for Serbia-EU relations. The EU, however, adopted the decision not to implement the ratification phase of the agreement until Serbia improved cooperation with the ICTY, which could only happen only after parliamentary elections and under Serbia’s new leadership. While it represented a fulfilment of democratic Serbia’s key foreign policy goal, the pre-membership agreement embodied in the SAA deepened the rift among the democrats. The deal was signed by the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister from the DS, Božidar Đelić, and the EU Enlargement Commissioner in the presence of representatives from 27 member states and Serbian President Tadić. The fact that only DS representatives were present on the occasion of the agreement’s signing indicated that the agreement did not have a broad-ranging consensus among Serbian democrats at that time, which furthermore demonstrated that Serbia’s European integration was a source of domestic political instability.

The DSS regarded the signing by the Serbian side as an anti-state act, and Koštunica proclaimed that Đelić’s signature ‘amounts to treason’. The DSS bloc and the Radicals (SRS) also painted the agreement with the EU as undermining Serbia’s sovereignty and statehood rights guaranteed under international law. In line with its previously stated anti-EU policy, the Radicals opposed any agreement with the EU. Leader of the socialists, Ivica Dačić, did not show prior to the elections a clear predilection for policy in this direction. However, his choice

993 ibid.
to enter into a coalition with the DS was a signal that the SPS opted for Serbia’s future in the EU.

In 2008, the World Bank estimated that Serbia and Montenegro hosted some 600,000 refugees and internally displaced, from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.\textsuperscript{994} Large refugee communities were an electoral factor influencing Serbia’s mainstream political discourses, as well as domestic perceptions about the former Yugoslav republics that were once wartime foes.\textsuperscript{995}

\textbf{Chart 4: Serbian parliamentary elections, 11 May 2008}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Parliamentary seats obtained (out of 250)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>78 (31.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS-NS</td>
<td>30 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>102 (40.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>20 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDP</td>
<td>13 (5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority parties</td>
<td>7 (2.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Serbia’s early parliamentary elections held on 11 May 2008 were contested by 22 entities.\textsuperscript{996} The DS argued for continuation of dialogue with the EU, alongside the LDP and the G17+, while the SRS and the DSS-NS coalition vehemently opposed it, presenting it as a loss of sovereignty, national pride and historical territory. Of the major political parties, the SRS won...

\textsuperscript{995} The electoral influence of Serbian communities from other former Yugoslav republics in the elections in Serbia is a separate research topic, and will not be discussed here in any further detail.
\textsuperscript{996} The five per cent threshold did not apply to parties and coalitions rooted in national minorities.
78 seats (only three less than in 2007), the DS coalition 102, the DSS-NS bloc won 30 (seventeen less than in 2007), and the SPS-led bloc 20 (four more than in 2007), while the LDP bloc won 13 seats (two more than in 2007). While recognising that the elections broadly adhered to the international standards for democratic elections, an OSCE report observed that an area of particular concern included the disproportionate control of political parties over the parliamentary mandates of their candidates. This effectively meant that political parties would choose after the elections which candidates on the party ticket should obtain mandates, thus potentially undermining the transparency of the democratic system.

The ideological split over Serbia’s continued European integration caused intra-party transformation among traditionally anti-EU parties. It split the radicals (SRS) into two separate entities after the elections, with the deputy leader of SRS (Tomislav Nikolić) adopting a more conciliatory tone towards negotiating with the EU. His positive approach to the EU earned him an expulsion from the SRS. In October 2008, Nikolić and his followers registered a new political party, the Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska Napredna Stranka*, SNS), which drew in members of other political parties, in particular the pro-monarchist SPO. Many prominent party members defected to the Progressives from the Radicals, which seriously weakened the influence of the Radical Party in the Serbian National Assembly. Serbia’s leading political analyst, Predrag Simić, has commented that the DS supported the formation of the SNS because

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997 Of the major coalition partners within *For a European Serbia* bloc, the DS won 64 seats (no change) and the G17+ won 24 seats (five more than in 2007). Republika Srbija, Republička Izborna Komisija, ‘Izveštaj o ukupnim rezultatima izbora za narodne poslanike Narodne Skupštine Republike Srbije’, http://www.rik.parlement.gov.rs/cirilica/propisi_frames.htm (accessed 1 March 2014).


999 Interview with the EU officials (A. Cammarata and T. Gnocchi), January 2010, Belgrade.

1000 The SRS could not pass the required threshold in the Serbian 2012 parliamentary elections, whereas the SNS gained 73 seats, which was only 5 less than SRS gained in 2008 elections. This demonstrated the ability to command popular support by former SRS party members, Tomislav Nikolić (current Serbian President) and Aleksandar Vučić (current Prime Minister of Serbia).
the DS leader Tadić supported the idea of forming a two-party system for Serbia. The EU also supported the emergence of the SNS. The question of Serbia’s European integration thus had a transformative effect on Serbian domestic politics, with the previously strong SRS support base diminishing due to the SNS’s emergence as a new political player. This was also a tribute to the EU’s enhanced diplomatic capacities, as its soft power of attraction managed to weaken what was previously Serbia’s single largest opposition group, the SRS. It also illustrates their pragmatic readiness to engage with ruling parties holding reservations about the EU in the hope of shifting their orientation.

The new government brought together the DS, the SPS and several minor parties, pledging to continue working with the EU while committing to finding a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo question. The Serbian National Assembly elected a non-partisan but DS-endorsed candidate, Mirko Cvetković, as Prime Minister on 7 July 2008. Ivica Dačić from the SPS became a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, while Jovan Krkobabić from the minority PUPS party also became a Deputy Prime Minister. Amongst other functions, the DS gained the key ministries, including Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, Justice, Kosovo-Metohija, and Agriculture. The G17+ took over the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development. The SPS took over ministries of Infrastructure, Energy and Mining, and Education, while representatives from three minor coalition partners took over several functions.


1002 Interviews with EU diplomats, Belgrade, 2011.

1003 Mirko Cvetković was the longest-serving Serbian prime minister since the regime change in 2000, who entered politics as an independent, DS-backed candidate with international development expertise.
ministerial positions.\textsuperscript{1004} The small number of positions for SPS party officials became a possible cause of resentment for the SPS leader, who was regarded as the key power-broker in the formation of government. His decision to enter into a coalition government with Tadić was seen as reflecting his determination to reinvent his political party as a mainstream centre-left social democratic party, which can share power with other democratic parties.\textsuperscript{1005}

\section*{Serbia’s internal politics and EU-Serbia relations}

During the DS-SPS government, there was progress in the relationship with the EU, although some believe that the progress was too slow for a government that had won on a pro-EU platform. The Kosovo issue continued to preoccupy Serbia’s international diplomacy, which ran against the principle of solidarity with the EU’s agreed positions that potential candidates are expected to display. This resulted in reduced support for the governing coalition, especially for the DS, which was responsible for many unpopular changes in its ministerial area of responsibility.\textsuperscript{1006} One of the first acts of the new Government was to arrest on 22 July 2008 a key ICTY indictee at large, Radovan Karadžić, who was at the time living and working in Belgrade in disguise and under an assumed name. \textit{The Guardian} reported that the arrest came after a tip-off from an unnamed foreign intelligence agency, which indicated that a higher level of trust had developed between Serbia and its foreign partners.\textsuperscript{1007} Reactions in the EU to his arrest and swift extradition to the ICTY were overwhelmingly positive, with the European

\textsuperscript{1004} In 2011, a Cabinet reshuffle resulted in the removal of several ministers, but the allocated ministries were largely retained among Coalition partners. Two major changes were that the Serbian Prime Minister also became the Minister of Finance, and G17\textsuperscript{+} gained a Deputy Prime Ministerial post.

\textsuperscript{1005} W.C. Thompson, \textit{Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe 2013}, The World Today Series, 13\textsuperscript{th} edn, Lanham, Stryker-Post publications, 2013, p. 444.

\textsuperscript{1006} The appointment of DS party members in senior management roles across the Serbian public sector had been severely criticised by both local and international observers, with the government accused of nepotism and corruption. However, nepotism in employment did not diminish under the SNS-SPS Serbian Government. ‘Nepotizam u Srbiji’, \textit{Al-jazeera Balkan}, 9 June 2013, http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/nepotizam-u-srbiji, (accessed 3 March 2014).

Commission’s President Barroso stating that the arrest was ‘very important for Serbia’s European aspirations’. With this act, the DS-SPS coalition demonstrated its commitment to develop better working relationship with the ICTY and by doing so, came closer to fulfilling its ambition to integrate Serbia deeper with the EU.

Three interviewees from the European Commission’s delegation in Belgrade all noted that the high-profile arrests of ICTY indictees by the DS-SPS ruling coalition and the domestic trials of lower ranking officials restored the EU’s confidence in the Serbian Government’s willingness to proceed down its European integration path. However, two of the three also remarked that this was not enough to convince more sceptical voices in the EU regarding Serbia’s willingness to fulfil political conditionality. An equally important test was, in their view, Serbia’s approach to the Kosovo issue after its independence, in particular to the north where Serbia supported parallel institutions but did not have an autonomous oversight over the border with Kosovo.

In September 2008, Serbia held several rounds of high-level discussions in Brussels, Paris and Berlin on the future of its relations with the EU. After numerous political deliberations within the UN framework on the Kosovo question, the Serbian Government adopted a decision in December 2008 to support the EULEX deployment. After the Serbian National Assembly ratified the SAA agreement the Serbian Government decided to voluntarily initiate the implementation of the interim trade agreement in January 2009. This action involved a gradual

1008 ibid.
1009 Interviews with the European Commission Officials in Belgrade, 2011 (see Appendix 2). The lack of adequate border management later became a focus of the EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia due to a rising asylum-seeker problem in which Serbia was the transit country for illegal migration into the EU.
liberalisation schedule (over six years) to assist Serbian industrial and agricultural producers prepare for trade competition from the EU.⁸¹¹

Serbia’s national allocation under IPA funding for 2009 was €194.8 million, which represented a slight increase from the previous year when Serbia received €190.9 million.⁸¹² Due to the economic crisis, Serbia received exceptional budgetary support of €100 million and also benefited from an IPA crisis package for the Western Balkans.⁸¹³ In addition, Serbian participation in several cultural, employment, customs and research programs was also co-financed by the EU. The EU praised Serbia’s Law on Political Parties of May 2009, which made stricter rules for registration and would reduce the number of parties that were only created for taxation and other non-political purposes.⁸¹⁴

In July 2009, the European Commission recommended lifting the visa obligation for Serbian citizens, subject to ‘Serbia meeting the outstanding criteria before the Council of the EU takes its decision, after consultation of the European Parliament’.⁸¹⁵ In September 2009, Serbia and EULEX signed a protocol on police cooperation. The European Commission’s annual progress report for Serbia noted:

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³⁸¹⁴ ibid., p. 7.
³⁸¹⁵ ibid., p. 5.
As a potential candidate for EU membership, Serbia aligned itself with 93 Common Foreign and Security Policy declarations from a total of 128 relevant declarations adopted by the EU during the reporting period.\(^{1016}\)

This type of assessment of Serbia’s alignment with EU policies, which was not present in the previous report, meant that the EU had started to take note of Serbia’s actual alignment with the EU’s common foreign policy declarations in international forums. However, Serbia’s historical relationship with Russia was certainly of interest to many in the EU. During his visit to the European Parliament in early November 2009, Serbian Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremić, confirmed that link:

> As for Russia, we have a historical relation which goes back centuries. We have the same alphabet, we share the same faith. We are culturally very close, we have been partners and allies in world conflicts and today Russia is also an important supporter when it comes to our diplomatic efforts to defend our territory and sovereignty. … And I think one day when Serbia joins the EU, Serbia can help improve the understanding between Russia and the EU.\(^{1017}\)

Serbian politicians, therefore, stressed their country’s uniqueness by referring to its political relationship with Russia, which received a further boost during the DS-SPS Government in the energy sector, and in trade.\(^{1018}\)

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On 30 November 2009, the Council of the EU published a document on visa liberalisation for selected Western Balkan countries, which was the legal basis for visa liberalisation with Serbia. The Council made this decision despite fears among some member states about the potential for an influx of asylum seekers from these countries into the EU. On 19 December 2009 (the revered St Nicholas Day in Serbia) the EU lifted its visa requirement for Serbs travelling for three months or less to Schengen area countries (EU-27 without Ireland and the UK). During the last fortnight of the Swedish Presidency of the EU, Serbia formally applied for EU membership on 22 December 2009. In February 2010, the Interim Agreement on Trade-related matters entered into force, following the Council’s recommendation of 7 December 2009 advising the Commission to start preparations for the entry into force of this agreement.

**Political debates over Srebrenica**

On 31 March 2010, the Serbian Parliament adopted a landmark motion on Srebrenica after thirteen hours of debate, which demonstrated the divisiveness of this issue among Serbian political parties. The DS initiated public debate on Srebrenica in January 2010, which bitterly divided Serbian political parties, including the democrats, because it put the spotlight on Serbia’s role in one of the most brutal episodes of violence during the 1990s. The importance of bringing about a resolution on this issue was regarded as the first step in Serbia’s official recognition of past crimes committed by Serbs during the Bosnian war. It was also

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important for ‘regaining a positive reputation and credibility abroad’. As one researcher observed:

*Srebrenica* not only became a symbol, but also a veritable buzzword that stirred up and polarized the Serbian population.\(^\text{1022}\)

The public and political parties were divided on the proposed motion, which would condemn crimes committed against Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in July 1995. As a leading civil society organisation in Serbia, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, observed in February 2010:

The dilemma still remains in Serbia’s predominant political and intellectual circles antagonizing the West and Europe. Playing on its huge influence on the public sphere and the support from a considerable part of the media, this conservative bloc insists on the country’s geostrategic orientation that does not imply the stance about Europe without an alternative.\(^\text{1023}\)

The SRS and the DSS proposed an alternative view of Serbia’s foreign policy, believing that Serbia’s future should not lie with the EU but in regional political neutrality, closer relations with Russia and economic self-sufficiency. The most serious divisions on Srebrenica among political parties emerged between the DSS and the coalition government, while several other opposition parties, including the SNS, argued that crimes against Serbs should have been


\(^{1022}\) ibid., p. 131.

condemned in the same document. Although the declaration described the killings of Bosniaks as a massacre rather than as genocide; its adoption was regarded as an important step in regional reconciliation and a positive sign for Serbia’s EU accession. Serbian civil society groups, including the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, cautioned that Serbia’s commitment would be fully demonstrated with the arrests of the remaining indictees. Professor Slobodan Samardžić from the DSS condemned the Srebrenica declaration, which, in his view, singled out Serbian crimes rather than condemning all crimes committed by all sides in the former Yugoslavia. Branko Ružić from the SPS observed that Serbia had with this resolution finally become a ‘transformed nation’. This was, overall, a bold step in regional reconciliation efforts, which was recognised as such by many EU members. Domestically, the DS started to be seen as putting European integration at the forefront of public debate to avoid discussions about pressing economic issues, including declining living standards in Serbia and increasing poverty.

On 14 June 2010, the Council decided to start the SAA ratification process with Serbia, which effectively unblocked Serbia’s road towards EU accession. The ICJ’s decision of July 2010, which stated that Kosovo’s independence proclamation was not in contradiction of international law, further weakened the Serbian Government’s position on the Kosovo issue in

1025 ibid.
1026 ibid.
1027 ibid.
1028 ibid. In 2009 and 2010, Serbia’s Deputy PM, Ivica Dačić from the SPS, received awards for his commitment to Serbia’s European integration, which was another sign that Milošević’s former party (SPS) was transformed. In August 2013, Ružić assumed the function of ‘Minister without Portfolio’, who was in charge of Serbia’s European integration.
international forums, despite Russia’s support. Although the ICJ opinion was not binding, supporters of Kosovo’s independence believed this decision was a historic opportunity for Serbia and Kosovo to establish bilateral relations, and ‘unblock their paths to greater European Union integration’. The President of Kosovo hailed the ICJ’s opinion, using the opportunity of that occasion to thank ‘the US, the EU and all other democratic countries’ that played a ‘unique role in assisting Kosovo’.

On 19 January 2011, the European Parliament ratified the SAA, which meant that it was up to individual EU members to ratify the agreement before it could enter into force. On 31 January 2011, Serbia replied to the European Commission’s complex questionnaire. The arrest of Ratko Mladić on 26 May 2011 was a clear sign that Serbia was committed to fulfilling the ICTY conditionality. On 12 October 2011, the European Commissioned granted Serbia official candidate status based on one key priority—further progress in the development of relations with Priština. Upon fulfilment of this priority, the European Council confirmed Serbia as a candidate country on 1 March 2012. However, this positive outcome in EU-Serbia relations was not enough to keep the DS-SPS Coalition in power, as the results of the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections would show.

1033 The DS-SPS Government was not in power when the SAA finally entered into force, after the last ratification by Lithuania occurred on 18 June 2013.
1034 The election outcome will be explained in the next and final chapter of this thesis.
Public opinion polls in Serbia and the EU

While public opinion polling in Serbia, especially in terms of attitudes towards the rest of the world, is a relatively new phenomenon, the EU has on the contrary conducted its Eurobaromber surveys of attitudes since 1973. Selected in-depth public opinion surveys from 2009 and 2010, as well as another set of survey results from the Serbian European Integration Office (SEIO) have demonstrated the changing attitudes of people in Serbia towards the EU, from large support to below-majority support levels. One shortcoming of the Eurobarometer reports is that only a few reports have specifically dealt with individual EU membership applicants. One shortcoming of the Gallup reports is that full data sets are not publicly available, and subsequent surveys have not always covered the same span of options when asking the questions.

Public opinion surveys in Serbia

The results of a Serbian public opinion poll show that public support for Serbia’s EU accession dropped considerably during the DS-SPS coalition government between mid-2008 and mid-2012. This was the case despite the diplomatic success of this pro-EU Serbian Government in securing a place for Serbia on the white Schengen list, which meant that for the first time in

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1035 This is particularly true for so-called Old member states (EU-15) where public opposition to further enlargement and/or Serbia’s accession in particular is high, as will be shown later in this chapter with data from the Eurobarometer reports.

1036 Unlike the 2010 report, the 2009 Balkan Gallup report for Serbia did not have ‘military’ as an option under ‘institutions’ in which respondents were asked to rate their level of trust. This inconsistency makes it somewhat more difficult to compare the results on a year-to-year basis. Furthermore, Balkan Gallup reports are available for 2009 and 2010 only. The Gallup reports are an initiative of the European Fund for the Balkans, and are available in the public domain and on selected themes only for the years of 2008–2010. ‘Reports: Balkan Monitor’, Gallup, http://www.balkan-monitor.eu/index.php/reports, (accessed 1 March 2014).

nine years since Serbia’s regime change, Serbian citizens with biometric passports were able to travel visa-free to Schengen countries for a specific duration of time. The DS-SPS Government also successfully negotiated Serbia’s formal candidacy for EU membership in 2012. One clue to public sentiment can be found in the *Gallup* opinion polls, which were conducted in Serbia in that period.

At the time of parliamentary elections in May 2008, the majority of Serbian citizens supported Serbia’s European accession (67 per cent were for, 12 per cent against).\(^{1038}\) In June 2012, just after Serbia’s parliamentary, presidential and local elections, support among the respondents for Serbia’s EU membership fell below half (49 per cent), while one in four respondents (25 per cent) were against it, as per results from surveys presented on the next page.\(^{1039}\)

\(^{1038}\) In May 2008, which was the month of the parliamentary elections in Serbia, 67 per cent of respondents said they would vote were in favour of Serbia’s EU accession, while 12 per cent said they were against Serbia’s membership of the EU. Republic of Serbia, ‘European orientation of the Serbian citizens: trends’, SEIO, June 2011, slide 3, http://www.seio.gov.rs/upload/documents/nacionalna_dokumenta/istrazivanja_javnog_mnjenja/javno_mnjenje_jun_2011.pdf, (accessed 8 May 2014).

Another report published by the *Gallup* in late 2009 found that most respondents were pessimistic about the economic situation and the Serbian Government’s ‘general policy direction’. The report also found that the institutions respondents trusted most were religious organisations (67 per cent). It is for this reason, therefore, that discourses which the Serbian Orthodox Church disseminates regarding the EU may influence the public opinion in Serbia. This was almost double the result for trust in national government (35 per cent),

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1040 This chart was prepared by the author, as per the previous footnote.
1042 According to the *World Factbook*, 84.6 per cent of people in Serbia identify as ‘Serbian Orthodox’, 5 per cent as Catholic, and 3.1 per cent as Muslim. CIA, ‘Serbia’, op. cit.
1043 The position of the Serbian Orthodox Church tends to be sceptical on the question of whether Serbia should join the EU, especially in a scenario that the Serbian Government was put under pressure from some EU members to recognise Kosovo as an independent state before it can join the EU. Individual positions of key religious figures within the Church also may vary. Any criticism towards the Church regarding its conservative stance on Serbia’s European integration is interpreted by the conservatives in the Serbian society as an attack on Serbian ‘national identity’, understood in this view to be inseparable from Serbia’s Christian Orthodox traditions. This normative debate extended into the realm of politics and religious minority rights, which are not the subject of this thesis. For critical views regarding the Church’s alleged negative influence on Serbia’s European integration process, see M. Matić, ‘Atak na evropsku budućnost Srbije’, *E-novine.com*, 3 June 2014, http://www.e-novine.com/srbija/srbija-tema/104410-Atak-evropsku-budunost-Srbije.html (accessed 4 June 2014). M. Vukomanović, ‘O čemu crkva (ne)može da se pita’, *Peščanik*, 17 July 2005, http://pescanik.net/2005/07/o-cemu-crkva-nemoze-da-se-pita/, (accessed 4 June 2014). For a positive view regarding the Church’s influence on Serbia’s European integration, see G. Živković, ‘Evropska unija i
which was trusted even less than EU institutions (40 per cent). The Serbian respondents were most distrustful of NATO (15 per cent). Many Serbs continue to view NATO in negative light, supporting to the Serbian Government’s policy of military neutrality. Some groups in Serbia tend to associate membership of NATO with EU accession, citing that all new EU members from Central and Eastern Europe first became NATO members before joining the EU. Therefore, when the Euro-Atlantic component of Serbia’s foreign and defence policy is emphasised, Serbian public opinion appears to be less supportive of Serbia’s European integration.

The results of the 2010 Balkan Monitor report showed a drop in Serbian public support for the EU. Less than a majority of citizens (44 per cent) believed that the EU was a ‘good thing’ for Serbia, which represents a decrease of 6 per cent from the previous year. At the same time, only 41 per cent of interviewed respondents believed that Serbia would be welcomed into the EU. Respondents in Serbia in 2010 trusted the military the most (74 per cent), then religious organisations (66 per cent), EU institutions (43 percent), the judicial system (38 per cent) and the national government (35 per cent).
When asked which countries made it harder for Serbia to negotiate with the EU, the majority of respondents identified the Netherlands (33 per cent), then Germany (11 per cent) and the UK (11 per cent). This might indicate that there is an awareness among the Serbian respondents regarding the problematic partners issue in Serbia’s efforts to join the EU. This awareness might have been informed by the reporting of ‘sticks’ from the EU and the Serbian Government’s disappointment regarding Serbia’s membership bid, which always became an overly-politicised issue in Serbian politics.  

Each time that an EU member would block the EU’s talks with Serbia, which delayed Serbia’s further European integration, this would receive extensive media coverage in Serbia, which tended to be overly focused on criticism rather than on how Serbia could improve its prospects to join the EU.

**Public opinion in the EU**

In 2006, the EU conducted a public opinion survey called *Special Eurobarometer report (EBR) 255* in order to investigate the levels of public support for further enlargement, including for countries from the Western Balkans. In that report, Serbia and Montenegro were treated as a single entity, although the Montenegrin Government was at that stage preparing for a referendum on independence. The surveyed EU citizens indicated that the main future challenges for EU hopefuls included respect for human rights; inclusion of minority groups; reconciliation/cooperation with neighbouring countries, and challenges related to democratic governance.

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1051 Ibid., p. 63.
Survey results indicated that support among twenty five EU members (EU-25) for further enlargement was 45 per cent, while opposition to it was 43 per cent, which shows that on the eve of further enlargement (that was to include Bulgaria and Romania in 2007), EU public opinion was quite divided.\textsuperscript{1052} Specifically for Serbia and Montenegro, support for their EU membership was 47 per cent, while opposition stood at 33 per cent.\textsuperscript{1053} Countries which most opposed Serbia and Montenegro’s EU membership were Austria (65 per cent), followed by Luxembourg (57 per cent), Germany (55 per cent) and Italy (45 per cent), where opposition outweighed support for accession.\textsuperscript{1054} In the EU, opposition to further enlargement increased between 2008 and 2012, as the chart produced from data extracted from annual Eurobarometer reports shows below.

Chart 6: EU citizens’ support for enlargement\textsuperscript{1055}

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\end{center}

\textsuperscript{1052} ibid., p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{1053} ibid., p. 67–68.  
\textsuperscript{1054} ibid., p. 68.  
\textsuperscript{1055} This chart was prepared by the author from multi-annual Eurobarometer reports from 2008 to 2012.
Between the EBR 67 and the EBR 78, public support for further enlargement declined from 49 per cent to 38 per cent respectively.\textsuperscript{1056} During the same period, opposition to EU enlargement increased from 39 per cent to 52 per cent respectively.\textsuperscript{1057} There were also several trends to emerge from the survey results. One trend that came to light in reports 67 to 78 was that support for further enlargement was significantly higher among those states which acceded since 2004 (‘new members’), than among older EU members (EU-15).\textsuperscript{1058} Another trend that emerged was that those EU citizens who trusted the EU more tended to support further EU enlargement more. Generally, the lowest levels of support for further enlargement were found in Austria, Luxembourg and Germany.

The Eurobarometer report 69 specifically mentioned countries from the Western Balkans, and more EU citizens were against Serbia’s potential membership (47 per cent) than were supportive of it (38 per cent).\textsuperscript{1059} Another report (EBR 71) found that age was a ‘significant factor’ in attitudes towards enlargement, as just over a third of respondents aged 55+ were in favour of it (34 per cent), compared to more than half of those aged 15–24 (57 per cent).\textsuperscript{1060} Furthermore, education beyond the age of 19 was also demonstrated to correlate with positive


\textsuperscript{1057} ibid.


attitudes to enlargement.\textsuperscript{1061} People who stayed at home or who were retired were more doubtful of further enlargement.\textsuperscript{1062} Similar broad trends were found in subsequent reports. An overall decline in support for EU membership across the EU was a particularly worrying trend for the Serbian Government, as much as other candidate states.\textsuperscript{1063}

**Prelude to the Serbian elections: the Kosovo challenge**

This trend of low public support in the EU for further enlargement (‘enlargement fatigue’) was discouraging for the DS-SPS Government, which had worked hard to meet many of the conditions set by the EU—even at the expense of domestic unpopularity. This was particularly relevant to Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY—the fulfilment of which was the major condition for further progress in the accession negotiations. Despite the initial scepticism of many international and local observers regarding the SPS’s role in the Serbian Government, for the first time since Milošević was overthrown in 2000, the SPS showed a serious political desire to cooperate with international justice institutions. Ivica Dačić worked on overcoming domestic institutional challenges that prevented previous attempts at arresting Serbian indictees at large.\textsuperscript{1064} By August 2011, Serbia had extradited all remaining indictees at large to the ICTY, which cleared what was previously regarded as the primary obstacle to its EU candidacy.\textsuperscript{1065}

\textsuperscript{1061} The report states that ‘Students and those who had studied beyond the age of 19 were most likely to support further enlargement of the EU, recording 61 per cent and 47 per cent respectively’. ibid., p. 161.

\textsuperscript{1062} This category reported 35 per cent for both supporters and opponents of further enlargement.

\textsuperscript{1063} Interestingly, a survey conducted in Serbia in 2014 also found that people with higher levels of education exhibited more positive views about the EU. Ninamedia Research, ‘Život u Srbiji–izazovi i mogućnosti’, op. cit., p. 6.

\textsuperscript{1064} First Deputy Prime Minister, Ivica Dačić, had also been the Minister of Interior Affairs since July 2008.

When the German Chancellor visited Serbia in August 2011, she delivered a set of ‘tough conditions’, urging Serbs to dismantle ‘parallel institutions’ in North Kosovo. Such a strong position by Germany indicated that this EU member was willing to play a more assertive role in regional affairs in the Western Balkans, by putting pressure on Serbia to show a greater flexibility towards the Kosovo issue. This demand, which is also known as the Kosovo conditionality, had become another major hurdle for Serbia’s European integration process. This ran counter to Serbia’s international diplomatic efforts which were focused, after Kosovo proclaimed independence, on countering its international recognition, particularly through its contacts inside the NAM. Serbia’s outspoken Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremić, was particularly active in this area, referring to Kosovo as ‘Serbia’s Jerusalem’ and using his political influence and diplomatic skills to convince other countries not to recognise Kosovo as an independent state. The Kosovo issue thus indirectly led the Serbian Government and diplomats to create a more active policy towards the NAM countries.

Serbia’s inflexibility regarding Kosovo’s participation in regional forums for the most part during the DS-SPS Government also backfired as it resulted in Serbia’s self-imposed absence from many important regional meetings to which Kosovo representatives were also invited. Serbia’s diplomatic efforts resulted in a delay in Kosovo attaining membership of many international and regional organisations. This policy triggered backlash against Serbia amongst

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1068 The intensity of Serbia’s diplomatic attempts to block Kosovo’s recognition could be compared to China-Taiwan diplomatic struggles and lobbying attempts for recognition over last two decades.

supporters of Kosovo’s independence (particularly in EU members like Germany) which were ardent supporters of an independent, law-abiding and European Kosovo.\textsuperscript{1070}

Domestically, members of the Serbian Government were also facing allegations of corruption. In \emph{Transparency International}’s 2011 corruption perception index, Serbia was ranked 86\textsuperscript{th} out of 183, the place it shared with Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{1071} In the year before, Serbia was ranked 78\textsuperscript{th} out of 178 countries, which meant that from 2010 to 2011 public perceptions of corruption in Serbia had perceptibly increased.\textsuperscript{1072} The European Commission closely monitored corruption issues in Serbia, noting that progress in prosecuting corruption cases, especially high-level cases, had been particularly slow during the DS-SPS Government.\textsuperscript{1073} This could have been the case, in part, because the Serbian Government was focused too much on the Kosovo issue.

After Kosovo declared independence, Serbian government officials sought to counter international recognition of Kosovo by UN members whilst attempting to put the Kosovo issue back into the UN’s framework as the principal reference point. Serbia’s outspoken Foreign Minister, Vuk Jeremić, was especially active in this area, whose attitude of vigorously trying to convince other countries that Kosovo should remain within Serbia triggered resentment amongst many Western diplomats and supporters of Kosovo’s independence from Serbia,

\textsuperscript{1070} Interview with European Commission officials, Brussels, May 2012.
\textsuperscript{1071} Of other candidates and potential candidates for EU accession, Bosnia-Herzegovina (91\textsuperscript{st} spot), Albania (95\textsuperscript{th} spot) and Kosovo (112\textsuperscript{th} spot) scored worse that Serbia. Transparency International, ‘Corruption perception index 2011’, http://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/results, (accessed 17 May 2013).
especially in Germany. Despite the fact that the European Commission delivered a positive opinion (to the Council and European Parliament) on Serbia’s membership application on 12 October 2011, opposition from Germany delayed further progress in EU-Serbia relations. As in the situation in which the SFRJ was at loggerheads with West Germany before 1967, Germany’s verdict on further progress in the EU’s deepening relationship with Serbia was critical. Germany’s pivotal contributions to the EU budget and the Bundestag’s increased parliamentary input following the Treaty of Lisbon’s entry into force indicated that Germany was willing to play a more active role by specifying new agendas in the EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia.\footnote{1074}

This was despite the fact that the DS-SPS Government worked hard to meet the EU’s ICTY conditionality—the fulfilment of which was key to unlocking Serbia’s accession negotiations, particularly with the Netherlands.\footnote{1075} Even though the European Commission delivered a positive opinion or avis to the Council and the European Parliament on Serbia’s membership application on 12 October 2011—which was a major milestone in Serbia’s European integration—Germany’s opposition interrupted this progress at the December Council meeting.\footnote{1076} Germany’s assent regarding further progress in the EU’s deepening relationship with Serbia was becoming of critical importance although it was concerned with Serbia’s relationship with Kosovo rather than with Germany itself.\footnote{1077}

\footnote{1074} Amongst other things, the Treaty of Lisbon increased the powers of national parliaments in decision-making in many areas of common foreign policy action, especially enlargement.
\footnote{1075} The Netherlands was especially insisting that this obligation be met, although the Dutch Government later dropped its veto and unblocked Serbia’s membership bid (in October 2010) despite the fact that Serbia did not deliver by that stage all indictees at large. I. Traynor, ‘Serbia moves a step closer to joining EU’, 26 October 2010, www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/25/eu-ministers-serbia-membership, (accessed 20 May 2013).
\footnote{1077} N. Marković, ‘Nemački ovčar i balkanski tvor: uloga Nemačke u procesima evropskih integracija Republike Srbije’, Sveske, no. 103, March 2012, pp. 34–44.
By specifically linking regional cooperation conditionality in relation to the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue with the process of Serbia’s European integration (EU-Serbia relations), the EU’s actions with Germany at its helm on this issue indicated several things. It indicated that support for Serbia’s non-compromising position on the Kosovo issue and Serbia’s insistence on UNSCR 1244 had little, if any support among EU members. It also left the impression that Germany would take a lead role in the enlargement policy. It also signalled that Germany’s political weight on this issue was significant and that it wanted Serbia to conclude specific agreements with Kosovo in order to allow Kosovo to negotiate a new SAA with the EU. It also showed that Germany pressured Serbia to conduct a high-level dialogue with Kosovo leaders, which, under the DS-SPS Government, appeared to be unrealistic.

Diplomatic pressure from Germany compelled the Serbian Government to eventually show more flexibility on the question of Kosovo’s regional representation. Germany’s pressure represented ‘sticks’, or a coercive diplomatic strategy within the EU’s conditionality framework. As discussed in previous chapters, apart from rewards (‘carrots’) or closer cooperation/engagement, political conditionality relies on ‘sticks’ for enforcement in the form of delays in decisions, warnings, punishments, sanctions or other coercive methods. Germany’s diplomatic pressure hence yielded some positive results with regard to the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, as it pressured the Serbian Government to think outside its normative framework about the region’s future in its technical dialogue with Priština. It also signalled to Serbia that if its leaders wanted their country to join the EU club, they had to be more willing to compromise on the Kosovo issue. But the Serbian Government was worried about a domestic backlash if it were to initiate any direct dialogue with the Kosovo Government. This inflexible

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1078 The German Government’s attitude also reflected sensitivities to domestic politics in Germany, in particular low levels of public support for further EU enlargement after Croatia joined the EU.
position by the Serbian Government was at odds with the EU’s preference for a unified and coherent regional approach regarding European integration of the entire Western Balkans.

The shift in primary focus within the EU’s political conditionality from Serbia’s cooperation with the ICTY (which was for most part completed) to ‘normalisation of relations with Kosovo’, had the consequence of alienating many Serbs from supporting DS policies. This development also encouraged right-wing groups in Serbia to intensify their support for Serbs in northern Kosovo, where a major security incident in late November 2011 left several German and Austrian peacekeepers injured. Serbia’s standing in EU circles was diminished as a result of this incident.1079 On 2 December 2011, Serbia reached an integrated border management agreement with the Kosovo authorities under EU auspices.1080 Despite this diplomatic success for the EU, Serbia’s European integration was slowing down, once again. On the same day (2 December), the German Chancellor told the German Parliament ahead of a major EU meeting on 5 December:

Since Serbia had not sufficiently lived up to expectations of normalising its relations with Kosovo—its only path towards the EU—the conditions for granting it candidate status are lacking.1081

Germany believed that violent clashes in Kosovo indicated that Serbia was not ready as yet for the candidate status. This ran against the European Commission’s recommendation to grant

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1080 This agreement was reached during the 8th round of technical dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo under EU auspices. The Kosovo prime minister’s press release stated that ‘by accepting the agreement, Serbia has in practice recognised the inter-state border with Kosovo’. The Republic of Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister, ‘Press release—The eighth round of technical dialogue is concluded’, 3 December 2011, http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/?page=2,9,2541, (accessed 1 March 2014).
Serbia the EU candidature. The European Council on 8–9 December 2011 did not grant candidate status to Serbia, prompting the resignation of the Serbian Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for EU accession, Božidar Đelić. This was discussed later in the European Parliament. A Member of the European Parliament, Adrian Severin, observed:

The postponement of the decision, contrary to the EU’s own assessment, has therefore caused a political crisis in Belgrade, which is likely to confirm the Serbian Eurosceptics’ thesis that the pro-European policy of the current Serbian Government and President Tadić has failed.

The EU’s decision to delay giving a candidate status to Serbia was undoubtedly a significant diplomatic blow to the DS-SPS Government. Serbia’s largest opposition party, the SNS, was at the same time putting additional pressure on the government by calling for early parliamentary elections and the President’s resignation. Many people in Serbia also resented President Tadić (who was also President of the DS), associating him with the economic policies of the DS-SPS government that have resulted (directly or indirectly) in Serbia’s unemployment rate to reach 24 per cent. Tadić was, nonetheless, actively involved in promoting Serbia’s cooperative image with the EU abroad, and was for this reason seen as a reliable partner by many in the West.

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Conclusion

Serbia’s engagement with the EU was expanded under the DS-SPS Government. The Socialists (SPS) proved themselves to be reformists, who advocated Serbia’s European integration. Their leader and Deputy Prime Minister, Ivica Dačić, became one of the key powerbrokers in Belgrade-Priština negotiations under EU auspices. The fact that Serbia’s two most influential political parties shared a similar view regarding Serbia’s European integration provided greater stability to the coalition government enabling it to govern for a full term, which was not the case with previous democratic governments. However, the DS’s inflexibility on the Kosovo issue became a challenge for Serbia’s negotiations with the EU. This could have been in part the reason why the EU was looking at other potential partners for dialogue in Serbian politics, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter.

The national discourses in Serbia regarding European integration became even more polarised after the parliamentary elections of May 2008, as rifts among democrats intensified. The key division was between a group of political parties whose leaders wished to see Serbia not continuing accession negotiations but rather becoming politically neutral, and those who saw Serbia’s future closely integrated within Euro-Atlantic structures (EU and NATO). Both sides of this debate resorted to appeals to history to justify their positions. This period in Serbian politics also saw the rise of the radical right, which gradually became a challenge to the government and promoted anti-EU and pro-Russia political discourses in the public discursive space. Although the EU lent some support to the coalition government in the next elections, the rise of the SNS with a pro-EU outlook provided a challenge to the DS’s influence in Serbian politics.
After three of Serbia’s most important indictees at large were delivered to the ICTY (Radovan Karadžić in July 2008, Ratko Mladić in May 2011 and Goran Hadžić in July 2011), Serbia put itself in a good position to be granted candidate status at the Council’s summit in December 2011. However, EU citizens were showing even greater signs of enlargement fatigue (as evident from declining public support for further EU expansion in Eurobarometer reports). Some EU members where the unease about new accessions was amongst the highest in the EU, such as The Netherlands, started to highlight other issues (for instance, corruption) that risked further delaying Serbia’s progress in European integration. The EU’s political conditionality approach towards Serbia seems to have worked with respect to cooperation with the Hague tribunal and in speeding up Serbia’s legal reforms (for example, hundreds of new legal regulations were passed to harmonise Serbia’s legal system with the EU under the DS-SPS Government). It also encouraged more regional cooperation between Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular.\textsuperscript{1086} However, the EU’s enlargement fatigue, and possibly, the enhanced Serbian cooperation with Russia (including a free-trade agreement, new loans and the acquisition by Russians of majority stakes in Serbian energy companies) probably encouraged EU member states to seek more pro-EU commitment from Serbia.

Meanwhile, the Serbian Government demanded through its diplomatic representation in key EU capitals firm proof of the EU’s seriousness about its integration, such as a specific date for the accession negotiations.\textsuperscript{1087} The strong focus on the ‘date’ for Serbia’s accession talks was

\textsuperscript{1086} Interview with the President of the Serbian National Assembly, Slavica Dukić-Dejanović, Belgrade, June 2010.

also evident in fieldwork interviews, where this topic seemed to be given more prominence than the quality of reforms or the implementation of new, EU-compatible laws in Serbia.\textsuperscript{1088}

Although the Western Balkans remained an area of ‘unfinished business’ for the EU, other priorities such as the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the development of the EU’s diplomatic arm (the European External Action Service), alongside pressing economic issues, were probably higher on the EU’s agenda. Additional political conditionality, provided alongside approval of Serbia’s official candidature, could have been, in part, the reason for Serbia’s EU accession fatigue. In Serbia, support for the DS in particular was seriously diminishing. The rise of right-wing political groups was a factor that could not be discounted, as some of these groups were even calling for mass protests against the government. A downward trend of declining intra-EU support for further enlargement and strict conditions in the EU’s political conditionality regarding Kosovo did not improve prospects for Serbia’s EU accession, as the government headed towards the prospect of electoral defeat.

\textsuperscript{1088} Interview with the SEIO’s Deputy Director, and an interview with Serbia’s Deputy Minister for Economic and Regional Development, June 2010.
CHAPTER EIGHT
Back to East/West bridging? EU-Serbia relations under the SNS-SPS coalition

If one considers the currently prevailing scepticism regarding further EU enlargement, it is remarkable that the prospect of a future in the EU is still sufficiently attractive to motivate governments in the Western Balkans to make quite painful concessions. It also confirms the idea that the remaining political and security issues in the Western Balkans can be best resolved if the EU engages actively and if it plays the enlargement card well.  

This chapter analyses developments in recent EU-Serbia relations by assessing major domestic changes and key themes in political debates in Serbia from before the parliamentary election in May 2012, until late May 2014. It assesses the consequences for EU-Serbia relations after a major shift in the Serbian voters’ preferences favoured prominent political actors from the Milošević era. For the first time since Serbia’s democratic breakthrough in 2000, Serbian voters drifted away from supporting key former DOS Coalition members (DS and DSS) towards electing political parties led by politicians who held prominent positions in the Serbian Government in the late 1990s—Nikolić, Vučić and Dačić. The outcomes of the parliamentary (6 May 2012) and presidential elections (6 and 20 May 2012) will be analysed in that context, including the impact of a SNS-SPS Coalition deal on Serbia-Kosovo dialogue within the wider framework of the EU’s political conditionality.  


1090 Under the SNS-SPS coalition, Serbia continued the previous government’s policy of expanding ties with former NAM partners (including in the Middle East and Asia) for trade, investment and general economic development purposes as foreign investment flows from the EU were adversely affected by the financial crisis.
The EU’s mediation role in the Serbia-Kosovo dispute will be assessed in light of new regional agreements. The results of early parliamentary elections in 2014 will also be discussed, as they ensured that the SNS continued governing in coalition with the SPS. The parliamentary election results meant that the SNS-bloc’s electoral success has anchored the consolidation of SNS influence in Serbian politics, and Aleksandar Vučić from the SNS became Serbia’s Prime Minister. The Serbian President (a founder of the SNS but no longer a party member) and Prime Minister (President of the SNS and Prime Minister of Serbia) now share a similar foreign policy outlook, although some analysts believe that Nikolić is strongly pro-Russian, and that Vučić became a pro-EU Serbian politician. Their public statements indicated that Serbia is seeking to find a new balance between East and West, despite its still strategically pivotal European integration course.

Serbia’s problematic partners: The Netherlands and Germany

As mentioned earlier, apart from satisfying the Copenhagen criteria, the European Council decided in the late 1990s that Western Balkan countries needed to meet two additional accession criteria:

- demonstrate willingness to implement regional cooperation with neighbouring states, and

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1091 The Prime Minister in the previous government, Ivica Dačić, became Minister for Foreign Affairs in the second SNS-SPS Government. This was crucial for the continuation of the process of Serbia’s European integration, as Dačić was the lead player in Serbia’s dialogue with Kosovo. His appointment as Foreign Minister was meant to ensure continuity in Serbia’s difficult negotiations with Kosovo under EU auspices.
1092 This previously occurred in 2008 when Tadić (from the DS) was President, and a DS-backed independent candidate became Serbia’s Prime Minister, which provided a source of stability for the government that ruled full term. Nikolić and Vučić frequently downplayed what was reported in the media as personal disagreements, and asserted themselves as speaking with one voice vis-à-vis major international developments, including the situation in Ukraine in which Serbia declared neutrality. I. Novaković, ‘Serbien’, Dialog Südosteuropa, im Zwiespalt Südosteuropa, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2014, p. 13.
• fulfil all their international obligations, including cooperation with the ICTY, the Dayton Peace Accords and UNSCR 1244.

These criteria stem from the particular historical circumstances of post-conflict societies in the Western Balkans. The EU expects countries in that region to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with former political foes in order to resolve any major outstanding issues from the wars of Yugoslav succession, including border issues. This was the EU’s method of promoting reconciliation in the Western Balkans. As one interviewee observed, after Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession, the EU inherited problems from these two countries (including high levels of corruption and delays in reforms) which its institutions found difficult to counter using traditional intergovernmental dialogue, so they had to resort to more coercive diplomatic methods.\(^{1093}\) There was no more political will amongst EU members to accept any new states from the Western Balkans, following Croatia’s entry, unless they were ready to fulfil all specified conditions and demonstrate a full commitment to the political, economic and normative goals, standards and values of the EU.\(^{1094}\)

Values of the EU in the context of Serbia’s European integration imply:

… the acceptance of EU positions and their implementation in passing the laws, strategies and system reforms, as well as consistent alignment with declarations, statements and common foreign policy positions of the EU.\(^{1095}\)

\(^{1093}\) Following Romania’s and Bulgaria’s accession, the EU had to resort to threats of funding cuts in order to motivate the national authorities in these two countries to take further action on battling high-levels of corruption and inefficient governance. V. Pop, ‘Romania, Bulgaria risk more EU aid cuts’, EU Observer, 12 February 2009, http://euobserver.com/justice/27599 (accessed 1 May 2013).

\(^{1094}\) Interview with MEP, Petru Luhan, Canberra, April 2011.

\(^{1095}\) N. Petrović and I. Novaković, From four pillars of foreign policy to European integration: is there a will for strategically orienting Serbia’s foreign policy, International and Security Affairs Centre, ISAC Fund Belgrade, 2013, p. 39.
This is also why the European Commission specifically refers to these additional yet often understated criteria in its annual progress reports for Serbia, and considers them as crucial when devising strategy for further enlargement in the Western Balkans. It is because of these additional criteria that progress in many Western Balkan countries’ European integration has been delayed.\footnote{These criteria were not required of Central and East European countries during the 1990s. They were specific to post-conflict states in the Western Balkans to demonstrate their progress in addressing specific issues arising from their recent history of conflict.}

Uvalić notes that often, the criteria relating to compliance with international obligations have been used:

\[\ldots\text{ in an arbitrary way, depending on the opinion of individual experts or }\ldots\text{ regarding Serbia, of the position of one country [the Netherlands].}\footnote{Uvalić, \textit{Serbia’s transition}, 2010, op. cit., pp. 228; 236.}

However, the outcome from all integration processes with the EU has historically been dependent upon positive resolution of any major bilateral dispute it had with any EU member. As reiterated in earlier chapters, this is because of the principle of unanimity, as enlargement is a policy area in which the consent of all EU members is required before a candidate can join.\footnote{In addition, parliamentary ratification is needed for the SAA.} Such was the case with the UK’s application that was blocked for years under a French veto until their bilateral relationship improved, as described in Chapter Two. Similarly, the SFRJ’s relations with the EU were formalised only after the Yugoslav Government made a breakthrough in its dispute with West Germany in late 1967. For such breakthroughs to happen, it sometimes takes a change of leadership in the EU member state blocking closer relations, or an alteration in the domestic policies of the state seeking closer ties. Although the criteria for
joining the EU are far more complex today for the Western Balkan states than was the case for Europe’s post-communist hopefuls in the 1990s, the regional cooperation requirement has many advantages, such as bringing about a quicker resolution to arbitration cases.\textsuperscript{1099} The Kosovo issue for Serbia is, therefore, a major test of the EU’s foreign policy effectiveness, of its diplomatic capability, and of its broader policy of enlargement in the Western Balkans.

A delay in the EU’s decision to grant Serbia formal candidacy status in December 2011, at Germany’s insistence, weakened the position of the DS before the elections.\textsuperscript{1100} One explanation usually offered for Germany’s comparatively tougher position towards Serbia than for EU candidates in previous rounds is a strongly felt enlargement fatigue, and a perception that Serbia did not come to terms with the wartime crimes conducted during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{1101} It is important to note here that Germany’s sensitivities regarding the question of dealing with one’s wartime or criminal past have been affected not only by the concerns of its citizens, which were increasingly sceptical about further enlargement, but also by its own historical legacy. Germany’s experience of having to deal with historical baggage, and the issues of guilt and remorse after the Second World War has most likely played a role in its treatment of Serbia.\textsuperscript{1102}

\textsuperscript{1099} For example, the EU mediated in a border dispute between Croatia and Slovenia before the former’s EU accession could go forward. The compromise agreement reached between these states with EU mediation allowed Croatia to move faster towards EU membership after the dispute was settled. In addition, Croatia was required to improve its cooperation with the ICTY before it was admitted into the EU. For details, see A. Geddes and A. Taylor, ‘Those who knock on Europe’s door must repent? Bilateral border disputes and EU enlargement’, KFG working paper, no. 54, Free University Berlin, 2013, http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/kfgeu/kfgwp/wpseries/WorkingPaperKFG_54.pdf, (accessed 1 March 2014).
\textsuperscript{1101} France regarded Germany as an enemy before the creation of the Coal and Steel Community, yet the Soviet threat and shifts in their domestic circumstances allowed both countries to develop higher levels of trust and cooperation in the 1950s.
\textsuperscript{1102} This separate subject of inquiry necessitates further research in order to establish a clearer connection between Germany’s conditionality towards Serbia and Germany’s experiences of coming to terms with its own wartime past.
Germany’s criticism of Serbia’s reform process and the previously outlined delay in Serbia’s negotiations with the EU represented a significant diplomatic blow to the Serbian Government. At the same time, Serbia’s largest opposition party, the SNS, was calling on the President to resign. According to data collected by the Serbian European Integration Office, in December 2011 support for Serbia’s EU membership was 51 per cent, and the public opposition to this prospect was 28 per cent. When compared to the polling results from May 2008 (67 per cent for and 12 per cent against), the public sentiment against Serbia’s EU membership significantly increased between 2008 and 2011.1103

An agreement (‘asterisk agreement’) was reached between Serbia and Kosovo on 24 February 2012 during the 9th round since the technical negotiations began in March 2011. The agreement stipulated that the name ‘Kosovo*’(with an asterisk) will be the only denomination to be used and the footnote to be applied to the asterisk will read: ‘This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with the UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence’.1104 This was a compromise solution as Serbia insisted on upholding UNSC 1244 in a strict sense, despite Kosovo’s independence proclamation having received a further boost from the ICJ Opinion. The asterisk agreement enabled Kosovo to participate in regional forums more regularly and without diplomatic protests and walkouts by Serbian officials.

On 28 February 2012, EU Foreign Ministers formally endorsed the European Commission’s avis on Serbia’s candidacy, thereby clearing the final hurdle for the issue to be considered by

the Council. On 1 March 2012, the Council confirmed Serbia as an official candidate for EU membership. This was a major milestone for Serbia, which enables it to have access to more pre-accessions funds. Its success was a tribute to the DS-SPS Government’s efforts to secure Serbia’s spot in the queue towards EU membership. The confirmation of Serbia’s official candidate status opened up opportunities for further reform, and for benefits reserved for formal candidates under specific conditions.

The EU’s decision was seen in Serbia as the government’s diplomatic success, which emboldened President Tadić to resign ten months earlier than expected, and announce the holding of early presidential elections on the same day as parliamentary and local elections. This move was supposed to provide a boost to his party’s electoral prospects. However, others thought that this move in the middle of an electoral campaign for Serbia’s legislative elections had the potential to increase dissatisfaction among many voters, and possibly contribute to blank votes and voting abstention as a form of social protest. These latter observations proved to be correct, as the number of blank voting papers doubled from the 2008 elections. This showed the Serbian public’s dissatisfaction not only with the government but also with the options it was facing at the ballot box.

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1106 In the 2012 elections, blank votes constituted 4.3 per cent in the presidential and 4.19 per cent in the Serbian parliamentary elections. ‘Kreativni, a nevažeći: Prisetimo se za koga je Srbija glasala na prošlim izborima’, Eizbori.com, 13 February 2014, http://eizbori.com/kreativni-a-nevazeci-prisetimo-se-za-koga-je-srbija-glasala-na-proslim-izborima-foto/, (accessed 2 October 2013). Deputy President of DS, Jelena Trivan, observed that a blank vote was a form of ‘electoral abstinence’ in the Serbian 2012 elections, but that ‘a vote with a Mickey Mouse also counted’ as it further legitimised ‘the strongest party’ (SNS) and indirectly led to fewer votes for the staunchly pro-EU parties, the DS and the LDP. ‘Kome pripadaju nevažeći glasački listići’, Pravni Portal, 27 February 2014, http://www.pravniportal.com/kome-pripadaju-nevazeci-glasacki-listici/ (accessed 1 March 2014).
The normative impact of Kosovo-related conditionality in Serbia

The shift in primary focus of the EU’s political conditionality from Serbia’s full cooperation with the ICTY to political dialogue with Kosovo was widely publicised, and criticised, in the Serbian media. This aspect of conditionality prompted anti-EU supporters and political parties (including DSS) to reignite collective memory discourses on Kosovo and intensify their support for Serbs in northern Kosovo. Some political entities, including the far-right ‘Serbian Doors’ (Dveri Srpske), which has, since January 1999 until its formal registration in March 2012, operated as an anti-government/anti-EU organisation, were even calling for the President’s resignation, labelling his more conciliatory position on Kosovo as a national humiliation. Serbia’s smaller political parties capitalised on a growing anti-government resentment among the voters to attract popular support for their policies. Serbia’s European integration was, once again, emerging as a key electoral issue ahead of the 2012 parliamentary elections.

Interviews with selected interviewees in Belgrade and Brussels one month before and one month after Serbia’s parliamentary elections in 2012 suggested that observers of, and participants in the process of Serbia’s European integration, were concerned about the Kosovo issue becoming (like the Hague conditionality) another major barrier to Serbia’s EU entry—in part because of the problematic partners issue.1107 Another major theme was related to the elections which were a deciding factor in the political battle between the DS and the SNS, just as was the case in the 2008 elections. The fieldwork data showed that the EULEX

1107 The fieldwork included meetings with civil society representatives, EULEX and EU delegation representatives, Serbian Government officials and opposition leaders, and political reporters from the major Serbian newspapers, Politika, Blic and Večernje Novosti. Daily articles were analysed from these sources in the two weeks before the parliamentary elections. Key themes concerned the state of Serbian economy and the strength of Serbia’s national currency, European integration, and Serbia’s relationship with Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Republika Srpska in particular).
representatives had actively engaged pro-EU opposition parties in informal policy dialogue before and immediately after the elections. This was a sign of evolution in the use of non-traditional EU foreign policy instruments in Serbia, as such informal meetings had hitherto usually been organised by diplomatic representatives from key EU member states, as well as the US and Russia.\textsuperscript{1108}

During one of those informal meetings, which the author attended, key themes concerned Serbia’s democratic reforms after the elections, and relations with Kosovo. EULEX representatives, who were fluent in Serbian and well-informed about major political developments including within political parties, asked questions about Serbia’s relations with Kosovo. By engaging with the Serbian opposition parties, the EULEX staff were involved in a process of socialisation of Serbian opposition.\textsuperscript{1109} EULEX representatives asked questions about possible future alliance between different political parties in Serbia, the identity of individuals who were likely to be in key official and advisory functions, and the type of relationship with Kosovo that could be expected to result from various scenarios of power-sharing arrangements. This seemed to indicate an increased willingness on the part of the EU to engage with pro-EU opposition parties, albeit in an informal manner, in order to facilitate a change in Serbia’s policy approach to the Kosovo issue.

Informal dialogue with pro-EU opposition parties was not new for the EU, as the EU had previously engaged in informal dialogue with the Serbian opposition in the late 1990s and 2000 as described in Chapter Five. The key difference was the change in focus from the DS to the

\textsuperscript{1108} Conversation with a Serbian opposition leader Nikolić, Belgrade, April 2012.

\textsuperscript{1109} At this informal meeting, the author’s work was made known to the EULEX representatives, who agreed to the author’s presence during meeting subject to the proviso that specific details (such as names and positions of the EULEX officials) other than the major topics covered not be revealed. The observations reported here are, therefore, the author’s own conclusions.
SNS, especially since the SNS had begun to advocate dialogue with Kosovo Albanians at the highest level to replace technical talks. The US particularly welcomed this development. EU foreign policy towards Serbia has, therefore, become much more strategically focused and proactive in comparison to its fragmented and reactive approach in the early 1990s. This was remarkable as five EU members did not recognise Kosovo’s independence. Despite this challenge, EU institutions such as EULEX (which reported to High Representative Ashton) were engaged in informal political discussions with the opposition. The author, as an observer during some of these discussions, interpreted such EU action to be a sign of maturity and evolution in the EU’s foreign policy instruments and use of soft power. It also indicated that the EU was thinking more strategically, going beyond widespread public expectations of another DS-SPS Government to consider other political options for Serbia.

**Serbian parliamentary and presidential elections in 2012**

Serbia’s EU policy was once again an important topic at the ballot box, with one major difference from the 2008 elections—the SNS was also advocating Serbia’s EU membership, and its conservative leaders had gained enough popularity to present the most serious threat to the DS in Serbian politics. The Serbian parliamentary elections of 6 May 2012 did not result in a clear majority win for any political party. The SNS won the highest number of seats, followed by the DS and the SPS. This shift was initially received with scepticism across Europe, as political observers feared a return to Milošević-era nationalist policies after the electoral results became known—which are presented in the chart below.

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Before the elections, it was widely believed that the SPS would again form the government with its previous Coalition partner, the DS. However, the DS wanted to have a Prime Minister from its ranks, and refused to form any coalition with the SNS, the DSS or the SRS. Tadić, as President of the DS, warned that Serbia’s parliamentary elections in 2012 were of critical importance for Serbia’s European future. He labelled his SNS opponents as ‘people who created the 1990s—violence against other people and religions and overall destruction’, who ‘could reverse the entire process of European modernisation of Serbia’ that started under the DS-led Serbian Government in 2001. However, in its 2012 report for Serbia the European Commission also echoed the Serbian opposition parties’ claims that media reporting prior to the 2012 elections was politically biased:

\[\text{(accessed 1 May 2013). The author’s impression from fieldwork discussions with Nikolić was that he was more of a pragmatist in his new role rather than a hard-core nationalist that he was during the 1990s.} \]

\[\text{1112 The DS campaign was particularly negative towards the SNS, which was portrayed as highly nationalistic. However, this did not correspond with the political platform of a new party (SNS) led by familiar politicians but with reformed views. Views expressed on contentious regional issues, however, especially regarding disputes with Croatia, heightened those fears. ‘Tadić: DS će imati premijera i posle izbora’, Politika, 10 March 2012, http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Politika/Tadic-mladima-Beograd-je-vas-grad-iskoristite-ga.lt.html (accessed 15 April 2013).}\]
Media reporting was also noted as insufficiently balanced and analytical, which pointed to the wider need to clarify the issue of media ownership.\textsuperscript{1113}

While the elections were fought along traditional political lines, the EU and Kosovo themes were heavily present in the pre-election campaigning. In a repeat meeting with one leader from the Serbian opposition, it was clear ahead of the 2012 elections that Kosovo would be a major issue, and that for it to be resolved, Serbia would need to significantly modify its position on Kosovo and the issue of Serbs in northern Kosovo if it wanted to become closer to the EU club.

The DS was not willing to promise to the Socialists the position of prime minister, and this was a key reason why the socialists entered into a power-sharing arrangement with the Progressives (SNS). The Socialists (SPS) under its leader, Ivica Dačić (a key figure in the previous coalition government), and the SNS—founded by Serbia’s main opposition leader Tomislav Nikolić (then President of the SNS) and his deputy, Aleksandar Vučić—formed a governing coalition in July 2012.\textsuperscript{1114} In what was an innovation for many observers, the SNS called for a government of national unity, inviting several office holders from the opposition parties to join it. One of those people was Milica Delević from the DS, who has vast experience dealing with the EU as the head of the Serbian European Integration Office, but she turned down the opportunity to become Serbia’s first female Foreign Minister as her party was against it.\textsuperscript{1115} This was a demonstration of commitment by the new government to support Serbia’s European integration efforts, even if that meant inviting selected DS members. The refusal to join the


\textsuperscript{1114} In the 1990s, Dačić was Milošević’s party (SPS) spokesperson. Nikolić, at that time in SRS, was Deputy prime minister of Serbia (in 1998–99) and Deputy prime minister of FRY (in 1999–2000), while Vučić (who was a member of the SRS during the 1990s) was Serbia’s Minister for Information (1998–2000).

\textsuperscript{1115} ‘Vučić: Milica Delević ne ulazi u vladu’, Radio-Televizija Srbije, 19 July 2012, http://xn--p1acc.xn--90a3ac/page/stories/sr/story/9/Politika/1142388/Vu per centC4 per cent8Di per centC4 per cent87 per cent3A+Milica+Delevi per centC4 per cent87 per cent3A+Milica+Delevi per centC4 per cent87+ne+ulazi+u+vladu+.html (accessed 15 April 2013).
government was a sign that the majority of them did not trust the SNS-led Serbian Government to lead Serbia towards the EU.

Other groups drawn into the new coalition included the URS (formerly G17+) and two minor parties led by Bosniaks. Rasim Ljajić, of the minority Social Democratic Party of Serbia, become Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign and Internal Trade and Telecommunications. Sulejman Ugljanin, of the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak, assumed the position of Minister without Portfolio. While the new governing coalition remained committed to Serbia’s European integration as a key strategic goal, the European Commission expressed concerns, in late 2012, about Serbia’s lack of progress in judicial reform, the absence of parliamentary oversight over executive government, and the number of cases against Serbia in the European Court of Human Rights (‘ECfHR’), which represented 6 per cent of all filed applications with the Court. Even though the majority of cases against Serbia related to ‘the excessive length of court cases and to non-enforcement of domestic judgments’, the high number of cases lodged with the ECfHR did not help create a good impression of Serbia among EU members. It is likely that judicial reform will become more significant as Serbia’s path towards EU membership progresses further, evolving into a more highly prioritised item in the EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia.

In the *Freedom House* report for 2012, which evaluates the democratic reform of states in transition, including in the Western Balkans, Serbia registered the lowest score in the ‘judicial

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1116 It is interesting to note here that these two politicians were bitterly divided over the Bosnian war, with the former accusing the latter of supporting Wahhabism in Bosnia. Wahhabism is an imported version of Islam from the Middle East, and continues to be seen by some local Muslim communities, especially in the Sandžak region, as a threat.

1117 To illustrate the complexity of judicial reform, the European Commission observed that Serbian courts in 2011 ‘received 2.23 million new cases, resolved 2.65 million cases and were left with a backlog of 3.34 million cases’. European Commission, ‘Serbia: 2012 progress report’, op. cit., pp. 11, 13.

1118 Ibid., p. 13.
framework and independence’ democratic performance criterion. It appeared to have performed worse than in 2003, as the Freedom House table reproduced below shows.

Table 1: Serbia’s democracy scores (2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
<th>Serbia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Society</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Media</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance*</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Governance</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Democratic Governance</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy Score</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table also shows that scores for media independence had been declining since the DS-SPS coalition took office in 2008; the score for this criterion was worse in 2012 than in 2003. Although improvement can be observed in the scores for Serbia’s ‘civil society’ and democratic governance (at the national and local levels), challenges in the judicial sector have the potential (if left unresolved) to spill over into other policy areas, affecting efforts against organised crime, high-level corruption cases and minority rights. Independence of the media is likely to

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become a bigger problem for Serbia’s EU accession, as it is also marked by normative discourses.

**Diplomatic signalling from the EU**

In May 2012, Serbia was invited, for the first time, to participate in a multilateral economic dialogue through the Council’s meeting on pre-accession fiscal surveillance.\(^{1120}\) This indicated both capacity and greater willingness on Serbia’s part to participate in the fiscal surveillance and economic policy coordination process—a major component of the EU’s fiscal and monetary union. Serbia also demonstrated through this forum its commitment to continue with European integration, which was particularly important at that moment as Serbia had national elections.

In the run-off presidential election on 20 May 2012, Boris Tadić lost to Tomislav Nikolić, having faced him for the third time since 2004 at the ballot box. This was a double blow for the DS, which with this loss was left without any official function for the first time since Serbia’s democratic changes in 2000. The disastrous result for the DS led to internal divisions within the party, restructuring and ultimately, Boris Tadić’s resignation.\(^{1121}\) The fact that the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Štefan Füle, personally attended the presidential inauguration ceremony on 11 June 2012, demonstrated the EU’s clear commitment to working closely with the new Serbian President, despite his Eurosceptic past.\(^{1122}\)

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\(^{1121}\) In 2014, Tadić formed a new political party, New Democratic Party (*Nova Demokratska Stranka*).

In his speech at Nikolić’s inauguration, EU Commissioner Füle said that he particularly welcomed the fact that the Serbian President’s first official visit abroad would be to Brussels on 14 June, which he told Nikolić was ‘a clear sign of the priority you attach to Serbia’s European orientation’.

However, Nikolić’s first trip abroad, which occurred between the time he won the elections and the formal start of his Presidency on 31 May 2012, was in fact to an annual meeting of Putin’s United Russia Party, with which SNS has a party-to-party bilateral relationship. According to the press reports, Nikolić advised Russia of Serbia’s European integration path when they met on the margins of this event. Nonetheless, Putin indicated that he was willing to grant Serbia a new loan as well as to support it on the Kosovo issue in international fora. Symbolically, this trip was another demonstration of the difficulty attached to Serbia’s balancing of its pro-Western and pro-Russia orientation, its economic needs as well as its normative commitment to both the EU and Russia.

Developments within the Democratic Party have indirectly helped to consolidate the influence of the Progressives in Serbian politics, as the SNS took over the leading position previously held by the DS as Serbia’s largest pro-EU political party. In line with the EU demands of Serbia’s new leadership, the SNS-SPS coalition announced that its focus would be the fight against corruption and improving economic growth. According to a SEIO public opinion poll, public support for Serbia’s EU membership declined in 2012, falling to a historic low of 41 per cent by December 2012. A key initiative in Serbia’s European integration since the parliamentary election was the Brussels agreement. This was a major EU diplomatic success

1123 He also noted that during Nikolić’s Presidency, key challenges would be Serbia’s continuation of dialogue with Kosovo and implementation of reforms in key areas such as the judiciary and the fight against corruption. Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood, ‘Policy Speech at the inauguration of President Nikolić’, Belgrade 11 June 2012, 11 June 2012, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-12-432_en.htm?locale=en (accessed 21 October 2013).
in bringing former foes from the Western Balkans to the same bargaining table after Serbia came under SNS leadership.

The Brussels Agreement

Under the SNS-SPS Government, the EU continued to facilitate dialogue between Belgrade and Priština, moving the talks beyond technical dialogue to the political level.\textsuperscript{1126} For the first time ever, the Prime Ministers of both Serbia and Kosovo met in Brussels on 19 October 2012 and opened a high-level dialogue. Many rounds of negotiations facilitated by the EU foreign policy chief, Baroness Catherine Ashton, yielded a landmark result in April 2013 with the conclusion of the so-called 15-points agreement (officially known as ‘First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations’) — the Brussels Agreement.\textsuperscript{1127} Although the Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić’s signature did not imply that Serbia would recognise Kosovo’s independence, it represented a significant ‘concession acknowledging Kosovo as a bounded political entity’.

Serbia’s new policy towards negotiating with Kosovo authorities was a sign that the SNS-SPS coalition was ready to show more flexibility in return for concessions from the EU and the promise of even closer relations. The change in Serbia’s policy also demonstrated the transformative power of the EU’s membership promise. Serbia’s major success in this diplomatic quest was the reaching of an agreement with the Kosovo Government to form the

\textsuperscript{1126} Mediation involves an ‘active search for a negotiated settlement to an international or intrastate conflict by an impartial third party’. The third party can draw up the agenda, call and chair negotiating sessions, propose solutions and even employ threats and promises towards the rivals. G. R. Berridge and A. James, \textit{A dictionary of diplomacy}, 2003, op. cit., p. 171.


\textsuperscript{1128} D. Bechev, ‘Serbia, Kosovo and the benefits of normalisation’, April 2013, \url{http://esharp.eu/big-debates/external-action/108-serbia-kosovo-and-the-benefits-of-normalisation/}, (accessed 1 May 2013). The Serbian and Kosovo leaders were nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize following this agreement.
Association of Serbian Municipalities in the north. Most political parties in the Serbian Parliament supported the agreement, except for the DSS. The DSS parliamentarian, Slobodan Samardžić, called it an ‘act of betrayal of national interests’. Many Serbs in North Kosovo rejected the Brussels agreement, calling for a referendum on the issue.

The Kosovo Parliament ratified the agreement on 27 June 2013, despite some obstructions and protests from a minor, ultra-nationalist party. The Brussels agreement led to an exchange of liaison officers between Belgrade and Priština, whose role was to monitor the agreement’s implementation. On 28 June 2013, the EU made a landmark resolution to open accession negotiations with Serbia in January 2014. On the same day, the EU agreed to open negotiations on the SAA with Kosovo. In September 2013, the Serbian Parliament learned that Germany’s Bundestag would monitor key provisions of the Brussels agreement, in particular the local elections in Kosovo on 3 November. With this political signalling, Germany was affirming its leading role on Kosovo conditionality. This was relevant as Germany was also the highest individual country donor to Serbia from the EU, having provided over €1.2 billion since 2000.

In October 2013, the EU set up a special fund to assist the development of Serb municipalities in Kosovo. EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle said that the first instalment of funding

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of €15 million was a demonstration of the EU’s commitment to the Brussels agreement.\textsuperscript{1134} On 23 December 2013, the European Commission adopted the 2013 IPA national program for Serbia, totalling €178.7 million.\textsuperscript{1135} The EU delegation to Serbia stated:

A mark of special trust between us is that in 2014 Serbia takes over management of EU funded projects. There are currently over 600 on-going projects under implementation covering a wide range of sectors for the overall benefit of Serbian citizens.\textsuperscript{1136}

However, despite higher levels of trust developing between EU and Serbia in vitally important economic matters, the biggest obstacle in their relations is now Serbia’s close relationship with Russia (evident in Serbia’s refusal to show solidarity with EU sanctions against Russia), and the question of Kosovo’s final status.\textsuperscript{1137}

The issue of bilateral disputes was evident with Lithuania delaying its ratification of the SAA with Serbia. In April 2013, following Prime Minister Dačić’s personal visit to the Lithuanian Government to resolve a bilateral issue, the Lithuanian Parliament ratified the SAA—thereby removing the final obstacle, as it was the last EU member state to do so. The Lithuanian issue with Serbia stemmed from bilateral disputes, such as the privatisation of a Serbian company in which a Lithuanian company has economic interests, and possibly also the fact that a Serbian

\textsuperscript{1135} Other ongoing support included funding for Civil Society Facility (€2.5 million), the TEMPUS programme (€4 million), and funds for refugees under the Regional Housing Programme (€12 million). Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, ‘EU assistance to Serbia’, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{1136} ibid.
\textsuperscript{1137} For a useful overview of Serbia-Russia relations in a broader historical context, see Ž.N. Petrović (ed.), ‘Russia Serbia Relations at the beginning of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century’, International and Security Affairs Centre, Belgrade, 2010.
Government nominee, former Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremić, was elected as President of the UN General Assembly over the Lithuanian candidate (by a vote of 99 to 85).\textsuperscript{1138}

After the SAA came into force in September 2013, the major tasks which Serbia still needed to fulfil were establishing a free-trade agreement with the EU and harmonising Serbian laws in line with the \textit{acquis}.\textsuperscript{1139} Under the provisions in the extensive SAA agreement, Serbia is required to gradually abolish duties on imports from the EU, including for Serbia’s traditionally highly protected agricultural goods. Serbia’s current lead negotiator in dialogue with the EU, political scientist Tanja Miščević has observed that Serbia’s priority will be on political reforms since economic reforms have been ongoing since 2010 when Serbia unilaterally decided to implement the interim trade agreement and started to abolish customs duties.\textsuperscript{1140} Serbia and the EU pledged to co-sponsor the formation of implementation and oversight bodies, including the Stabilisation and Association Council, the Stabilisation and Association Committee and the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee, which will all be made up of representatives of the EU and Serbia. As Miščević points out, the most important new element arising from the SAA’s entry into force is Serbia’s obligation to ‘adjust parts of its foreign policy to harmonise them with the common positions of the EU, when relevant’.\textsuperscript{1141} This has proven to be a challenging task in respect of Serbia’s relationship with Russia.


Table 2: Serbia’s alignment with the Common Foreign and Security Policy statements\textsuperscript{1142}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress report</th>
<th>Percentage of alignment with EU declarations and Council decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>69 per cent (51/74)\textsuperscript{1143}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>‘most instances’\textsuperscript{1144}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>99 per cent (69/70)\textsuperscript{1145}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>89 per cent (31/35)\textsuperscript{1146}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the early parliamentary election on 16 March 2014, the SNS bloc won an overwhelming parliamentary majority. The political ‘marriage of convenience’ between the SNS and the SPS continued, while the electoral success of the DS was seriously undermined by votes leaking from DS to the former Serbian President, Boris Tadić, and his New Democratic Party (NDS). The DSS did not pass the parliamentary threshold for the first time since the DOS Coalition’s victory in 2000, which means that now all Serbian political parties with parliamentary representation have a pro-EU policy approach. This could represent a decisive maturing of Serbia’s European integration process as only parties that supported Serbia’s European integration entered Parliament.\textsuperscript{1147} This is despite the fact that Serbia’s alignment with EU foreign policy positions seems to be falling away. Due to Serbia’s refusal to support the EU’s position on the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, it is most likely that in the EU’s next progress report

\textsuperscript{1142} Table 2 is the author’s own work.
\textsuperscript{1143} European Commission, ‘Serbia: 2010 progress report’, op. cit., p. 5,
\textsuperscript{1144} European Commission, ‘Serbia’s analytical report’, 12 October 2011, p. 128,
(accessed 13 May 2014).
\textsuperscript{1145} European Commission, ‘Serbia: 2012 progress report’, 10 October 2012, p. 62,
\textsuperscript{1146} European Commission, ‘Serbia: 2013 progress report’, 16 October 2013, p. 59,
\textsuperscript{1147} Izbori 2014, ‘Konačni rezultati parlamentarnih izbora 2014’, 25 March 2014,
for Serbia this gap will become even more pronounced. The results of the Serbian 2014 parliamentary elections are presented in the chart that follows.\textsuperscript{1148}

**Chart 8: Serbian parliamentary elections, 16 March 2014**

Serbia’s democracy scores have also remained intact since the arrival of the SNS-SPS coalition in mid-2012.\textsuperscript{1149} This indicates that domestic challenges to reform do not seem to have withered away significantly since 2011. As this thesis has argued, domestic factors are important for moving the reform process forward, but not enough. The split within Serbian democrats has weakened the support base for this political group in Serbian politics, while the SNS coalition has been as strong as ever. The normative factors, however, are precluding further advancement in the relationship with the EU as Serbia is once again witnessing a re-introducing of the East/West bridging idea by the dominant political elites, especially the SNS. The political will

\textsuperscript{1148} All charts, including chart 8, are the author’s own work.

to show solidarity with the EU in the foreign policy domain seems to have been seriously affected by the Ukrainian-Russian crisis, in which both the EU and the US are politically invested. While Serbia’s administrative capacities have improved since 2011, as noted in the annual European Commission’s progress reports, and while the country has advanced in its dialogue with Kosovo authorities, the lack of a comprehensive view by the Serbian Government in relation to broader goals of EU accession is likely to cause further complications in Serbia’s EU accession process. The priority for the current government has been Serbia’s economic growth. Expansion of traditional partnerships to include new financial partners, such as the United Arab Emirates and India, points to two things. Firstly, Serbia is investigating options for growth that originate in the ‘East and West, South and North’, without focusing exclusively on improving its market access into the EU countries or local conditions for exporters. Secondly, by building relationships with countries like Belarus, the Serbian Government has demonstrated a continuity in foreign policy from the previous government that, for example, initiated closer ties with Azerbaijan. As the EU membership perspective seem to be a more distant if still strategic goal, normative factors from Serbia’s collective memory and ruling elites are, once again, creating obstacles on its EU accession path.

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Serbia’s accession negotiations

Despite the fact that the formal opening of accession negotiations between the EU and Serbia took place in January 2014, the opening of chapters has been delayed because of the elections in the EU. The head of EU delegation to Serbia and former British Ambassador to Serbia, Michael Davenport, said that the progress in EU-Serbia relations will depend on the implementation of the SAA and ‘Serbia’s responses to the EU’s technical questions’, including in its dialogue with Kosovo. Since its ratification, the Brussels Agreement has been unevenly implemented, causing some concerns among observers of regional politics that tensions might re-escalate between Serbia and Kosovo if the EU does not maintain the momentum of a clear membership prospect for both Belgrade and Priština. The EU High Representative criticised both the Serbian and Kosovo leaders for not doing enough to ensure the implementation of this agreement.

Two high-ranking EU officials visited Serbia in April 2014, High Representative Ashton and EU Enlargement Commissioner Füle. The EU Delegation’s head in Belgrade, Ambassador Michael Davenport, described these visits as ‘the strongest signal of the EU support to Serbia’. Major issues highlighted during Commissioner Füle’s visit included Serbia’s further economic and legal reforms as well as the ‘normalisation of relations with Priština’—

the Kosovo conditionality. During Füle’s visit, the Serbian President complained that he did not feel that Serbia was being treated equally by all EU members:

I know that by meeting the conditions we will make it possible for citizens to live in a well-organised country, a legal state, equal to the others, but for the time being, I do not feel that we are exactly equal to everyone in the EU.

The statement signals that an important part of the Serbian leadership may feel that Serbian needs are being ignored. This might also suggest that the attraction of EU membership, despite being given a boost in the official opening of negotiations, was waning for Serbian voters, whose EU scepticism remained high. It also demonstrates the limits of the EU’s economic diplomacy with Serbia, as the soft power approach necessitates the building of a common normative platform towards building closer relations in all domains.

A testing moment for Serbian diplomacy occurred in May 2014 when EU representatives called on Serbia to show solidarity and align itself with the EU sanctions against Russia following the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis. As the Serbian leadership chose not to support the common EU position on sanctions (unlike Montenegro, for example) and declared neutrality, the question arose once again as to where Serbia’s solidarity in its foreign relations may lie in the future despite notable progress in EU-Serbia relations under the SNS-SPS coalition. Like several EU states (Bulgaria, Austria and Italy in particular), Serbia has cooperated on the South

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1157 ibid.
Stream project, which the European Commission has expressed reservations about. Serbia’s foreign policy dilemma over the case of Russian sanctions shows that normative considerations in Serbian foreign policy as well as national discourses play a major role in its decision-making, which in turn could affect Serbia’s EU candidacy assessment by EU institutions and member states. As a candidate for EU accession, Serbia is required to align its foreign policy with the EU’s common decisions, such as the sanctions. It will take more than a careful choice of words for the new Serbian Government under the SNS and the SPS to explain its neutrality position towards Russian-Ukrainian crisis and its refusal to support the EU sanctions against Russia.

An escalation of quasi-nationalist rhetoric in Serbia has been noted since the last election. The new Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić declared in May 2014 that ‘the West’, including the EU, has asked Serbia to support sanctions against Russia, but:

> Serbia has demonstrated that it has its own policy which is the best for us [Serbia], which respects moral values, European integration but also its friends [Russia] who did not implement sanctions against Serbia and did not bomb us [Serbia], and that is very important, with whom we have very successful economic relations.\(^{1159}\)

Vučić effectively highlighted the need for Serbia to maintain a third way (‘its own policy’), just like Tito’s Yugoslavia did in any conflict between East and West whilst reaping economic benefits from both sides. This normative position of Serbia’s most important decision-maker, the prime minister, shows that national discourses and collective memory remain highly relevant in the dynamic process of the European integration of post-communist countries like

Serbia, and post-conflict societies in the Western Balkans generally. Observing these normative constructs as an indication of political sentiment, public discourses and diplomatic signalling to determine Serbia’s position is going to be more relevant than ever before in evaluating the progress of EU-Serbia’s accession negotiations.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined EU-Serbia relations under a conservative, SNS Government coalition with the SPS. Under their leadership, Serbia negotiated a breakthrough result under EU auspices in its relationship with Kosovo, resulting in their first bilateral political agreement in April 2013 that sought to address the needs of both sides. However, as the implementation of this agreement has been slow, the EU is deliberating about the best way forward. A logical conclusion from the EU’s experience in the Balkans over the past decade would be to continue to provide adequate incentives and clear prospect of membership to both parties, which is the most important motivating factor for them to continue to resolve differences in a peaceful manner. At the socio-political level, victimhood narratives, advanced by both Serbs and Albanians, are continuing, representing a recurring obstacle to finding a permanent solution.

When the massive flooding of early May 2014 struck Serbia as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, causing over €1 billion in damage to these countries’ economies, it was said that only such a common tragedy could bring people from the former Yugoslavia closer together to the point where they might express unconditional solidarity towards one another. However, as the flooding also uncovered a mass-grave in Bosnia of what is suspected to be Bosniak victims, traditional normative constructs and discourses regarding the conflict of the 1990s in the Balkans will certainly not wane.
As the consequences of the major flooding disaster are further evaluated, Serbia’s economic development is likely to experience a setback in the short term. While the EU’s initial response was criticised in the Serbian media for being too slow, the EU indicated it would allow Serbia to use special funds up to the value of €1 billion once the damages were properly assessed. Meanwhile, individual EU countries have provided financial and technical assistance and support, alongside other major donors (Japan, the US, Russia and the UAE).1160

Over the foreseeable future, Serbia’s European integration will remain a highly normative process domestically, in which ideological differences are likely to cause further delays in the progress of reform. Similarly, bilateral disputes are equally significant to political conditionality for Serbia’s prospective accession. While public opinion in Serbia and in the EU towards Serbia’s EU accession remains reserved, and the EU becomes more inwardly focused because of events such as European parliamentary elections, its attractiveness for countries in the Western Balkans will be maintained only by a commitment by the EU to accept candidates from the Western Balkans. However, European accession is a political and normative process that is constantly renegotiated. For this reason, the narratives surrounding it ought to be carefully watched and analysed, as the EU will need to reinforce its economic carrots with a longer-term soft power strategy. Only when Serbia’s normative interests are more closely aligned with those of the EU, including in the foreign policy domain, will it be easier for both parties to deepen their cooperation on the path towards Serbia’s eventual accession.

Serbia also needs to be reassured that Serbs who are living in Kosovo are not overlooked and marginalised. In accordance with its current Constitution, the Serbian Government still regards Kosovo as its own territory as elaborated in its constitution—a position which Kosovo authorities find highly offensive. In order to avoid another protracted issue, the EU could grant to both Serbia and Kosovo more scholarship opportunities and temporary labour rights, support for reform in public administration, the judicial sector and national rebuilding. More engagement from the EU rather than less, and a better articulated communications strategy could assist in countering negative perceptions of the EU among Serbs, the majority of whom have not travelled to the EU over the past twenty years because of sanctions and economic hardship, but also because of the normative influence of ongoing anti-EU political rhetoric at the societal level in post-Milošević Serbia.
THESIS CONCLUSION

It takes a huge effort to free yourself from memory, but when you succeed, you start to realise that you’re capable of far more than you imagined.  

European integration is a deeply social and negotiated political process with a strong normative dimension. This thesis analysed the key political and normative challenges to Serbia’s EU accession in order to explain why Serbia’s European integration process has been particularly difficult and highly uneven, and characterised by frequent delays. One key research finding is that in its relationship with Serbia, the EU has frequently resorted to coercive diplomatic strategies in order to encourage changes to Serbia’s domestic and international behaviour (a strategy that was also applied to Bulgaria and Romania). However, this strategy increased some of the pre-existing divisions among Serbian democrats, leading to an even greater internal political instability, and slowing down the pace of domestic reform in the context of Europeanisation.

A major factor that distinguishes Serbia from earlier cases in European integration (the CEES in particular) is the fact that some of the most important members for the EU’s enlargement policy (Germany, France, Italy and the UK) actively supported a military operation against FRY in 1999. The normative legacy of this conflict, especially anti-Western discourses in Serbia that skyrocketed following the NATO intervention, continue to adversely affect Serbia’s political discourses and complicate all efforts undertaken by Serbian political leaders to deepen their country’s engagement with the EU.

1162 Anti-Serb discourses in the West, which were not examined in this thesis, could potentially provide further insight into delays in negotiations with Serbia on the EU’s side. Further research would be required before any such link could be established and proven. Further research is indeed needed to show how the
A normative debate between pro- and anti-Western political discourses in Serbia, and the collective memory of past conflicts, has profoundly influenced Serbia’s European integration. For this reason, a new approach is needed in order to better comprehend key obstacles to Serbia’s European integration. Constructivist methods (such as historical discourse- and contextual analysis, and a position that political and diplomatic interactions between political elites of two or more negotiating partners are inherently social processes) served as a starting point for developing a discourse-based conceptual framework in this thesis in order to examine EU-Serbia relations within a broader historical perspective. This thesis presented an additional approach to the three dominant approaches—structural, cultural and regulative—which seek to explain Serbia’s delayed EU accession by using a different conceptual framework.

**Structural, cultural and regulative approaches**

The proponents of structural explanations argue that Serbia’s institutional reform has stagnated due to its insufficiently developed structures (including poorly reformed and oversized bureaucracy, technological backwardness, outdated management practices, corruption, and other factors). These structures have purportedly prevented Serbia, over the past fourteen years, from achieving deeper Europeanisation. The EU attempted to address the lack of local expertise and public knowledge in Serbia about EU affairs, and to close the knowledge- and skills gap by providing over $2 billion of financial and technical assistance to Serbia since 2001, which kick-started Serbia’s institutional reform but has seen limited progress at the level of normative attitudes held by Serbia’s policy-makers.

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normative frameworks of other candidates have affected their European integration experiences to better inform the EU on its expansion processes and allow other potential candidates to critically assess their own progress towards deeper integration.
The proponents of structuralist perspectives contend that resistance to domestic reform in Serbia was inherited from institutional practices that derive from Serbia’s earlier historical periods (the Milošević era, communist Yugoslavia, and royalist Yugoslavia). For Serbia, as a latecomer in European integration, this means that its political elites will continue to face institutional hurdles in adapting to EU standards because of deep-seated structural deficiencies and outdated institutional and managerial practices. These are supposedly linked to Serbia’s institutional ‘mentality’ that impedes innovation and flexibility.

According to this perspective, the most effective Serbian policy-makers after 2000 were those who managed to operate outside the formal institutional framework. These individuals are epitomised in the figure of Serbia’s assassinated Prime Minister, Zoran Đinđić, who made a political decision to arrest and extradite Milošević to The Hague Tribunal for war crimes, despite the existence of regulations that precluded Serbian nationals from being extradited, especially a former head of state. While Milošević’s extradition was one among many points of disagreement between the two largest Serbian democratic parties (the DS and the DSS) in the early 2000s, it represented a turning point for Serbia’s relationship with the West, particularly the EU.

From a structuralist perspective, Eriksen argued that Serbia needs more courageous individuals like Đinđić to implement (often unpopular) reforms in order to strengthen administrative, judicial and economic capacities. He highlighted that partocracy and nepotism in Serbia are serious challenges, which inhibit further institutional reform. The magnitude of challenges that Serbia’s first democratic government faced since coming to power in January 2001 is aptly illustrated in an observation made by Milica Uvalić. As a Serbian-Italian political economist
who had temporarily returned to Serbia in 2000 to assist with the new government’s democratisation agenda, Uvalić recalled:

In December 2000 and early 2001, the Federation Palace lacked not only computers, fax machines and photocopying facilities, but even ordinary paper. On occasion of the first important visit of an EU delegation in March 2001, a document was prepared on ongoing reforms to be distributed to members of the EU delegation, but there was no paper to print it. …The EU delegation had no understanding of the need to provide equipment …\textsuperscript{1163}

Igor Novaković, a former President of \textit{Palilula} shire in Niš, made a similar kind of observation when he was interviewed for this thesis. Novaković described the EU’s funding guidelines (for programs aimed at strengthening Serbia’s democratic capacities at the local level) as too inflexible. He said that the EU guidelines required local implementation partners in his own shire to purchase office equipment made only inside the EU.\textsuperscript{1164} ‘We could not find a printer that was made in the EU’, he said, ‘and, therefore, we were left without a much-needed office tool until a private donor stepped in’. These examples show how the EU took for granted Serbia’s capacity to comply with the most basic requirements and how the inflexibility of the EU’s institutional requirements represented a challenge to the implementation of EU-funded projects in (at the time) potential candidate states. Structural perspectives are often too focused on identifying weaknesses in Serbia’s institutional capacities without explaining how difficulties in EU-Serbia dialogue, especially at the institutional level, have been overcome.

\textsuperscript{1164} Interview with Igor Novaković, January 2012, op. cit.
Cultural explanations for Serbia’s delayed accession tend to emphasise as a key reason for Serbia’s delayed reform its cultural ‘legacy’ of anti-liberalism, authoritarianism and extreme nationalism, which is linked to the perception of an overly interventionist role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbian politics. Sabrina P. Ramet is a representative of this approach. In many of her works, Ramet derives a contentious conclusion about the lack of progress being linked to Serbia’s cultural mentality. This trait is seen as being inherited from Serbia’s religion and cultural traditions, which are pre- or even anti-modern.

Cultural explanations for Serbia’s delayed accession tend to emphasise Serbia’s ‘cultural legacy’ of anti-liberalism, authoritarianism and extreme nationalism as a key reason for delayed reform. In turn, this is also linked to the perception of an interventionist role by the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbian politics. Sabrina P. Ramet is a representative of this approach. In many of her works, Ramet derives a contentious conclusion about the lack of progress being linked to Serbia’s cultural mentality. This mentality is seen as being inherited from Serbia’s religious and cultural traditions, which are perceived as being against modernisation.

Cultural arguments, however, underestimate the influence of liberal democratic forces in Serbian society, choosing instead to focus on the failure of successive governments to influence change in Serbia’s ‘cultural mentality’. As such, culturalists do not give enough attention to the growing influence of pro-Western and liberal ideas in Serbia. For instance, in the 1990s, Serbian liberalism was openly revived by Đinđić and student movement Otpor by providing a political and ‘cultural’ alternative to the Milošević regime. Cultural approaches also do not explain the variations in Serbia’s domestic policy-making or intra-party transformations that can led to a significant normative reorientation (as the example of the break with the SRS past by the SNS shows). Nationalism and cultural traditions is too simple an explanation to capture
obstacles to Serbia’s domestic reform, and ‘ignorance of the West’ is an equally unconvincing argument about where the roots of the challenges between EU and Serbia might lay.

Regulative approaches focus on Serbia’s failure to meet the stringent EU accession criteria, which are embedded within the EU’s conditionality framework. Scholars of these approaches often tend to either criticise or praise the EU’s political conditionality towards Serbia, which is an overarching framework by which the EU can evaluate Serbia’s annual progress (such as through European Commission reports). The proponents of this perspective rarely undertake a deeper evaluation of how accession criteria towards Serbia was developed, and under what conditions accession norms have allowed for the hardening or softening of specific policy areas. Regulative approaches, therefore, do not adequately explain the variations in the EU’s policy towards Serbia. They also cannot explain various nuances in the EU policy, such as informal diplomatic engagement by establishing dialogue with the opposition through the innovative ‘Energy for Democracy’ program. Further research was needed in order to try to explain the political nature of Serbia’s European integration.

While these three approaches provide some credible evidence in explaining Serbia’s inability to integrate with the EU, the normative approach espoused in this thesis provides a holistic approach to identify the determining factors preventing Serbia’s accession to the EU. This approach suggests that the hurdles to Serbia’s accession stem from ideational and discursive factors. The political nature of the EU accession process requires that the process of European integration be constantly negotiated, without a pre-determined result in mind. Diplomatic negotiations are a complex variable to study. This thesis focused on several smaller illustrative cases, for instance, by analysing the EU’s role in Serbia’s presidential and parliamentary
elections. This showed that the challenges to a deeper engagement between the EU and Serbia are political and normative in nature, rather than material or ‘cultural’/religious.

In order to explain the normative factors, this thesis resorted to the methods which are frequently used by the scholars of constructivist orientation. These include discourse analysis, a genealogical approach and de-construction of dominant patterns of political thought and political discourses during different periods of Serbian politics after the Second World War. The majority of studies on EU-Serbia relations, save for a few notable examples, focus on the period after 1990 rather than examining a rich diplomatic history of cooperation which characterised EU-Yugoslavia relations for most of the Cold War. This thesis went beyond the events which marked a ‘formal’ start of EU-Yugoslavia relationship (in 1968) by explaining why the relationship had not been formalised earlier. It found that there were several specific conditions which inhibited dialogue between the states of integrating Western Europe and non-aligned Yugoslavia. These conditions included low levels of trust, solidarity and divergence in foreign policy outlooks between EU members and Yugoslavia. The issue of ‘problematic partners’, which was also found in the UK’s earliest experiences with European integration, prevented Yugoslavia from advancing further in its dialogue with the EU, until it resolved these differences with key EU members in which domestic conditions had also changed.

By examining diplomatic and political relations between the EU and Serbia since the Second World War, as well as drawing on several themes from the EU’s integration history, this thesis sought to derive important lessons and conclusions from this study about Serbia’s current relationship with the EU. These lessons can improve the understanding of the normative obstacles Serbia is facing today with regard to its EU accession path.
The experience of building closer relations with the EU is, therefore, part of Serbia’s diplomatic history, which has been largely forgotten, as the majority of academic output on this topic focuses on the wars of Yugoslavia’s dissolution and the Kosovo conflict. The author’s research, which was informed by extensive semi-structured interviews with a range of participants, indicates that normative obstacles on Serbia’s EU accession path continue to inhibit dialogue between the EU and Serbia. The factors of trust, solidarity and problematic partners can be used as part of a normative research framework when delving deeper into the question of why Serbia is still lagging behind in its European integration. A clash in normative frameworks between the EU and democratic Serbia derives from an ever-present theme in Serbian political history: the re-current idea of neutrality in foreign policy and East/West bridging. These ideas represent a normative challenge to further progress in EU-Serbia relations. They are closely related to the concept of solidarity, which is one lesson that can be learned from the experiences of the Eastern enlargement.

The examination of these narratives in Serbian foreign policy uncovered Serbia’s much longer diplomatic history. In essence, Serbia needed to balance, for its survival, as an independent state, between the East and the West. This concept has been interpreted differently by Serbia’s political leaders throughout history. This is precisely the narrative which can be detected in discussions on Serbia’s foreign policy today, which clashes with the EU’s solidarity principle. In addition, even if Serbia fulfils all formal requirements for accession, the quality of its bilateral relations with EU members will be the determining factor in whether it is accepted into the EU or not.
Lessons from the Eastern enlargement

The unanimity principle of the EU requires all EU members to agree before another country can join the bloc. An illustrative case study of Eastern enlargement showed that in the early 1990s, there was a general congruence in normative frameworks between the majority of EU states and the CEES, which were eager to ‘re-join’ Europe. In order to build political support from inside the EU, the Višegrad countries in particular have been active by cultivating formal and personal dialogue with influential EU leaders, and by maintaining strong support from the European People’s Party bloc within the European Parliament. Although trust was not immediately built between the formerly authoritarian nations and EU members, the solidarity which the CEES expressed with the common EU positions (including in the UN votes) improved the levels of trust which is necessary for the issue of problematic partners to be successfully overcome.

This political hurdle was best demonstrated in recent years between Slovenia and Croatia, with Slovenia blocking Croatia’s membership negotiations due to unresolved bilateral issues. Only with EU mediation have the two countries managed to sign a compromise agreement, which effectively allowed Croatia to fulfil its ambition to ‘re-join Europe’. Similarly for Serbia, as in the case during the Cold War between Yugoslavia and West Germany, any unresolved bilateral issues can escalate during the last stage of its accession process, causing more delays. In addition, enlargement fatigue, which has been in recent years particularly observed among older EU members (EU-15) was in this thesis represented through the chart outlining Eurobarometer survey data. This data was presented alongside public opinion polls for Serbia, which also showed that enthusiasm among Serbian nations for EU membership has declined during the same surveyed period (2008–2012). Serbia’s victimhood narratives, in particular
after Kosovo proclaimed independence in February 2008, have influenced popular perceptions about the EU’s regional role.

**Victimhood narratives**

This thesis also argued that the development of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy mechanisms came about, in part, as a response to the Yugoslav wars. It was precisely this period in EU history (the 1990s) that specifically influenced the development of the CFSP instruments, and fostered further integration between member states. The Yugoslav crisis presented particular challenges to EU policy-making for which new institutional, political and administrative solutions were needed. Ultimately, the geopolitical situation in the 1990s helped promote deeper integration in the EU, and in some aspects of the CFSP, such as conflict prevention. However, it gave Serbia a ‘bad name’ in regional politics, and further study would need to be done in order to examine how this problem can be ameliorated in the future; through better coordinated public diplomacy or by other means.

Another finding in the thesis is that victimhood narratives of the Albanians and Serbs in relation to the Kosovo issue (apart from being unhelpful for conflict resolution) have actually obstructed confidence-building measures and mediation efforts pursued by the EU. The evolution of the EU’s foreign and security policy tools since the Lisbon Treaty, has enabled it to take a more pro-active role in resolving regional crises in the Western Balkans, which stands in stark contrast to its ineffective and often confusing policy responses to the crisis in Yugoslavia, particularly the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo during the 1990s.
It is also important to note that the flexibility in the EU’s approach to domestic changes in Serbia has been a catalyst for change, the prime example being the EU’s innovative linkages with the Serbian opposition during the Milošević regime. This thesis found that the EU’s soft power methods were particularly effective in ‘informal’ or second-track diplomacy by encouraging liberal democrats to promote a new political narrative to the internationally isolated Serbian electorate in 2000, thus encouraging them to vote for pro-EU leaders and increase popular pressure that had led to Serbia’s regime change. The EU is the most engaged external political actor in the Western Balkans, precisely because of the attractiveness of its membership to the remaining non-EU states in that region which acts as the ‘magnet’ for change. If the policy goal of Serbia’s EU accession is seen as complementary by both the Serbian Government and the EU, and if both parties show more flexibility in addressing difficult issues, then it is possible that delays in Serbia’s accession will be less frequent as time progresses. There is much scope for further research in assessing normative factors that have contributed to delays in other EU accession cases, such as Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the FYROM, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Turkey and Ukraine.

The history of European integration has demonstrated that solidarity, trust and a pan-European vision of unity prevailed over narrow national perceptions and victimhood discourses in Europe after the Second World War. But for that to occur, political leadership in integrating Europe was incredibly important, just as it is today, as regards to Serbia’s EU accession prospects. While Kosovo is likely to remain a deeply emotional issue for Serbs, the current Serbian Government, so far, has been more constructive in its diplomatic approach than any previous Serbian Government on this issue. But the implementation of bilateral agreements between Belgrade and Priština still rests on the political will in Brussels to enforce the agreed
commitments, particularly as deep mistrust marks political relations between two former foes, who still see each other this way.

The way forward

In December 2013 at the EU summit in Brussels, British Prime Minister, David Cameron, threatened to veto future enlargements of the EU, including the accession of Serbia and Albania. As the problematic partners issue has illustrated in Chapter Two, low levels of trust can delay one country’s accession prospects, as the UK itself experienced during the 1960s. The high numbers of asylum seeker applications from the Balkan countries in the EU, since the Schengen regime for some Balkan countries was lifted in 2009, could have contributed to a growing anti-enlargement sentiment among EU members. However, as the British Government is involved in a heated domestic debate about the UK’s future in the EU and Scotland’s referendum on independence, it is clear that domestic divisions and normative clashes among existing EU members, and not only in the applicant state, can delay future accessions.

Serbia’s European accession process, however, requires that Serbia becomes aligned not only with Brussels as a regulative and administrative core of Europe, but also normatively. However, as political tension is rising between the West and Russia over energy security in Europe and the fragile security situation in Ukraine, Serbia will be increasingly pushed to choose between East and West. Considering the recent pronouncement by Serbian President, Tomislav Nikolić, that Serbia ‘must not make a choice’ between East and West (which was

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reiterated by Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić) and taking into account strong public support for such a policy position in Serbia, it seems likely that delays in Serbia’s EU accession might continue in the near future. While the history of Serbia’s non-alignment is unlikely to be repeated in the same form as during the Cold War, the ideas of Serbia’s independence and neutrality in foreign policy will continue to present major obstacles to Serbia’s European integration.

Over the foreseeable future, Serbia’s European integration will remain a highly normative process, in which ideological differences between Serbia’s democrats (like in the past) could cause further delays. Similarly, bilateral disputes are significant to political conditionality for Serbia’s prospective accession. While public opinion in Serbia and in the EU remains reserved towards Serbia’s EU accession, and the EU becomes more inwardly focused, the attractiveness of EU membership for countries in the Western Balkans will be maintained only by a clear and unambiguous membership prospect.

Since European accession is a political and normative process that is constantly renegotiated, the narratives and diplomatic signals surrounding it ought to be carefully watched and analysed. The EU will need to substantiate its economic ‘carrots’ with a longer-term soft power strategy towards the Western Balkans. It should also address the issues of security and the protection of all minorities in Kosovo, including Serbs, which should show to Serbia that the needs of its citizens in Kosovo are addressed. The precarious human rights situation for non-Albanian ethnic minorities in Kosovo is a reminder that when the EU’s attention is focused too much on institutional and administrative reform, the much needed confidence-building measures will suffer.
More engagement from the EU rather than less, and a better articulated communications strategy could assist in countering negative perceptions of the EU among Serbs. More than half of Serbia’s population has not travelled to the EU over the past twenty years because of sanctions, economic hardship and the normative influence of ongoing political anti-EU rhetoric at the societal level in post-Milošević Serbia. Recent statements by the President-elect of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker, that there will unlikely to be further enlargement for the next five years, will be a discouraging sign for Serbia, prompting some of its democratic elites to seek closer engagement with other partners outside the EU.

**Mapping the future: four scenarios**

In May 2014, the European Fund for the Balkans issued a policy paper in which four scenarios for the future of the Western Balkans were outlined: the status quo, which according to the authors, has reduced the speed and traction of European enlargement in the region; Turkey’s model of alienation from the EU; abandoning enlargement and increased unpredictability in the region; and a single large enlargement for the Western Balkans.\(^{1166}\) As the examples of the UK’s and Croatia’s delayed accession demonstrated, *problematic partners* represent a serious obstacle for candidates, but it can rarely be unforeseen. The example of Serbia’s delayed negotiations with the EU because of Lithuania’s veto serves to illustrate the relevance of this concept for Serbia’s European integration path. Serbia should strive to develop good working relations with all EU members, and engage more specifically with those countries that have indicated their reservations about Serbia’s membership. The Kosovo issue has precluded Serbian diplomacy to focus on developing its influence inside the EU, and this still remains the

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case, although the SNS-SPS Government has been remarkably open about the need to improve difficult relations with Croatia and Germany as a starting point.

In terms of mapping the future scenarios for Serbia’s European integration, this thesis takes the view that Serbia must first improve its image in the West by becoming a more reliable partner to the EU before any new breakthrough should be expected in its European accession process. Serbia will also need to show solidarity with the EU on common EU decisions in the area of foreign and security policy. This is a requirement expected of EU candidates, which the European Commission is using in its annual assessments of Serbia’s suitability to join the EU. Without a genuine commitment to showing solidarity with the EU, it will be difficult for any new applicants, including Serbia, to convince other EU members to accept their EU membership bid.

But the challenge of normative constructs and memory of the wars of Yugoslav succession will not be easy to tackle. The EU can influence further change in Serbia by, once again, engaging with a broader range of actors. However, the EU’s current is short-sighted, tending to centre on security and strategic dimensions more than normative or discursive factors. An understanding of the latter is particularly crucial in overcoming obstacles towards Serbia’s European integration.

The responsibility rests on the Serbian Government to recognise this challenge and educate their citizens about the benefits and realistic expectations of EU membership—provided that it itself is aware of these benefits, which go beyond financial. Serbian victimhood discourses, the concept of East/West bridging and the neutrality principle will need to be considered when negotiating further European integration framework for Serbia. Both the EU and the Serbian
Government will need to approach their dialogue process with more flexibility and innovation, but the membership prospect for Serbia, whilst not pre-determined, should at least be more credible.

European integration cannot be completed until all remaining Balkan states are given the same chance to thrive inside the EU, as other states from the same region who have already acceded to the EU. The inclusion of post-communist countries into the EU served to overcome Europe’s traditional divisions, making the region more united and the EU stronger as an international actor. It also enhanced the EU’s diplomatic skills. However, to overcome the remaining challenges in the relationship between the EU and Serbia, researchers should recognise which normative obstacles have been responsible for halting Serbia’s political and diplomatic development in recent historical eras.

Further research will be certainly needed for the next phase of EU-Serbia relations, as the formal accession negotiations began in January 2014. This thesis has broadened research inquiry into challenges to Serbia’s European integration, which could offer a useful framework for further study. Ultimately, Serbia’s membership of the EU would be good for Europe and good for Serbia and for its non-EU external partners—even if Serbia will be able to join the EU only after 2019. Serbia’s accession into the EU would be a historic example of how the EU’s soft power, with its transformational capacity, managed to overcome, together with Serbia’s political leaders, normative obstacles to the EU’s further enlargement into the Western Balkans. It could also serve as a model for other candidates, and as an example of what the EU diplomacy can achieve when it adopts a broader vision of solidarity.
APPENDIX ONE: MAPS

Map 1: Royalist Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{1167}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Provinces_of_the_Kingdom_of_Serbs_Croats_and_Slovenes_1920-1922.png}
\caption{Provinces of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1920-1922)}
\end{figure}

Map 2: Axis/fascist occupation of Yugoslavia during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{1168}

Map 4: State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2005.1170

Map 5: Serbia in 2013.¹¹⁷¹

APPENDIX TWO:

MILESTONES IN EU–YUGOSLAVIA/SERBIA RELATIONS

1965: The EU is in informal negotiations with the SFRJ on a prospective trade agreement.

1967: Declaration on Bilateral Relations was signed on 2 December, establishing a framework for closer economic relations.

1968: Yugoslavia becomes Europe’s first socialist state to accredit an ambassador to the EU.

On 15 October, the EU and Yugoslavia begin negotiations on a comprehensive trade agreement.

1970: In March, the EU and Yugoslavia sign a non-preferential trade agreement in Brussels, which came into force in May that year.

1971: Yugoslavia becomes a member of the European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical research, a group under the auspices of the Council.

1973: EU and Yugoslavia sign their second five-year agreement.

1974: EU and Yugoslavia establish regular ministerial meetings.

1975: EU and Yugoslavia establish two sub-committees with task of exchanging information on development of cooperation in agricultural industry and technology.

1976: EU and Yugoslavia issue a Joint Declaration on bilateral relations in December, and Yugoslavia gains access to the European Investment Bank loan facility.

1980: EU and Yugoslavia sign a Cooperation Agreement in April, which is more comprehensive than the EU’s agreements with other Mediterranean countries. The EU opens a delegation in Belgrade.

1985: In March, the EU and Yugoslavia establish an agricultural research working group.

1986: EU and Yugoslavia engage in discussions on energy planning.

1987: In December, the EU and Yugoslavia sign an Additional protocol of economic adaptation, and a Second Protocol on Financial Cooperation.

1990: Yugoslavia expresses interest in EU membership.

1992: The EU sanctions against FRY come into force.
2000: On 9 October, the EU lifts some sanctions against FRY following the overthrow of Milošević.

2003: The murder of Serbian Prime Minister in March sets back Serbia’s EU integration.

2004: On 1 October, the European Council opens a process for Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia.

2005: On 3 May, the EU calls off talks with Serbia, urging it to improve cooperation with the ICTY.

On 1 October, the EU and Serbia launch negotiations for Stabilization and Association Agreement.

2006: On 3 May, the EU suspends talks on the SAA with the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro over its failure to arrest Mladić.

After Montenegro declares independence in June, Serbia re-affirms its commitment to continue negotiations with the EU.

In July, Serbia delivers an action plan on improving cooperation with the ICTY.

2007: On 13 June, the EU resumes negotiations with Serbia.

On 7 November, the EU initiates the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia. The Netherlands and Belgium demand that Serbia must first improve its cooperation with the ICTY.

On 14 December, the European Council approves a European Security and Defence Policy mission for Kosovo, a decision which the Serbian Prime Minister Koštunica opposes.

2008: On 1 January, agreements between the EU and Serbia on visa facilitation and on readmission enter into force.

On 4 February, the EU establishes a European Union Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) to support Kosovo’s transition.

After Kosovo proclaims independence on 17 February, rioting in Belgrade damages embassies of several EU countries.

On 18 February, the EU adopts a revised European partnership for Serbia.

On 29 April, the EU and Serbia sign the SAA and interim agreement on trade and trade-related issues in Luxembourg.

In May, the European Commission gives Serbia the ‘Roadmap on visa liberalisation’.

On 8 September, the Serbian National Assembly approves ratification of the SAA.
In December, the EULEX takes over supervision of Kosovo from the UN.

2009: In July, the European Commission recommends that visa liberalisation is granted to Serbia.

In November, the Council of Ministers reached a decision to abolish visa restrictions for Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia, which comes into force on 19 December.

On 19 December, visa requirement is waived for Serbian nationals travelling to Schengen countries on a biometric passport

On 22 December, Serbia applies for EU membership.

2010: On 14 June, the Council of Ministers decides to forward the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia to the national parliaments of EU member states for ratification.

On 25 October, the Council of Ministers sends Serbia’s candidacy request to the European Commission, which then embarked on preparing a pre-accession questionnaire of 37 volumes and over 5,000 pages.

2011: On 31 January, Serbia responds to the EU questionnaire.

On 12 October, the European Commission recommends Serbia for EU candidate status, subject to further progress in Belgrade’s relations with Priština.

On 9 December, the European Council postpones a decision on Serbia’s candidature under pressure from Germany, following a security incident in Kosovo’s North.

2012: On 1 March, Serbia becomes an official candidate for EU membership.

2013: In April, under EU auspices Serbia and Kosovo form the Brussels Agreement.

On 28 June, the European Council endorses the Commission’s opinion to start negotiations with Serbia.

On 1 September, the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia enters into force.

On 17 December, the Council adopts the negotiating framework with Serbia and committed to hold the first intergovernmental conference in the near future.

2014: On 21 January, the EU-Serbia intergovernmental conference takes place, marking the official beginning of Serbia’s accession negotiations with the EU.
APPENDIX THREE: INTERVIEWS

Interview questions for the interviewees from the European Union

1. What are the key defining characteristics of the EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia?
2. Who are the key actors within the EU involved in the shaping of the EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia, and who are those responsible for the implementation of EU policies towards this country?
3. What have been the major challenges the EU has encountered in its negotiations with Serbia over the latter’s prospective accession?
4. Which actor/institution in Serbia is the most difficult negotiating partner from the EU’s perspective?
5. Do you think it would be good thing to the EU if Serbia acceded?
6. What do you consider to be the main obstacles for the EU’s enlargement policy towards Serbia?
7. In which policy areas would you like to see significant improvements regarding EU-Serbia relations?
8. What role, in your opinion, do historical past and memory of recent conflicts (from the 1990s era) play in the shaping of the EU’s conditionality towards Serbia?
9. Do you think that the key EU foreign policy goals in its relationship with Serbia have been achieved over the past five years?
10. What are likely to be the key foreign policy priorities for the EU in its relations with Serbia over the next five years, from the EU perspective?
11. Do you think that the EU would be more or less secure following Serbia’s accession?
12. How do you think Serbia’s prospective membership of the EU may affect life in the EU and regional stability?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to add to your responses?
Interview questions for the interviewees from Serbia

1. What are the key defining characteristics of the EU’s foreign policy towards Serbia?
2. Who are the key actors in Serbia involved in the shaping of Serbian foreign policy responses towards the EU, and who are those responsible for the implementation of relevant policies in this regard?
3. What have been the major challenges that Serbia has encountered in negotiating its accession with the EU?
4. Which actor/institution in the EU is the most difficult negotiating partner from Serbia’s perspective?
5. Do you think it would be a good thing for Serbia to join the EU?
6. What do you consider to be the main obstacles to Serbia’s European integration?
7. In which policy areas would you like to see significant improvements regarding EU-Serbia relations?
8. What role, in your opinion, do historical past and memory of recent conflicts (from the 1990s era) play in the shaping of Serbia’s responses towards the EU, including its conditionality policy?
9. Do you think that Serbia’s key foreign policy goals in its engagement with the EU have been achieved over the past five years?
10. What are likely to be the key foreign policy priorities for Serbia’s engagement with the EU over the next five years, from a Serbian perspective?
11. Do you think that Serbia would be more or less secure after it joined the EU?
12. How do you think Serbia’s prospective membership in the EU may affect life for Serbian citizens and regional stability?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to add to your responses?
Key interviewees

- Dr Slavica Đukić-Dejanović, Parliamentary Speaker of the Serbian National Assembly, Socialist Party of Serbia (Belgrade, January 2010)
- Tomislav Nikolić, then opposition leader of the Serbian Progressive Party (Belgrade, January 2010; Belgrade, April 2012)
- Branko Ružić, Member of the Serbian National Assembly and member of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; Socialist Party of Serbia (Belgrade, January 2010)
- Srdan Srećković, Minister for Diaspora, Serbian Renewal Movement (Belgrade, June 2012)
- Dr Slobodan Samardžić, Faculty of Political Science, University of Belgrade, former Minister for Kosovo and Metohija, and Member of the Serbian National Assembly; Democratic Party of Serbia (Belgrade, July 2010)
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STATEMENT

I, Nina Marković, acknowledge that this thesis is in full my own work.

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Signature
POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND SERBIA IN A BROADER HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

ASSESSING NORMATIVE OBSTACLES TO SERBIA’S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

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July 2014

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University