

Forum: Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1)

Issue: Maintenance of international security, good neighborliness, stability and development in South - Eastern Europe

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INTRODUCTION

Spanning 11 different countries —and a partially recognized one— South-Eastern Europe, also known as the Balkans, is one of the most complex and sensitive political and economic regions in the world. From the 19th century onwards, the region has faced a variety of issues, ranging from economic instability, border disputes and ethnic differences to wars and conflicts.

The occupation of the major part of the Balkan Peninsula by the Ottoman Empire, starting as early as in the late 1300s, led to a series of uprisings and wars, as well as the displacement of many ethnic minorities that ultimately caused a lot of crises in the region. With World War I starting from the region and further escalating within its countries and World War II becoming a serious threat for the unstable nations of the Balkan Peninsula, stability and good neighborliness were neglected concepts. The rise and fall of Yugoslavia resulted in a series of ethnic conflicts, wars of independence, and insurgencies, which gave South-Eastern Europe its current composition, without alleviating the never-ending crisis that the region faces to this day.



1. A comprehensive map of South-Eastern Europe

¹ “Balkans.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 12 July 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans#/media/File:Karte_Suedosteuropa_03_01.png.

In modern day, with multiple South-Eastern European countries being members of the European Union, economic stability in the region is at an all-time high. However, the influx of refugees and immigrants, combined with the anti-immigration policies of certain countries, the Kosovo dispute, the tensions between North Macedonia and Greece, and the rise of nationalism, among others, are very real problems that hinder the region's potential economic prosperity and worsen relationships between states.

With the 'Southern Gas Corridor' —a gas pipeline set to traverse the majority of the countries South-Eastern Europe— well under way, there is even greater hope for financial advancement in the region. Initiatives, such as the South-East European Cooperation Process, and efforts to integrate more South-Eastern European countries into the EU, shape the ground for further cooperation between countries ensuring good neighborliness, as well as stability in the long-term. However, in order for these to be achieved, the key issues discussed in this study guide must be tackled in order to pave the way for a more stable South-Eastern Europe.

DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

South-Eastern Europe (SEE)

Also referred to as the Balkans, SEE is typically consisted of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Greece and Kosovo, with portions of Romania and Turkey belonging to the region as well. It is the easternmost major peninsula in Europe and one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse parts of the continent.

Good neighborliness

A fundamental principle of the United Nations stating that nations should live in peace among themselves and avoid any sort of conflict or tension as 'good neighbors'.

Development of a state

According to the United Nations, 'a state develops by achieving a higher quality of life for its people.' It is important to note that development can be differentiated into economic development, social development and environmental protection, while all of the above must be achieved in a sustainable manner, thus adhering to the UN's Sustainable Development policy.

Stability

A prerequisite for achieving sustainable development that refers to a time of peace and economic prosperity in a country.

National Security

National security is the ability of states to protect their people, borders and interests, either by means of their armed forces and intelligence agencies or diplomacy.

International Security

Often referred to as global security, international security is the need to preserve and safeguard international peace in the context of globalization —i.e. the extensive interconnection of states, economies, and societies.

Free Trade Agreement

A type of trading bloc that promotes international trade within a region between member states that all impose the same tariffs, quotas and regulations to third parties. Typical examples of Free Trade Agreements include NAFTA (Canada, U.S.A., Mexico) and EFTA (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein).

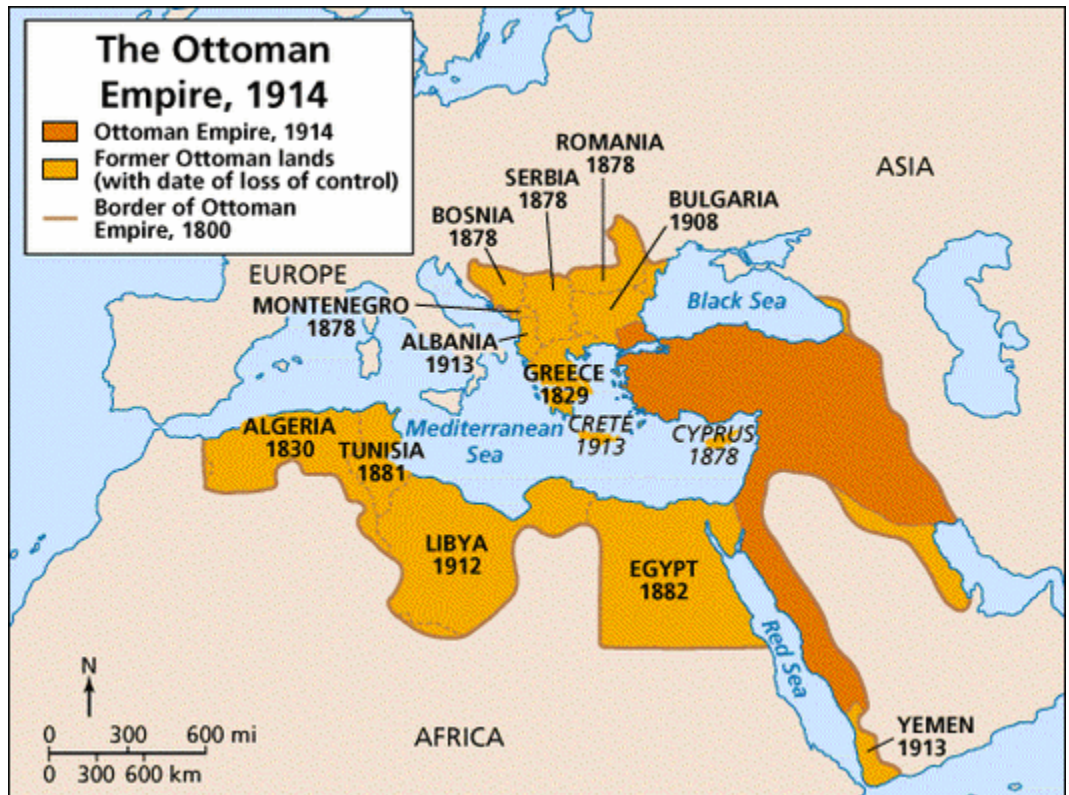
Refugee

A person that has been forced to flee his/her homeland due to violence, war or persecution on a racial, religious, social, national, or political bias.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Influence of the Ottoman Empire

By the 1800s, the Ottoman Empire had managed to gain control over most of the Balkan Peninsula. However, around that time multiple independence movements and uprisings broke out, which were oftentimes supported by the major European powers of the time that sought to weaken the Ottoman Empire. This resulted in the self-determination of many regions of the Ottoman Empire, such as Serbia or Bulgaria. By the beginning of the 20th century, many of these autonomous regions had gained their independence, as the Ottoman rule in South-Eastern Europe started to subside.



2. A map of the Ottoman Empire's expansion to the Balkans showing the dates when each country became independent

The First Balkan War

In 1912, the Balkan League was created under Russian influence by Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, all former parts of the Ottoman Empire. The key target of the Balkan League was to create a military alliance that would retake the region of Macedonia from the Ottomans.

Subsequently, the First Balkan War started, when in 1912 Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire. The Balkan League managed to defeat the Ottoman armed forces that then signed a peace treaty in May 1913, in London, dividing the lands between victors.

The Second Balkan War

² *The Ottoman Empire, 1914.*

historum.com/proxy.php?image=http%3A%2F%2Fda4ottomanempire.weebly.com%2Fuploads%2F1%2F3%2F5%2F4%2F13546577%2F882094291.gif%3F529&hash=913414c2230e706bb2e3411316d5af4b.

The Second Balkan War started on June 1913 after a conflict arose between Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria with regards to the division of the lands gained in the First Balkan War. The joint Greek and Serbian forces defeated the Bulgarians and divided Macedonia among themselves, with Greece gaining the majority of the region, as well as Crete, and Serbia gaining Kosovo and Northern Macedonia.

However, after the end of the Balkan wars, Albania became an independent state under a German prince, after pressure put by the West —particularly, Italy. The Balkan Wars not only helped shape some of South-Eastern Europe's modern borders but also increased tensions between Serbia and Austria, with the latter supporting Bulgaria, which eventually led to the eruption of World War I.

World War I

It is important to note that South-Eastern Europe is, in essence, the place where WWI began. In 1914, Austria-Hungary had just annexed the region of Bosnia & Herzegovina, which further heightened tensions between the country and Serbia. Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was visiting Sarajevo in order to oversee a series of military exercises. However, a group of young Bosnians —Gavrilo Princip, Trifko Grabez and Nedeljko Cabrinovic— were sent to Serbia to acquire weaponry that the Black Hand, a terrorist group with ties to the Serbian army, helped them smuggle back to Bosnia & Herzegovina.

On 28 June 1914, Gavrilo Princip assassinated Franz Ferdinand, eventually resulting to Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia, while throughout 1914, more than 60 war declarations were made between multiple European countries. South-Eastern Europe was divided, with Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire joining Germany and Austria-Hungary in the so-called Central Powers, while Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Greece supported the Triple Entente.



The repercussions of WWI on South-Eastern Europe meant that a massive amount of people were dislocated, while the less-developed regions suffered economically. The region's borders were changed, since countries, like Romania and Greece, gained big portions of land after the Entente victory, while the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes —later Yugoslavia— was created.

3. Map showing the South-Eastern European borders after WWI

World War II

During the Second World War, Italy sought to expand its borders by attacking the Balkan Peninsula. However, it was met with resistance from Greece on the Albanian front, which almost defeated the Italian forces, but the subsequent German intervention led, with the help of Bulgaria, to the occupation of South-Eastern Europe by Axis Powers.

Following the defeat of the Axis Powers, tensions in the region increased, with the Yugoslav forces murdering several hundreds of Bulgarians in Macedonia,⁴ because of their support to the Axis Powers. As a consequence of WWII, the Balkans saw a rise in ethnic tensions, inner-state conflicts and insurgencies.

Cold War

During the Cold War, tensions have begun to rise. Namely, Turkish-Greek relations were strained, something that reached an all-time high in 1974, when Greek

³ Limited, Alamy. "Stock Photo - The Balkan States between the First and Second World Wars." Alamy, www.alamy.com/stock-photo-the-balkan-states-between-the-first-and-second-world-wars-27520285.html?pv=1&stamp=2&imageid=7FDCFF46-E63A-4F28-ABA6-.

⁴ "Ванеса Кинг." *Metamk*, 10 Jan. 2019, meta.mk/en/bulgarian-media-are-resurrecting-a-nationalist-myth-by-resurrecting-the-bloody-christmas-of-1945-in-macedonia/.

authorities orchestrated a coup d'état in Cyprus, which was followed by a Turkish invasion of the island. These events came shortly after the fall of the Greek military junta, and led to a de facto partition of Cyprus between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots.

At the time, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania had become satellite states of the USSR, seeing as the Communist Parties seized power in these countries and remained in power until at least the 1960s.

At the same time, Yugoslavia became the first communist country to break with the USSR, meaning that Tito—the leader of Yugoslavia—sought to adopt his own policies, which were oftentimes different from the Soviet Union's. Despite preserving positive relations with the West—namely, Greece and Turkey, which were both members of NATO by the time—Yugoslavia sought to remain neutral preferring other nations, such as Indonesia and Egypt, as its allies.

While the rise of communism in South-Eastern Europe definitely brought new factors in the equation, it is important to note that ethnic rivalries still existed, while the region preserved its diversity. However, the effects of the Cold War can be seen through the prism of the events after 1989, which shaped the region's future.



4. A map showing the USSR-aligned countries in South-Eastern Europe during the Cold War

⁵ “Satellite State: Facts, Summary, History, Impact & Communism.” *School History*, schoolhistory.co.uk/notes/satellite-state/.

Post-Communism

During the 1980s and especially the 1990s, South-Eastern Europe experienced the fall of communist regimes. As westernization entered South-Eastern Europe, Albania, Romania and Bulgaria experienced a time of relevant instability and various insurgencies.

The Yugoslav Wars

However, the harshest transition was the one of Yugoslavia. Following the death of its leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the country descended into a crisis, with multiple ethnic parties and nationalist movements seeking to seize power. States, like Croatia and Slovenia, supported the decentralization of the Yugoslav government and the abolishment of communism, which was opposed by Serbia.

Soon, in 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence, which led the Serb minority in these countries to side with Serbian authorities and start a four-year war. At the same time, in Bosnia —the most diverse region in the Balkans—, Croats and Muslims organized a referendum, while Serbs boycotted it and denied its validity. With the Serbian abstention, the 60 % of voters decided in favor of Bosnia's independence. This soon started the Bosnian war, with the Serbs fighting against the Bosnian Croats and Muslims. The Serbs occupied certain territories and declared them independent under the name of Republika Srpska.

The Serbs sieged the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo for 44 months causing many trials and tribulations to Bosnian citizens who suffered not only from lack of food and supplies, but also from constant sniper attacks and bombings. This caught the attention of the international community, which recognized Bosnian independence, as Serbs occupied two-thirds of the country.

There were soon incidents of ethnic cleansing, like the Srebrenica massacre⁶, where Serb authorities massacred 8,000 Muslim men and boys in a UN protected area. During the Yugoslav Wars, more than 20,000 women, mostly Muslims, were raped. These have been recognized as war crimes and genocide by the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which still persecute the offenders to this day.

In 1995, after a bombing of the Serb forces by NATO, the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia agreed to a peace deal, and a NATO peacekeeping force was established in both the Muslim-Croat and the Serb parts of the country.

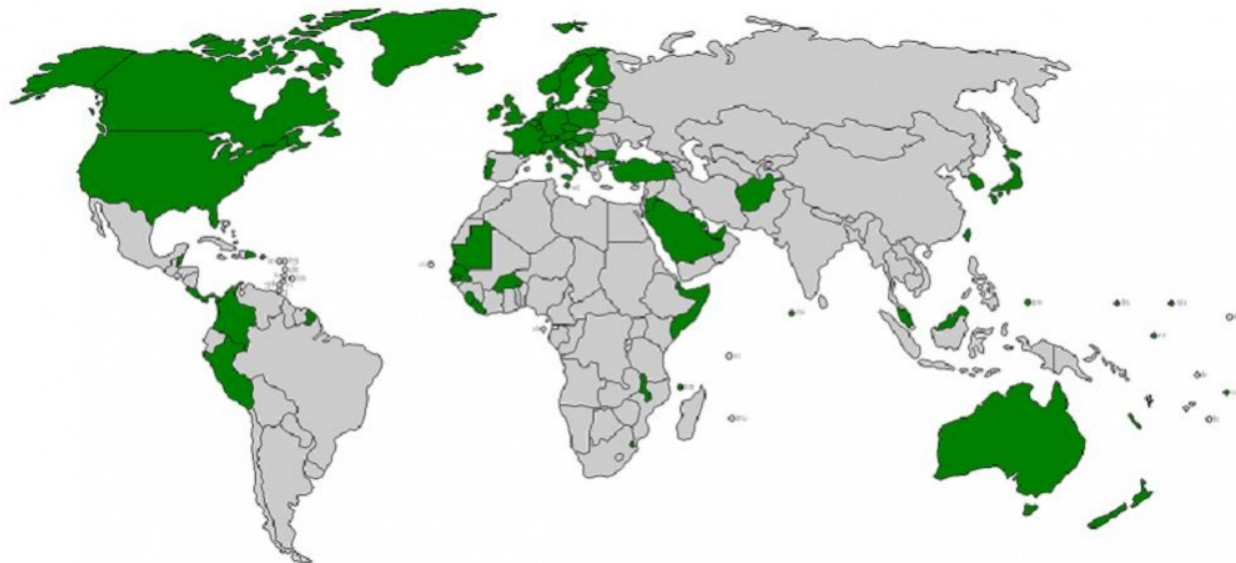
⁶ Smith, R. Jeffrey. "Srebrenica Massacre." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 22 Nov. 2017, www.britannica.com/event/Srebrenica-massacre.

From the fall of Yugoslavia came to be the independent states of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, F.Y.R. Macedonia (later North Macedonia), and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was soon renamed Serbia & Montenegro (while Serbia and Montenegro became two separate independent countries in 2006, and Kosovo declared its independence in 2008).

Kosovo's Declaration of Independence

Shortly after the end of the Yugoslav wars, the Kosovo Liberation Army fought the Serbs (from 1998 to 1999) with no results. However, Kosovo officially declared its independence in 2008. Serbia condemned the declaration and supported that it was illegal, which was further backed by Russia. However, the International Court of Justice deemed it legal.

As of 2019, 102 UN member states recognize Kosovo as independent, along with 23 European Union countries. Kosovo is not a member of the UN, seeing as Russia and China do not officially recognize it and veto in the Security Council its admission. Kosovo's population is around 1.8 million people, of which 95% are Albanians. It is important to note that there are frequent protests and tensions in Kosovo, while there is a UN mission established in the country (UNMIK) in order to preserve peace and stability in the region.



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5. Countries recognizing Kosovo

North Macedonia Name Change

⁷ "International Recognition of Kosovo." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 11 July 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_recognition_of_Kosovo#/media/File:CountriesRecognizingKosovo.

Ever since the FYROM's independence, Greece has been protesting the use of the name Macedonia as it implies a claim on a greater region mainly controlled by Greece, but also a link to Alexander the Great. Greece only allowed the country to join the UN under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It has opposed any further admission of the country to NATO or the EU. However, in June 2018, an agreement has been reached between the leaders of the two countries, the Prespes Agreement. It states that the country should rename itself as the Republic of North Macedonia, which officially entered into force in early 2019 ameliorating diplomatic relations between Greece and North Macedonia, but making the populations of both countries relatively discontent.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Croatia

Croatia has joined the European Union in 2013 and NATO in 2009. The Croatian Prime Minister, Andrej Plenkovic, has stated that Croatia's policy is fully supportive of maintaining stability and security in the region, as well as doing whatever is possible in order to strengthen economic advancement and interstate relations.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Due to its various ethnic and religious groups, Bosnia has often seen incidents of nationalism. However, after the election of a new government in 2015, it has sought the help of Europe in order to economically develop and preserve stability. It is important to note that the Serbian part of the country, Republika Srpska, has been calling for independence (and eventual unification with Serbia) since the Yugoslav wars increasing tensions in the region. The EU and the West in general have condemned the independence of Srpska.

Albania

Albania's stability has historically been tied to the stability of its neighboring countries. Albania is statistically one of the most nationalistic countries in Europe as is evident by incidents in the Greek-Albanian border. Albania is a member of NATO and a potential member of the EU.⁸

⁸ Deutsche Welle. "Nationalism on the Rise in Southeastern Europe: DW: 25.05.2012."
DW.COM, www.dw.com/en/nationalism-on-the-rise-in-southeastern-europe/a-15976124.

North Macedonia

With the recent name change, North Macedonia has great potential of joining NATO and the EU, which will help the country achieve economic stability. However, the name change left a lot of people dissatisfied with the government, as well as Greece.

Serbia

Serbia is a close ally of Russia, as well as a possible member of the EU. Its relations with its neighbors —Croatia and Bosnia— often fluctuate. Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's independence and condemns any actions of international recognition.

Greece

Greece is both a member of the EU and NATO, while it suffers from a devastating financial crisis. Greeks have greatly judged the government with regard to their policy towards North Macedonia and Turkey, as well as immigration and refugees, which is one of the country's greatest problems. Greece has been seeking help from Europe to alleviate its financial crisis, as well as to handle the refugee influx.

Other South-Eastern European Countries

Bulgaria is both a member of NATO and the EU, while its economy has experienced rapid growth in recent years.

Slovenia is both a member of NATO and the EU, and joined the Western sphere of influence soon after its independence. It enjoys a high level of prosperity and stability, while its relations with its neighbors are peaceful.

Romania is both a member of the EU and NATO, and has been characterized as a fast growing economy. It has one of the highest Human Development Index (HDI) rates in Europe.

Montenegro joined NATO in 2017 and has been in recent years the top ally of Serbia. Before its NATO membership, the country has been a supporter of Russia. Montenegro has been looking for ways to rejuvenate its economy and lower unemployment rates.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO has recently been integrating more and more SEE countries, which comes in a direct opposition to Russia's historical influence over the Balkans. This means that, through gradual westernization, the USA's influence in the region is expanding.

European Union (EU)

The EU has sought to incorporate more SEE countries in recent years, which also led to the restriction of Russia's influence over the region. The EU could be SEE's hope for economic and social stability.

South-Eastern European Cooperation Process (SEECP)

SEECP is an initiative, in which all of the Balkan countries belong, to establish security, stability, growth and good neighborliness in the Balkans. SEECP was established in 1996 aiming to unite the Balkans after the Wars of Yugoslavia and protect peace in the region. It has already helped boost the economy of various Balkan countries, despite the strong competition from the EU. It has also established frequent talks between governments promoting good neighborliness.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
15 February 1804	The Serbian Revolution against the Ottomans begins setting the forefront for more similar actions by other ethnic groups.
1912	The Balkan League is established.
October 1912	Montenegro declares war on the Ottomans triggering the first Balkan War.
30 May 1913	The Treaty of London is signed ending the first Balkan War.
29 June-10 August 1913	The Second Balkan War.
28 June 1914	Gavrilo Princip assassinates Franz Ferdinand starting WWI.

11 November 1918	The end of WWI.
1 December 1918	The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes is established.
28 October 1940	Italian authorities send an ultimatum to the Greek leader demanding the country's surrender. Greek's refusal to give in triggered the Italian invasion of the Balkan peninsula.
1945	Yugoslavia and Albania become socialist states.
1946	Bulgaria becomes a socialist state.
1947	Romania becomes a socialist state.
1948	Yugoslavia breaks ties with the USSR.
15 July 1974	Cypriot coup d'état.
1989-1990	The communist regimes in Romania, Bulgaria and Albania collapse.
25 June 1991	Slovenia and Croatia declare their independence from Yugoslavia.
1 March 1992	Bosnia declares its independence after a referendum starting the Yugoslav Wars.

5 April 1992-29 February 1996	The siege of Sarajevo.
July 1995	Srebrenica Massacre.
March-June 1995	NATO bombing of Yugoslavia.
1996	The South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) is established.
1998-1999	Kosovo War.
17 February 2008	Kosovo's declaration of independence.
12 June 2018	The Prespes Agreement.
February 2019	North Macedonia officially changes its name.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The Prespes Agreement

This Agreement was signed in June 2018 between Greece and FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) changing the latter's name to North Macedonia. It ended the long name dispute between the two countries, but left a lot of people in both countries dissatisfied.

UN GA Resolution A/RES/56/18

This UN Resolution was passed in November 2001 and published the following year. It discusses measures and actions, through which SEE can achieve long-term stability, good-neighborliness and security.

SEECF Resolution on Opportunities for Economic Cooperation

This resolution was published by SEECF and discusses measures aiming at strengthening the economies of the Balkan states through intergovernmental cooperation.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Central European Free Trade Agreement

This trade bloc consists of non-EU countries (nowadays, mainly in SEE — Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo (represented by UNMIK), Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina (and Moldova). It aims at boosting the economies of these countries and ensuring stability, despite the rising power of the EU.

UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

UNMIK is the official mission of the UN in Kosovo aiming at “help[ing] the Security Council achieve an overall objective: to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo and advance regional stability in the western Balkans.”⁹

Efforts of the EU

The European Union has generally tried to integrate Balkan countries, with Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia being already its members. This way, it would ensure not only economic advancement, but also strengthen intergovernmental relations in the region.

⁹“Mandate.” *UNMIK*, 17 Feb. 2016, unmik.unmissions.org/mandate.

Southern Gas Corridor

The 'Southern Gas Corridor' project is a gas pipeline that is set to cross multiple SEE countries. The project is quite promising with regard to stability, as it is set to make South-Eastern Europe more energy sufficient. The EU could potentially become more dependent on this environment friendly energy source, which could mean even greater economic advancement for the SEE countries. However, there have been some concerns on behalf of the USA and the EU, seeing as these pipelines will be bringing gas from Russia. The fear that Russia's influence is once again expanding in the Balkan Peninsula could lead to rising diplomatic tensions in the region.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The question at hand is a pretty multidimensional one; therefore, delegates must consider different measures for different aspects of the issue.

Firstly, the weaker economies of SEE must be supported in order to catch up with the stronger ones. This can be achieved through strengthening the pre-existing projects, such as SEECF or the Southern Corridor, through encouraging foreign direct investment and, even potentially, considering the integration of more SEE countries into the EU.

Moreover, intergovernmental cooperation must be encouraged either by enhancing projects, such as SEECF, or by promoting talks and direct communication between governments. On these grounds, the vast ethnic differences in the Balkans must be taken into account and, perhaps, measures that aim to bring the peoples of SEE closer, like those of Greece and North Macedonia, must be taken. This could come in the form of encouraging social cohesion by means of education and several projects, like the ones the EU is currently initiating.

Violence and nationalism in regions, like Kosovo and the Greek-Albanian border, must be taken into consideration as well. Delegates could propose further patrolling of these regions or the strengthening of UNMIK. Kosovo itself is another aspect of the question at hand, where peace and stability must be ensured, while also taking measures with regard to the status and recognition of Kosovo. This could be done either via talks with Serbia and Russia or negotiation processes.

A big issue facing SEE, as mentioned before, is refugees. With countries, like Hungary that border SEE, closing their borders, the states of SEE must be helped as far as humanitarian and medical aid are concerned, while also ensuring the safety, shelter and education of refugees and migrants.

Ensuring stable regimes should also be a priority of the committee, as SEE has dealt with the issue a lot in the past. Delegates may look into ways of advising the less stable governments or educating citizens in order for them to make informed political

decisions. Lastly, the operation of international courts, like the ICC and ICTY, that persecute war criminals in the region could be continued or aided alleviating the pain of many families.

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