

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EU Policy Recommendations are a part of the project of University Debates. The project is aimed at promoting democratic values among youth. Each semester, university students at a participating university form a team to attend a workshop to develop their debate skills and to measure these in a debate organized shortly after the workshop. In addition to that, students' teams write a policy brief on a topic of their choice, consisting of analysis of their national situation (based on interviews and teams' own research) and to prepare recommendations for EU policy. At the time of the debate, a survey is taken among the students of all participating universities.

Seven university teams from five countries take part in the project. Workshops and debates are broadcast online and are open to other university students interested in discussing democratic values, European policy, transatlantic security and other international issues. These EU Policy Recommendations were presented by the students' teams to the members of the European Parliament on 25 April, 2018.

I. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO

- ❖ **TEAM:** Ammina Bašović, Ismail Ćidić, Rabija Kruško, Iman Hasanbegović, Leyla Hasanbegović
- ❖ **TOPIC:** EU enlargement: Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession

- 1) EU should support Western Balkans countries' EU and NATO path more strongly because of the rising Russian meddling and influence. It is not a secret anymore that one of the main Russian foreign policy objectives is the Balkans, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina. After they lost Montenegro and Macedonia, they want to destabilize the region via Milorad Dodik's regime and his dangerous secessionist game¹, formation of the para-military forces² and massive arming of the police forces³. EU countries that are members of the NATO should accept Bosnia and Herzegovina in the mentioned international organization as soon as possible to avoid any "Montenegrin", "Macedonian" or even "Ukrainian" scenario. After NATO membership, the EU should accept Bosnia and other Western Balkans countries to finally close the door for the dangerous Russian interference.
- 2) All non-EU Western Balkans countries should become part of the EU at the same time. It is known for years that Serbia's and Croatia's foreign policy includes direct interference into the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina by claiming that they are protecting their people there. This interference includes everything from supporting the local politicians⁴ to meddling into the legislation process⁵. In order to avoid any unfortunate situations for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to avoid Slovenian-Croatian scenario, the remaining non-EU Western Balkans countries should become part of the EU at the same time. Although the latest EU's Western Balkans Strategy gives better chances to Serbia and Montenegro than to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU should reevaluate its position on this matter. Moreover, this is not only about Bosnia, it also concerns Albania and especially Kosovo which may have an even more difficult path.

¹ Kovačević, Danijel. "Dodik's Secession Talk Keeps Bosnia on Edge". *Balkan Insight*. Jan 17, 2017.

<<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/dodik-s-secession-talk-keeps-bosnia-on-edge-01-17-2017>>

² Borger, Julian. "Russian-trained mercenaries back Bosnia's Serb separatists". *The Guardian*. Jan 12, 2018.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/12/russian-trained-mercenaries-back-bosnias-serb-separatists>>

³ Borger, Julian. "Arms shipment to Bosnian Serbs stokes EU fears". *The Guardian*. Feb 13, 2018.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/feb/13/bosnian-serb-police-arms-purchase-stokes-eu-fears>>

⁴ Toe, Rodolfo and Dragojlo, Saša. "RS Opposition Fears Interference From Serbia". *Balkan Insight*. May 16, 2016.

<<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/opposition-in-rs-fears-influence-from-serbia-05-17-2016>>

⁵ Lakić, Mladen. "Pressure Mounts on Bosnia to Change Electoral Law". *Balkan Insight*. Jan 10, 2018.

<<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/international-intervention-for-bosnia-to-change-electoral-law-01-10-2018>>

- 3) EU should continue to be present in Bosnia and Herzegovina to support the reforms of the public administration, educational system and the judiciary arm.

EU countries and EU in general were one of the key players in the formation of the contemporary political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why EU has the responsibility to remain fully active and present in order to help Bosnia and Herzegovina to pass the obstacles. That includes, among other things, reforms of public administration, educational system and continuation of the reforms in the judiciary.

II. ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MOLDOVA

❖ **TEAM:** Radu MACRII; Diana PERJU; Olivia PRISACARI; Dorina MĂRGĂRINT; Nicoleta ARTIN

❖ **TOPIC:** Common Agricultural Policy

- 1) **EU should give priority to quality and taste of agricultural products instead of homogeneity, perfect shape and size of products.**

It is well known that the European Union requires high standards for agricultural products, meaning safety, labelling, packaging and marketing rules for products as well as requires a homogeneity of goods from the same range of products - perfect size, shape etc. From our point of view, European agricultural policy should not be focused on the standards of homogeneity of agricultural products, namely the size, the perfect shape, the packaging of agricultural products, but the quality and the most important taste of the products.

Of course these standards are also important and attractive for consumers, but quality should be a priority. For example, the Moldovan agricultural products do not have perfect shapes, our apples do not have the same size and form, but instead they have a great taste and high quality...

- 2) **EU should support education, technical, and financial assistance to agricultural producers and implement marketing strategies.**

Make available a full range of education, technical, and financial assistance. There are a number of constraints to farmers adopting alternative management practices that cannot be fully addressed by a single type of assistance. Education can inform producers about innovative practices, technical assistance reduces the private cost of obtaining information about a particular practice on a particular farm, helps provide managerial skill that may be

lacking, and financial assistance helps overcome a short planning horizon, allows the farmer to accept greater risk beyond the short run, and provides an incentive to try something new. It is also very important to set up a marketing school to teach agricultural producers about product promotion, creating attractive packaging, and finding potential buyers online.

3) EU should establish a B2B online trading platform for farmer's agricultural products, certified and accredited by European food safety authority.

By this recommendation we mean the establishment of a platform that will eliminate the intermediaries and increase the financial flow of farmers and correspondingly make the prices for agricultural products more affordable for consumers. The creation of a such platform will indirectly analyze which European farmers need to be subsidize more or less. This recommendation also assumes accentuation of institutional framework, responsible for food quality and safety through the functional improvement and technological endowment.

III. UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO

- ❖ **TEAM:** Anđela Lekić, Ivana Mugoša, Jovana Milonjić, Miloš Perović, Tomka Živković
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Future enlargement of the EU and integration process of Montenegro

1) Federalisation of the European Union

European Union should transform itself in order to have a stronger binding and less bureaucracy. European federation of citizens which have a common policy, economy, currency and common values is our perspective for better future. Only Federal Europe, with one heart and one lung, can be the leader of free world and free nations and citizens of the world. This means bringing order to the chaos. The EU is an important instrument in order to create an undivided, secure and peaceful Europe; all democratic countries in Europe that want to become part of it should be allowed to join the EU. We share a common belief with the European liberal family of a different and more advanced perspective of the European Union and firmly stand behind the idea that Montenegro is part of such a civilization, and it is the best way for a more prosperous and secure lives.

In regard to this, there should be more flexibility for those who want to be part of such system of values, realizing the importance of image and essential creation of Europe as a bastion of freedom in the world today.

2) Enlargement of the European Union

One of the basic principles of the EU is its enlargement in order to spread the European idea in as many countries of Europe. Of course, being a serious international organization, the EU has a strategy and plan of extending, and potential member states must meet certain requirements in order to become part of the EU. We believe that the expansion is still necessary, despite the political crisis in recent years.

First of all, we believe that the question of the Western Balkans and its very significant geopolitical areas can be dealt with only in the EU. Of course, we are not talking about the expansion in terms of achieving political goals only, but also stronger integration processes through which new members must pass in order to amplify its internal institutional system and be ready for the challenges of EU membership. This ultimately depends only on the speed of progress and reforms that countries of the Western Balkans achieve. The emphasis should be on the economic reforms that must be implemented and vigorously directed to structural weaknesses, lack of competitiveness and unemployment.

Also, all states must overcome the burden of the past, the resolution of outstanding issues before accession to the EU, and this is especially important for issues concerning borders. Unique and economically stable Europe is possible only under the common roof of the European Union, so its expansion is the basic condition for achieving this.

3) Greater presence in the Western Balkans

Regardless of Brexit and the crisis in Catalonia (which has certainly shaken not only the EU as an organization but also its belief in the idea of creating a supranational Europe) we are convinced that the expansion of the European Union is the best solution for the creation of a stable and united Europe. We believe that the expansion of the EU regarding the Western Balkans is extremely important, because without the Western Balkans there is no peace or stability in the EU. By adoption of the new strategy, the European Union strongly promotes the idea of European integration. In this way, the EU in addition to new energy and agility shows that enlargement to the Western Balkans is in its political, security and economic interests. New energy in the enlargement policy is key to the long-term sustainability of European unity, but also to raising the enthusiasm about integration of the Western Balkans. We are pleased that the European Commission made it clear that it will retain particularly important principle of evaluating individual merits of candidates for membership, and that it will strengthen its presence in the Western Balkans as a necessary precondition for its further development. It is evident that the officials in Brussels recognized that the prospect of European unity would significantly erode if there are not new extension, and that by the adoption of a new strategy this idea revives and

revitalizes. Certainly, Montenegro will continue to implement the necessary reforms and obligations in the European integration process. The great importance for us and the whole region is the presence of European Union in the Western Balkans, because it is just a necessary prerequisite for further development of the whole region.

IV. UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE, FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

- ❖ **TEAM:** Sofija Mirčetić, Lana Hadži-Niković, Aleksandar Ivković, Stefan Dimitrijević, Goran Sandić
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Politics of Enlargement (Berlin Process)

- 1) It is not particularly necessary for the EU to have the current number of initiatives in the region of Western Balkans. This situation is leading to loss of focus and inability to prioritize reforms that deserve to be carried out as soon as possible. It will be much more effective if there were a manageable number of initiatives with the implementation that can be easily monitored. Awareness raising and visibility of the EU still leave something to be desired. Citizens of Western Balkans unfortunately remain largely uninformed about the benefits of the membership. The way this entity is organized is also hard to understand, and the economic benefits of the free trade and movement of people, goods and services often get overshadowed by populist rhetoric about unelected bureaucrats regulating the lives of ordinary people. This is why the EU should, firstly, make its presence in the region more solid (for example, by not waiting for the USA to join in before solving serious problems as in the case of Macedonia). Secondly, the network between the EU, local politicians and representatives of civil society should be much more developed, especially through the youth, which has proven to be ready to work for the better future interstate relations.
- 2) Infrastructure, energy and transport have been singled out as the sectors that benefited the most from the Berlin process. The countries in the region have been incentivized to further align their policies in these areas with the EU. This is a positive step towards the general goal of economic interdependence and cooperation, whose importance cannot be overstated. EU should encourage even more development in the areas of “connectivity”, because nothing brings countries together more efficiently than the networks that enhance trade and movement of people. However, it is also in the interest of the EU to insist more robustly on the principles of rule of law, separation of power, democratic representation as well as the existence and functioning of independent institutions. This aspect of post-

communism and post-conflict development remains a problem in various degrees throughout the region. The reason behind this recommendation is the long-term stability and prosperity of the future members. Present negative tendencies in these areas contribute at least in part to the slow economic growth and rising emigration, which will represent a burden for the EU as it expands its membership.

- 3) At the institutional level, European Union should include representatives of national parliaments in the Berlin process and similar future initiatives. It is extremely important for the legislative branch of government not to be left out because of the regulatory role it plays in the national policy making. The dialogue organized between heads of state/government is laudable, but it requires additional elements of checks and balances if it aims to achieve greater success.

V. UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD, FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY

- ❖ **TEAM:** Dunja Funduk, Renata Trajković, Jelena Žarić, Marija Sušić, Gojko Dimić
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Media, Media education

- 1) First problem we named was lack of information about EU negotiations and lack of interpretation of the official and protocolar statements of EU and domestic politicians. What European Union could do is affect mass media in Serbia to explain all that statements so that everyone can understand them and how will that statements and regulations affect everyday life in Serbia. European Union could also establish institutions whose employees could travel across the country and answer people's questions about negotiations in language they could understand. EU could send some brief for mass media in Serbia with recommendations how to report and how to interpret statements and PR information they get every day.
- 2) Inducting media education courses in elementary and high schools in Serbia is a second recommendation we recognized as an important improvement in position of Serbian media. European Union may give samples through lectures how to train graduated journalists to be suitable to teach in schools. Also, European Union could come up with a way of additionally educating graduate of any related, mostly humanistic, science and to make them suitable to teach about media. Besides forming a capable lecturers, European Union in cooperation with Serbian media experts could devise a suitable approach for a teenagers

that will allow them to recognize different ways of manipulations, meanwhile teaching them how to independently form an opinion over a certain subject.

- 3) If a country is considering joining the European Union it needs to rethink the current state of mass media as well as how to reshape or change certain policies and the countries cultural compass. In order to make media more objective and fair, we need to implement better education about one of the most important professions of our age, journalism. Informing the public and doing it objectively without negligence is extremely important. The most obvious and necessary solution for Serbian media is helping to create a network of professional journalists who can implement education on politics and media, censorship, auto-censorship, threat of violence towards investigative journalists etc. That network could help less funded media, demand stronger court cases and expertise so that human rights are left intact. The network could also assist in creating a program aimed at educating the public as well as up and coming journalists, because journalists are not the only people sharing and receiving information in the age of the internet. People need to know the repercussions that come with engaging in public discourse and how they reveal certain information. While EU has government funded organizations like The European Council that vouch for free speech and fight to educate the public about the world, in Serbia similar types of organizations are silenced or are not given the chance to do their job even though The Law on Public Information and Media grants those rights.

VI. UNIVERSITY OF MATEJ BEL IN BANSKA BYSTRICA

- ❖ **TEAM:** Vasyl Roman, Viktória Slížiková, Igor Sobol, Filip Sopóci, Adam Žilka
- ❖ **TOPIC:** EU Enlargement process considering FYR Macedonia and Montenegro for potential member states with proposals on their way to the accomplishment of Copenhagen Criteria till the year 2025

- 1) In the question of relations for example between Macedonia and Greece, but also between Macedonia and other countries in the Balkans, communication and strengthen relations are very important. Of course, Montenegro should also be diligent in relations with other countries. Not just communication, also cooperation with other European countries and sharing experiences can be very useful for Montenegro and Macedonia. Slovakia can offer their experiences, too. After its way to join European union which successfully finished in 2004.

- 2) For the successful entry of the two countries into the European Union, we consider the monitoring of the observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms, especially freedom of expression, to be of particular importance. The basic democratic rules must be respected by all Member States. The European Union has rigorous control mechanisms whose role is to rule out any doubts. Under current circumstances, we see no reason to set up additional control mechanisms. The accession negotiations themselves require effective, professional and efficient public administration. The further importance of these reforms is to improve the quality of public services and save money. An example may be Bulgaria, which has made its public administration more effective in joining the EU.
- 3) Montenegro and Macedonia can be let to enter the EU only when their economies and legislatures are ready for 100% according to the Copenhagen criteria. This is very important, because the EU does not need economically and politically weak countries and countries that are not ready to join them. The reason is that this could cause at least 2 huge problems, which would affect the EU and its economy in a very bad way: 1) economic crisis inside of the EU; 2) political crisis, which can cause more exits from the Union. Montenegro and Macedonia can very effectively cooperate in preparing for the entering to the EU because their legislatures are quite similar. Moreover, Montenegro is further in this process, so in this case they could help their neighbours. More stable and strong members of the EU means increasing its economic potential.

VII. COMENIUS UNIVERSITY IN BRATISLAVA

- ❖ **TEAM:** Veronika Šulková, Ivana Petrenčáková, Tomáš Ďuriš, Anna Brisudová, Katarína Šarníková
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Eurozone, Schengen area

- 1) In order to preserve the Schengen area, the outer borders should be more protected. We believe that the inner border checks are not the right way to fight against migration crisis and terrorism. Due to the copious advantages of the Schengen area, we strongly disagree with the inner boarder checks because it will slow down the movement of people, and more importantly, of goods. Labor force coming from migration is needed in the EU, however, there should be selection. From the recent events, it is obvious that there is a lack of sharing

of information among the countries, which leads to some potential security threats within the Schengen area. In our opinion, a secure database could help in protecting the inner and also outer borders, and would push the countries towards closer cooperation. We suggest sharing information on the movement of the people who might pose a security threat among the Schengen countries. Moreover, the countries, in which there is a lack of integration processes, should pay more attention to resolving the on-going problem of inequality among its second and third generation of original migrants.

- 2)** As can be seen from the interviews, the current state of Eurozone is not in a good shape. In order to improve the Eurozone's response to the economic crises, we have to ensure that countries will cooperate and continue in the mutual effort to preserve the value of the euro. We have to build up mechanisms that can keep the Eurozone in good economic health. First of all, we agree that there is a need for a European Minister of Economy and Finance who will enforce the standards for the countries. Also we think that some sort of budgetary cohesion among the Eurozone countries is highly needed. We would also support the common budgetary settings by the agreement of the finance ministers among these countries, because there are plenty of countries, which do not abide the standards of Eurozone.

- 3)** The European Union financial transaction tax and the complete reform of the tax system is highly needed in the Eurozone. We support the complex reform of the tax system of European Union, in order to avoid tax frauds and we would also support the EU Financial transaction tax, because it can bring more money into the Eurozone. Both of these reforms could make Eurozone more attractive for other EU members and also broaden the European integration among its members. EU Financial transaction tax could be applied to the Eurozone preferentially, and thus this system would bring more money to the Eurozone.