

Секция «Иностранные языки и регионоведение»

European Union regional initiatives in the Balkans

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Our presentation considers how the political transformation of the countries of South-Eastern Europe, the various many-level factors influence the formation of identity in the region.

The available scientific data allowed us to assume that significant influence on the formation of identity have socialist past, the levels of economic development and international integration to the public.

Geographically, it is not simple to define the Balkan region, or rather South Eastern Europe as it is now more popularly called; it is even less easy to define it in the geo political sense³. Such a definition depends considerably on one's angle of vision and one's objective. In broad geographical terms, the Balkan Peninsula encompasses an area today home to eleven states: Albania, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and the six countries of the former Yugoslavia - Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

Slovenia too is often omitted from this group as geographically not being in the Balkans, to which it belongs even less from the cultural and economic point of view. This country has already held the Presidency of the European Union. On the other hand, a new entity has emerged - Kosovo, its status unresolved but recognized by a large number of EU members and countries of the region.

Finally, besides "South Eastern Europe," in EU geopolitical jargon the term "Western Balkans" is also in use to denote the countries of former Yugoslavia (Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia), without Slovenia but with the addition of Albania

After almost ten years of troubled relations between the European Union and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), the political changes that took place in Belgrade after the elections of September and December 2000 opened the door to a new, more favorable phase. FRY-EU bilateral relations became part of the EC regional policy towards the Western Balkans and South Eastern Europe. For five of these countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the FRY and Macedonia), from mid-1999 the policy became known as the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). The EU Stabilization and Association Process is a fundamental component of the Union's regional policy on the Western Balkans and includes activities such as humanitarian aid, unilateral measures etc.

The most important priority of the policy of the Balkan countries consider accession to the European Union that will ensure prosperity and stability in the region. It is necessary to estimate prospects of the Balkan states to become full-fledged members of EU. We will consider a situation with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Croatia which also belonged to this list, accepted by the European Union in 2013.

Albania

Social and economic situation of Albania is one of the most unsuccessful in Europe , so the chances of the accession to EU are considered quite low . However, strong political support to the country is given by Italy for which Albania is the supplier of energy resources and is the leading trade partner. Besides, the considerable part of the Albanian migrants lives in Italy.

Serbia

Strategically important position in the region is held by Serbia, both in the political and economic relation, and in the military one. Such position of the country provides interest for EU. But everybody knows that in long-term prospect of EU it is concerned by strong links (relationships) of Serbia and Russia, and also unavailability of Serbia to join NATO. These questions become an obstacle for full integration of Serbia into the Eurozone.

Kosovo

Chances of the accession to EU exist and at Kosovo, whose independence still isn't recognized by some countries, including Serbia. Thus the aspiration of Serbia to enter EU is the main lever of pressure upon it. Belgrade's refusal to recognize Kosovo independence identically to the refusal of the EU to take Serbia into its ranks .

Montenegro

Theoretically, Montenegro has already belonged to the Eurozone and economic space of a common market of EU, thus it has the most favorable prospects for EU membership. There is a high investment interest in the country for the last time. Besides, Montenegro represents a successful example of adjustment of bilateral ties with all countries of the Balkan region. The country should only define the status of refugees from Kosovo .

Macedonia

With regard to Macedonia, the motive of integration with the EU restrains the appearance of internecine wars between ethnic groups. This situation will contribute to the further stabilization of the country. But the question with Greece, which insists on the renaming of Macedonia, is still unresolved. It is necessary to diverse the name of the country from the name of the district that Athens, which is considered to be the property of Greece. Such contradictions, forced Greece to «lock» the adoption of Macedonia in the EU.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is trying to maintain the territorial and ethnic integrity of the country. Stability of this region raises doubts from the European Community, but a possible change of the borders is inadmissible for Europe. The gradual abandonment of the policy, which leads to the fragmentation, is caused by prospects of becoming a member of the European Union.

For the Balkan States (Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina), the prospect of EU accession is a global problem. This issue was proclaimed in 2003 the European Union at the meeting in Thessaloniki. All Balkan States have made their accession to the EU priority, although the degree of their readiness causes reasonable doubts. At this moment all States of the region, except Kosovo, signed a stabilization and Association agreement and free trade zone with the European Union. The EU is the main investor and the main partner for this group of countries . «The Balkan knot» is a constant source of anxiety and source of the world political problems. Thus, the Europeanization of the Balkans is the issue of stability for the European Union.

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