

THE PATH TOWARD EU OF SERBIA

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Abstract. *Europe faces major crises. One of the main challenges towards integrating migrants, especially between how is state`s security seen in the XXI century and how minority issues can influence the agenda setting process. It is to see how the management of borders and internal policies can cope with an increasing pressure upon citizens welfare. Also, the European governance is ready to provide solutions to all these problems in different ways. For this, the emphasis should be placed on lobby and advocacy technics for future trends in migrationl security. Beside the area of EU`s Liberty, Justice and Security Area, limitations and challenges upon migration security, the European governance, lobby and advocacy for sustainable migration policies and other perspectives in the relationship between EU institutions and migration security, it is important to take into consideration the relation with third countries.*

Before those challenges for European Union the enlargement in the West Balkans was a priority, but for now this objective is postponed. Serbia, as a candidate country for European integration can not be part of it in the near future, even if its most negotiation chapters are advanced. Migration crise also affects the periphery of Europe, not only the important centers of power. West Balkans must face the migratory population crisis as well, but it does not have so many intruments like central Europe. Serbia and other countries from that area must face the migration problem and it also needs to continue development for the future integration, which is a double effort.

The main objective is to show the connection between the accession negotiations between Serbia and the European Union and the migrations crisis. In this way, the document analysis is helpful. There could be seen the differents from the European reports before the migration phenomenon and after. Also, the conflictual context that started in Syria is an important factor.

Keywords: *Serbia, migration, accession negotiations, enlargement, progress.*

1. Introduction

Before these problems for the European Union, enlargement in the Western Balkans was a priority, but this goal has been postponed to be achieved in the future. Even if it is not part of the European structure, the Balkan states have also faced the migration phenomenon and must continue to develop for future integration, which is a double effort.

In most cases, Syrian migrant populations and surrounding areas as a result of the Syrian conflict have traveled to South East Europe to establish themselves in developed European countries. The main targets were Germany, Britain and France.

Serbia has had an open approach for finishing migratory crisis. As a candidate country for European integration, it can not be part of the EU in the near future, even if it has made

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efforts in this regard. The migration crisis also affected the security of Europe's periphery, not just the major power centers. Among the other countries in this part of the continent that began drafting the negotiations can be mentioned Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Croatia is a member of the European Union in June 2013. These countries have had a different approach to the migration crisis compared to EU countries.

In order to better observe Serbia's approach to migration, first of all the paper analyzes the context in order to observe the state of development of this country in order to comply with European rules. Observing the level of development, we can better understand the migration phenomenon. The historical and political context and the European Union's enlargement action are important. It will also be the beginning of the Syrian conflict, which is the cause that has transformed part of the population into refugees.

The evolution (from 1990s) and the actions of the European Union:

In June 1993, the Copenhagen European Council endorsed the principle of EU enlargement to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and set out the criteria that these countries must meet in order to become members of the EU. The political requirements refers to the institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the protection of minorities. The economic criterion refers to the market economy and competition. The community *acquis* criterion includes the obligations of the member state. The European Council in Essen in December 1994 adopted the pre-accession strategy to prepare the signatory states of the association agreements. Among the important points of the strategy, the Phare program can be mentioned as a pre-accession instrument. The European Council in Cannes in June 1995 adopted the White Paper. It ensures the preparation of Central and Eastern European countries for the single market. In Madrid in December 1995 it was decided that six months after, the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, conditions would be created for the integration of states. In June 1996, Florence adopted a calendar for negotiations with the Central and Eastern European states. At the Dublin meeting in December 1996, the pre-accession strategy was strengthened. The detailed analysis of the Commission's opinion was adopted in Amsterdam in June 1997. Agenda 2000 was published in December 1997 in Luxembourg. It contained the future of EU policies, the enlargement of the Union and the financial options until 2006.

At Cardiff in June 1998 initial assessment reports were made. The financial framework was implemented in Berlin in March 1999. In December 1999 European Council in Helsinki acknowledged the importance of the enlargement process.¹ In June 2000, Feira countries that are part of the Stabilization and Association Process are considered potential candidate countries for the European Union.² In Nice in December 2000 a new negotiating strategy was established. Progress in the negotiations was highlighted in Gothenburg in June 2001. In December of the same year, Laeken decided the countries that would become members since 2004, and in Seville in June 2002 the negotiations entered into the final phase. Copenhagen in December 2002 saw the accession of candidate countries Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the

¹ The European Commission, „Extinderea spre est pe agenda Consiliului European” in *Infoeuropa*, nr. 10, 2007, p. 1 http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_10.pdf, accessed in 30.11.2018.

² Idem, *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations – Serbia*, 2014 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/index_en.htm, accessed in 30.11.2018.

Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary on 10 May 2004. These countries signed the Accession Treaty in Athens in April 2003. Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey could participate as observers as a result of the Thessaloniki meeting in June 2003.³ Also, the stabilization and association process was confirmed as a European policy for the Western Balkans.⁴ In Brussels in October the new neighborhood policy was established, and in December the extension was meant to be done in a straight line. The last preparations for the 10 states that were to become members of the European Union were made in March 2004. In June 2004, a new candidate country was established in Brussels: Croatia. In December the negotiations with Romania and Bulgaria were closed.⁵

The EU reopened its Serbian textile market. On 16 December 2004 the Serbian government adopted information on the conclusion of an agreement on the export of Serbian textile products to the EU market. At that session, the government decided to set up a board for pension insurance reform and gave its agreement to the decision on postal prices in domestic traffic.⁶

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has been given the opportunity to become a candidate country, in line with the conclusions of Brussels in June 2005, and at the end of that year, it was granted candidate status.⁷ In Belgrade on 29 June 2005, the Serbian and Montenegrin Parliament adopted a resolution on the state's accession to the EU in an emergency procedure. The resolution was adopted on a proposal by the European Parliament's European Integration Committee, with votes in favor of the resolution by 59 Serbian MPs and 23 in Montenegro.⁸ Also in June 2005 the negotiations for the Stabilization and Association Agreement were concluded. In May 2006, these negotiations were blocked due to Serbia's inadequate cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

According to the European Council in Brussels in June 2006, enlargement is becoming a historic opportunity. In December, the same year a debate was held on enlargement. 2007 is characterized by the resumption of Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations, after Serbia fully co-operated with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. At the end of 2007, Serbia was initiated.⁹

The independence of the state of Kosovo was declared on February 17, 2008, the Serbian province in the past. In the summer of 2011, the situation in the north of this

³ Idem, „Extinderea spre est pe agenda Consiliului European” in *Infoeuropa*, nr. 10, 2007, pp. 4-5 http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_10.pdf, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁴ Idem, *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations – Serbia*, 2014 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/index_en.htm, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁵ Idem, „Extinderea spre est pe agenda Consiliului European” in *Infoeuropa*, nr. 10, 2007, pp. 5-6 http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_10.pdf, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁶ The Serbian Government, *EU to reopen its market to Serbian textile products*, 2004, <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/vest.php?id=7457>, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁷ The European Commission, „Extinderea spre est pe agenda Consiliului European” in *Infoeuropa*, nr. 10, 2007, p. 6 http://ec.europa.eu/romania/documents/eu_romania/tema_10.pdf, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁸ The Serbian Government, *Serbia-Montenegrin parliament adopts Resolution on EU accession*, 2005 <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/vest.php?id=13808>, accessed in 30.11.2018.

⁹ The European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations – Serbia*, 2014 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/_index_en.htm, accessed in 30.11.2018.

province, populated by about 100,000 Serbs, has worsened, and the European Union and the Kosovo-led forces led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization needed action. Province of Kosovo has proclaimed its independence. It is recognized as a state of over 80 countries.¹⁰

September 1, 2013 was the date of entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between Serbia and the EU, and in December 2013 the Council adopted the Negotiating Framework with Serbia and established the organization of the first Intergovernmental Conference with Serbia next January. On January 24, 2014, the scheduled conference took place.¹¹

Croatia is currently a member of the EU, Montenegro, Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are candidate countries, with accession negotiations being under way with Montenegro and Serbia. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are potential candidates.¹²

Serbia's analysis of membership criteria:

The paper is studying the reports of the European Commission on Serbia and the negotiating chapters relevant to the subject of migration.

In the chapter: free movement of goods: 2013: Serbia has made reforms for contacts with neighboring countries, including with Kosovo, and has made a positive contribution to international cooperation. The first agreement on regulatory principles and normalization of relations took place on 19 April 2013.¹³

Points of agreement: the Serbian Standardization Institute adopted approximately 94% of European standards. In the field of conformity assessment, a number of bodies have been designed in line with EU directives. Multilateral Agreements and Mutual Recognition Agreements have been signed. New areas of accreditation have been established for several directives. There has been a national certification recognized by the European Commission for Organic Products in line with the *acquis*. Serbia has been able to export its products freely to the EU market.

Points of disagreement: harmonization of horizontal legislation with the *acquis communautaire* was to take place by January 2014. Administrative capacity and cooperation between the institutions had to increase.

Conclusions: progress has been made in this area, with the need for Serbia to continue with the development of horizontal legislation. Various multilateral agreements have been signed. Most European standards have been adopted. The institutions' positions had to be strengthened. Overall, progress in this area has moderately advanced.¹⁴

2018: as agreements, the legal basis for technical regulations, standards, conformity assessment, metrology and accreditation is realized with the purpose of

¹⁰ P. Iskenderov, „Independența Kosovo și sfidările la adresa Europei” în *Vocea Rusiei*, 2012, http://romanian.ruvr.ru/2012_02_17/66293458/, accessed in 30.11.2018.

¹¹ The European Commission, *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations – Serbia*, 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia/index_en.htm, accessed in 30.11.2018.

¹² André De Munter; Benjamin Rey, *Balkanii de Vest*, 2014 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/ro/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_6.5.2.html, accessed in 30.11.2018.

¹³ The European Commission, *Serbia 2013 Progress report*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 5.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 21-22.

aligning with the *acquis*. “On standardisation, the Serbian Institute for Standardisation (ISS) became a full member of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC) in January 2017. Concerning accreditation, the Accreditation Body of Serbia (ABS) was re-evaluated successfully in a peer evaluation by the European Co-operation for Accreditation Association in 2017, enabling ABS to maintain its status in the European Accreditation Multilateral Agreement.”

As disagreements, but the administrative bodies and financial resources need further improvement in the domains of market surveillance, metrology, accreditation and standards. It haven't adopted an action plan with the articles 34-36 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Conclusions: Serbia is moderately prepared in the field of free movement of goods, but it should adopt a strategy and an action plan for the implementation of the EU, for both approaches (old and new) and horizontal legislation and organisations and it should provide adequate administrative bodies for the implementation of the European regulation on registration, evaluation, authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.¹⁵

The chapter: free movement of labor: 2013: implementation was present and there are also the necessary international instruments. There have been binding rules on international trade.¹⁶

Points of agreement: Serbia's objectives have been defined for the National Employment Service. Implementation of the bilateral agreements with Austria, Bulgaria and Slovakia on the coordination of security systems are realized.

Points of disagreement: on access to the labor market, the law on the employment of foreigners was to be approved by parliament. The National Job Seeking Database was still incomplete and employers were under no obligation. Collaboration with Slovenia has been difficult. Institutions needed to be strengthened. Preparations for the European Health Insurance Card have not been made.

Conclusions: little progress has been made in this area, and preparations have been moderately advanced.¹⁷

2018: for agreements, relating to coordination of social security systems, a new agreement with Romania has been ratified and the agreement with Greece has been signed. “Preparations for agreements on electronic exchange of social security data with Bulgaria, Hungary and Italy have started. Electronic exchange of social security data is operational with Slovenia, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro.”

On the other hand, no new legislation on access to the labour market was adopted and procedures for working permits to EU citizens, who are currently covered by rules for third country nationals, need to be further simplified. EU citizens will have fully free access to the labour market without a work permit just from the date of Serbia's accession to the EU. “There has been no progress on preparations for joining EURES (the European network of employment services).”

¹⁵ *Idem, Serbia 2018 Progress report*, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, pp. 52 - 53.

¹⁶ *Idem, Serbia 2013 Progress report*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 10.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

Conclusions: Serbia is moderately prepared, but it has to continue cooperation with member states on for social security systems.¹⁸

The chapter: the right of establishment and provision of services: 2013: as part of the follow-up mechanism following the liberalization of visas, the Commission periodically assessed the progress made by the country in implementing the reforms introduced in the Visa WP.¹⁹

Points of agreement: in the field of postal services, the postal strategy for 2013-2016 was adopted in April 2013. The public postal service has been modernized.

Points of disaffection: there has been no progress for the right of establishment. It was necessary to adopt a general law on harmonization regarding the freedom to provide cross-border services. The capacity of departments in this sector had to be strengthened. Administrative capacity was not enough. Operational progress had to be corporatist. Legislation on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications has not been adopted.

Conclusions: little progress has been made on the right of establishment and the freedom to provide services. It was necessary to develop administrative capacity in line with the *acquis communautaire*. Preparations were moderately advanced.²⁰

2018: in September 2017 the government adopted the 2017-2020 strategy for postal services and the law on it, aiming to align with the second and third Postal Directives. This implementation should help to further liberalise the market and increase the powers of the postal services regulator in line with the *acquis*.

From things that were done, it can be seen that on freedom to provide cross-border services, the umbrella law on services has not been adopted. It should continue to harmonise sectoral regulation and establish a single contact as a one-stop-shops for service providers for obtaining information and complete administrative formalities online. Also, it has to adopt a new law on mutual recognition of professional qualifications and implement the adopted strategy and action plan. In the end, it must adopt the law on postal services and relevant implementing legislation to further open up the postal market; increase the capacity for postal services inspection.

Conclusions: Serbia is moderately prepared.²¹

The chapter: free movement of capital: 2013: cross-border cooperation has been used to promote the capacity to create dialogue between local and regional authorities in neighboring countries, namely Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro.²²

Points of agreement: the Foreign Exchange Act was adopted in December 2013. Long-term capital transactions have been liberalized. Serbia initialized the national risk assessment process in the fight against money laundering. The Agency for the Prevention of Money Laundering signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Argentina, Andorra, Panama, Denmark and Portugal, with the total number of signatures being 42.

¹⁸ *Idem, Serbia 2018 Progress report*, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 54.

¹⁹ *Idem, Serbia 2013 Progress report*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²¹ *Idem, Serbia 2018 Progress report*, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, pp. 54 - 55.

²² *Idem, Serbia 2013 Progress report*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 5.

Points of disagreement: there were limitations on short-term transactions and residents' deposits were partially liberalized. There were restrictions on agricultural capital. Payment system legislation had to be aligned with the *acquis communautaire*. The Agency for the Prevention of Money Laundering did not have the necessary prerequisites for the recruitment and training of the personnel.

Conclusions: overall, there has been limited progress. There was a need to harmonize Serbian legislation on short-term capital, agriculture and payment systems with the *acquis*. The alignment of the other subdomains was considered moderately advanced.²³

2018: “Amendments to the law on foreign exchange operations, aimed at lifting restrictions on non-resident borrowers, have been agreed.” About the fight against money laundering and terrorism financing, a new law was adopted in December 2017 to align the legislation with the EU Directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing. There were no developments in payment systems, even if Serbia’s legislation is already mostly in line with the *acquis* in this domain. It was needed for liberalizing the capital movements in line with its obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and for aligning its legislation with the latest *acquis* on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, increase the capacity of the Administration for the Prevention of Money Laundering and enhance cooperation between all stakeholders to improve investigation and reporting.

Conclusions: the Serbian state is moderately prepared on free movement of capital, but no progress was made on meeting the recommendations set out in 2016.²⁴

The conflicting context:

Muhammad, the prophet of the Sunni, represents reflection and consensus. The majority of the Muslim population of the world follows Sunni Islam and about 10-15% follow Islam. The Shiites live in several countries but form the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. There is also a significant number in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. Though the Sunnis and Shiites follow the same religious principles, the differences of them sometimes led to religious intolerance, political struggles and violent confrontations.²⁵

The geographical area at which the Caspian Sea is located has a different value compared to the Mediterranean Sea; in the first case, the dominant is economic, the Caspian Sea area being one of the richest in energy resources, and in the second is dominant strategic, thanks to the commercial road linking the complementary economic areas, Europe and Asia.²⁶

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 23.

²⁴ *Idem*, *Serbia 2018 Progress report*, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/sr_rapport_2013.pdf, accessed in 01.12.2018, p. 55.

²⁵ Forțele terestre române, *Primăvara arabă în Siria*, 2011, <http://www.forter.ro/>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

²⁶ Claude Raffestin, *Geopolitică și istorie*, w.y., https://books.google.ro/books?id=IEc_PKWejWcC&pg=PT110&lpg=PT110&dq=claude+raffestin+geopolitica+si+strategie&source=bl&ots=1QjBbh1-cw&sig=cx3iCOHFpSPderMrNDDQzk7c9so&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiei43O94TQAhUBtywKHW63BwYQ6AEIHTAA#v=onepage&q=claude%20raffestin%20geopolitic%20si%20strategie&f=false, accessed in 01.12.2018.

Conflicts began with the beginning of the Arab Spring in Syria, when the population began protests in the streets and continued as residents in the northern Syrian city of Ras Al-Ain crossed a border fence in the Turkish city of Ceylanpinar to escape the bombing rebels. Despite the fact that they are neighbors, the political relationship between Syria and Turkey historically was not very good, but things were being normalized until the Arab Spring. For most of the last century, the relationship between Turkey and Syria was extremely bad, Turkey was an imperial power since 1517 - known as the Ottoman Empire - and its nationalism. As time began to catch roots in Syria, and in the twentieth century, the Turks began to be seen as oppressors. By the end of the First World War, the Turks were defeated, but they killed a lot of Syrians who joined the Arab uprising against them, and "this left a very bitter taste," said Joshua Landis, director of the Center for Studies in the Middle East.

In 2004, Bashar al-Assad was the first Syrian president to go to Turkey after the First World War, and the two nations began to talk about how to settle their disputes. They opened the borders for trade, the Syrians and the Turks began to visit their countries for shopping and vacations, and a common cultural connection was discovered in the process. Turkey's role in supporting the opposition has made things more difficult within the country, Landis said. Also, Landis also specified that the border between Turkey and Syria is 530 miles. The Turkish government made a request to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to deploy PATRIOT anti-missile systems on its territory. The request blamed for a period of bombing at the Turkish-Syrian border and destabilizing regional security due to Syrian civil war. This request has been prioritized, member states holding such anti-missile systems have had to decide in parliament whether or not they support this request. Syrian president, Bashar Assad, said he will not surrender internal but also external pressures against him. The international community has attempted to pass through the Security Council a resolution that would condemn violence against civilians, but it also came up with some measures to resolve the situation. The resolution has not passed, states like the Russian Federation and China have turned to veto. The escalation of the internal conflict has led to the destabilization of security throughout the region. Neighboring countries like Turkey record a large number of Syrian refugees. Initially, over 3,000 people were forced to leave their homes to save their lives.²⁷

In response to the non-adoption of the measures, Turkey bombed several border areas a few days later. Turkey said the border with Syria is extremely uncertain, some border points being controlled by rebels, and others by the Damascus government. Bombships worsened the day before. Turkey has not invoked Article 5 of the Treaty, but has repeatedly called for Article 4, which provides for consultations with member states where one of the members anticipates some dangers to its security. The danger for Turkey was the Syrian use of the chemical and biological weapons they held. The government of Damascus has publicly stated that it will use these weapons against states that will try to intervene in the domestic affairs of the state, even if they deny that there are such weapons and missiles capable of transporting them.²⁸

Tensions at the border between the two countries intensified in 2012 when Syrian air force defeated a Turkish military reconnaissance aircraft. Erdogan, who was then

²⁷ ***, *Syria and Turkey: A Complex Relationship*, 2011, <https://www.phs.org/newshour/rundown/syria-and-turkey>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

²⁸ Smaranda Toader, *Analiza conflictului dintre Turcia și Siria*, 2013, <http://www.slideshare.net/smarandatoader/conflictul-siria-turcia-relatii-internationale>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

prime minister, said the revolt against Bashar al-Assad was very close to victory and warned that Turkey would respond firmly to any hostility from Syria.²⁹

Bashar al-Assad's spy chief, General Ali Mamluk, arrested and accused of plot by the Damascus regime, was dissatisfied with the rise in Iran's influence. Its elimination is the hand of Tehran defending its interests and controlling Syria. Ali Mamluk, the head of the Syrian intelligence services and one of the few officials who still had access to President Bashar al-Assad, was accused of having secret talks with countries that would support rebel groups and exiled members of the Syrian regime. Assad had difficulties in keeping the regime's "inner circle" united.

General Rustum Ghazaleh, the head of the Public Security Department, died in the hospital after the apple had been beaten by loyal people to Rafiq Shehadeh, his rival and counterpart in military intelligence, who was dismissed.

The fact that Ghazaleh was the last witness to prove the involvement of the Damascus authorities in the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, investigated by the Special Court for Lebanon, his death was considered suspicious, a way to escape a dangerous witness to President Assad and various sources have evoked plutonium poisoning.³⁰

The Serbian approach:

At the beginning of the migratory phenomenon from 2015, compared to most EU states, Serbia was open to receiving refugees. Aleksandar Vucic, the prime minister, said: "Serbia is ready to be part of a European solution to the migration crisis." „It's not a big deal. It can even create a new value in economic terms.”³¹ Serbia is ready to be part of a European solution to the migration crisis, assume some of the obligations of the EU Member States, and accept a quota of refugees, although it is not in the EU.

"European states should agree to take up to two million real asylum seekers and share them fairly,"³² Vucic said during a recent visit to London.

"It's nothing for Europe ", Vucic estimated, stating that the figure is less than half of 1% of the EU population. "It's not a big deal. It can create even new value in economic terms",³³ the Serbian Prime Minister said.

According to Vucic's statements, the EU should provide more assistance to improve conditions in countries ravaged by conflict in the Middle East and to strengthen borders, otherwise Europe will risk being overwhelmed by migrants coming from more remote areas.

In 2015, Belgrade stopped sending migrants to Hungary from September 16, a country that closed its 175-km border border with Serbia with a barbed-weight fence. Since then, Croatia has become the new way to access Western Europe.³⁴

²⁹ NATO, *Conflictul Turcia-Siria*, 2015,

<http://nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news90447htm?selectedLocale=ennNAC>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

³⁰ Gabriela Anghel, „Mamluk, umbra misterioasă a lui Assad”, în *România liberă*, 2015, <http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/international/mamluk--umbra-misterioasa-a-lui-assad-378185>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

³¹ Angela Sârbu, „Aleksandar Vucic: Serbia este gata să fie parte a unei soluții europene privind criza migrației” in *Agerpres*, 2016, <http://www.agerpres.ro/externe/2016/02/25/aleksandar-vucic-serbia-este-gata-sa-fie-parte-a-unei-solutii-europene-privind-criza-migratiei-18-27-05>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

Subsequently, in 2016 due to the large migratory waves, the Western Balkans developed a more modest view of refugee reception, Croatia being skeptical and even considering the option of closing borders for the surplus of migrants. Serbia did not have such a radical vision but focused its attention on other issues (domestic, etc.) Until then, the scepticism in relation with migratory flows grown.

Conclusions:

In terms of negotiation criteria, Serbia has made efforts by creating specialized institutions for each field or by empowering existing authorities to meet the challenges of future integration.

Analyzing the report published by the European Commission on the negotiation chapters, we can notice that, in general, the preparations made by the Serbian state are not advanced, and continuous efforts are needed in this regard. Most preparations for alignment with the *acquis* in the negotiation chapters have been termed moderately advanced. However, in some areas, such as the free movement of goods, advanced progress has been reported. Consequently, it takes time to make progress in closing the chapters by the Commission.

In order to integrate, Serbia has made efforts both by adopting legislative measures to bring it into line with the *acquis communautaire* and through various projects and actions in cooperation with the EU. There is still a need to develop many issues that are currently being adopted or not yet underway. Serbia has political will for membership, but at the same time it must still make permanent efforts to get closer to the European Union.

Regarding migration, at the beginning, Serbia was determined to deal with refugees as well as important EU states. It does not think this crisis is a big one. It was estimated that it will not affect the substantial Serbian economy. After some years, this perception has changed and Serbian state started to become less open to the idea of hosting refugees.

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³⁴ *** „Refugiații înfierbantă din nou Balcanii: Serbia ia o măsură radicală împotriva Croației” in *Ziare.com*, 2015, <http://www.ziare.com/invazie-imigranti/serbia/refugiati-infierbanta-din-nou-balkanii-serbia-ia-o-masura-radicala-impotriva-croatiei-1383969>, accessed in 01.12.2018.

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