

*Paper prepared for the Euroacademia International Conference
The European Union and the Politicization of Europe*

Vienna, 8 – 10 December 2011

*This paper is a draft
Please do not cite*

08.11.2011

DELAYED EU ENLARGEMENT TO THE WESTERN BALKANS

By Prof.Dr. Blerim REKA*)

Abstract

After a one- century delay of the European reformation of the Balkans: 1912-2012; and a decade long status quo of enlargement: 2000-2010; the Western Balkans is facing a new historic challenge: will the decade: 2012-2022 be another decade of un-realistic expectations to become a part of the EU?

The key dilemma in the relation between EU and Western Balkans remains the same: will the EU Europeanize the Balkans, instead of becoming Balkanized itself?

I will try to analyze the crucial factors of this existing situation (from absorption/integration capacity, through enlargement fatigue, as well as three others fatigues: institutional, financial and commitment fatigue).

In my paper, I will also offer a prospect for a new way of accession of the countries from Western Balkans into EU, analyzing two parts of the problem.

The first is within EU: the existing enlargement policy, which was something between accession and a soft protectorate.

The second problem is within the countries of the region, mainly their political mentality.

I propose the need to re-brand the Western Balkans, which means: the political elites from this region, must change their mentality and must be liberated from the one-century suspicion that regional integration could lead towards pan-nationalist ideas. The history is there, and we cannot change it; although, the geography has tried to do so. As a consequence of that geography, politically, the new state was created; but demographically, the same national substance remained in (the same) place.

The Western Balkans is tired from permanent struggles between geography and history. The only way to prevent further clashes between the two and to have them joined, is the integration of the region into EU. The European Union should adopt a more flexible approach towards its enlargement in Western Balkans, in order to prevent the Balkanization of Europe. Brussels in the next decade should change its approach from the first decade. Instead of the existing framework: Stabilization and Association, now, the EU should move robustly: from stabilization, toward association of the whole region into the EU.

Western Balkans countries needs to change their old fashion mentality: from XIX toward XXI century political thinking.

Key words: EU enlargement, Western Balkans, accession, reforms, Europeanization,

**) Blerim Reka is Pro-Rector for Research of South East European University, Tetovo, Macedonia, as well as professor of EU law and International Law. He is the author of 18 books in these fields. He was Ambassador, Chief of the Mission of Republic of Macedonia to EU, Brussels.*

1. One century delay of reformation of the Balkans: 1912-2012

What is today known as the Western Balkans, has experienced a one-century un-reformed history. This one-century period shows the unsuccessful path of (non) modernization of the South-East Europe. Starting with Balkans wars, (1912), continuing with the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Sovereign (in Sarajevo 1914), than the tragic two world wars, continuing with almost a half-century communist rule, and finishing this tragic road with former Yugoslav wars, (by the end of the last century). The rest was the tragic delay of the process of the Europeanization of the Balkans.

Former communist regimes in Western Balkans were replaced with so-called democracies. Two decades of post-communist transition were a mixture of nationalist and authoritarian ruling. New political elites came in the name of the fight against communism, but they did not become democratic governance, nevertheless.

This unreformed century of the Western Balkans, could be described at best by the following transitional processes:

- Post-Ottoman transition: after 1912;
- Post-World's Wars transition, (after 1918, and after 1945);
- Un-finalized national statehood processes in Balkans, (1912-2008);
- Post-Communist transition: (since 1990's);
- Post- conflict transition, (1999-2009);
- Pre-European transition: (since 2000), and finally
- Possible full Europeanization of the Balkans: after 2020?¹

This ruthless century for the Balkans, 1912-2012, was dominated by at least three totalitarian ideologies: fascism, communism, and nationalist hegemony. Although for the whole last century, the international community insisted on not changing the borders of Europe, the European political map, however, was changed several times, replacing previous border regimes. London's borders (1913); Versailles borders, (1919); Yalta's borders (1943-44); and finally Helsinki's borders (1975) had been changed, in frequent cycles: 1912-1913; 1919; 1941-1943; 1943- 1945; 1991-1992, however neither peace nor stability ever ruled the region. The Balkans was and still is a region with permanently open and unresolved national questions.

The problem of national minorities, as a consequence of false and artificial creations of national states, even in the beginning of XXI century, have still provoked instability as it was at the XIX-XX century. Thus, the tragic history of the Western Balkans is in fact the story of permanent historical-geographical clashes. The Western Balkans is tired from permanent struggles between geography and history. The history is there and we cannot change it, although the geography, (with political mapping, due permanent changes of the borders) has tried to do so. As a consequence of that history, politically: the new state was created; but demographically, the same national substance remained in (the same) place, although in a new geography. That is why the region needs to become integrated into the EU. The only way to prevent further clashes between the two and to have them joined, is the integration of the whole region into the EU. A package integration approach would prevent new (old) traditional borders contests.

But, what is today the Western Balkans and what does it present?

Today, the Countries of Western Balkans share at least five common features:

1. **Conflict history:** the common post-war and the common communist experience, because as going through centuries, all of them emerged from a conflict and communist history;²
2. **Multi-ethnic composition:** Almost all of the aspiring countries of the Western Balkans are multi-ethnic societies, whereas besides the majority nation, there are also non-majority citizens living;³
3. **Weak Governance.** The aim of all these countries is to build a functional democracy, thus an EU compatible political system based on the rule of law and respect of human rights, and minority rights. However, furthermore, one of the common weaknesses of the aspiring countries of this region remains weak governance, (in the central and also in the local level). This, since all of these countries had a deficit of ethics, accountability and transparency in governance. All of these countries face the phenomenon of criminality and endemic corruption;⁴
4. **Undeveloped Economies.** All are undeveloped economies with approximately 24 million inhabitants and with a GDP (in 2000) lower than the GDP of EU member states, such as Greece and Portugal. Or, as concluded by Stiblar: "only 0, 6 % of the GDP of 27 EU member states".⁵

5. **The identical strategic orientation: Euro-Atlantic Integrations.** All Western Balkan countries have a strategic orientation: the integration into the EU and NATO. Perhaps with the exclusion of Serbia, (which according to official statements, is in favor of integration into the European Union but not necessarily into the North-Atlantic Alliance).⁶

2. A decade of status quo of enlargement: 2000-2010

The first decade of the XXI century, could be named a decade between two Septembers: 11 September 2001- 15 September 2008, dominated by global terrorism and global financial crisis. Within this geopolitical framework, the first decade of new century was challenged by 3-E challenges: E- Economy; E-Environment and E-Ecology. Or, by geo-economy; geo-energy and geo-ecology challenges.⁷ The power shift of the beginning of this century created a multi-polar or non-polar world; instead as it was mono-polar world, (after the cold war); or bi-polar world, (as it was during the cold war period). Climate de-sovereignization, energy diplomacy, and socialization of capitalism are new phenomena which face our global world.

So, all analysis of EU and of EU enlargement policy, should be based in this new geopolitical framework of global world. By the end of the first decade of this century, the position of the Western Balkans in the EU enlargement process is not clear at all, because of a mixture of recent two key problems: political (Post- Nice institutional transformation of the EU), and economic, (crisis of Euro- Zone).

The ratified Lisbon treaty, finally, seemed to overcome long years of an internal institutional battle between member states and Brussels bureaucracy, and has opened the window of opportunity that after a decade of delay, this process could be intensified in the second decade of this century.

But, dramatic events within Euro-Zone by end of 2011, (because of the Greek debt), have re-opened pessimist thinking toward next enlargements, or once again re-actualize the *status quo* approach for the enlargement process.

Officially, the institutions of the European Union abide decisions taken in the Thessalonica Summit (2003) that “the region has a European perspective” and that the EU is firm in keeping the promises to offer membership possibilities to all countries of this region based on the two following principles: the **Principle of Conditionality**, when these countries fulfill the criteria and their obligation deriving from the SSA; and the **Principle of individual merits** of each aspiring country based on their individual reform achievements. However, on the other side, this promise from Brussels towards countries of the Western Balkans is becoming difficult to keep.

Ten years have passed since promises for the Europeanization of the Western Balkans where inaugurated at the Zagreb Summit, (2000) and eight years from Thessalonica summit (2003) have passed, since the launch of the European perspective, and still, none of these countries have become a member state. Even with the most optimistic perspective, whereas the membership forecast for Croatia is as far as 2013.

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country, even after six years (2005-2011) has still not received a date for the beginning of accession negotiations⁸. Montenegro, has received positive recommendation this year for the start of accession negotiations. Albania, after 2010, this year once again did not gain a candidate status (although, it had applied for EU membership, together with Serbia in 2009). Serbia has gained a candidate status this year, however without a date for the start of negotiations. Bosnia and Herzegovina, although having signed their SAA with EU in 2008, due to internal constitutional problems, is far from getting the candidate status. The Republic of Kosova, after almost four years of its independence, is still waiting to enter into contractual relations with the EU and in process of stabilization and association.

Eight years since the promise for a European perspective, (in Thessaloniki), the circumstances have changed so much that the same promise was forgotten. Non-enforcement of the constitutional treaty (2003-2007) and the prolongation of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (2007-2009) were the factors that hampered the further enlargement of the European Union. The same hampering geopolitical influence was experienced as a consequence of the war in Georgia (2008) and the world financial crisis (2008-2009).

Although denied to be the case by most senior officials of the EU, it seemed that the Western Balkans was being forgotten and victimized in front of such global problems, and the shifting geopolitical priorities towards Euro- Asia. Or, perhaps these new global challenges were used by Brussels as a pretext to slow down the further enlargement, and to keep this *status quo* of enlargement.

In the first decade of this century a state of an undefined hold was being created in the process of enlargement, making it highly uncertain as to when these new EU memberships could occur. After a decade of waiting a front of the Brussels gates, and leaving the Western Balkans and Turkey outside of the EU orbit for an additional decade, would entail consequences to the European security and stability.

Since the first EU fatigue: **enlargement fatigue**, (after 2004, which was resolved by introducing absorption/integration capacity of EU, as an explanation for the Union's limit to receive new member states); and the second fatigue: **institutional fatigue**, (2004-2009, which the EU faced internally, after long political battles pro et contra of EU constitution); by end of 2008, after world financial crisis, EU faced a third one: **financial fatigue**, (which is now harming the euro-zone).

So, for the EU enlargement process, the circumstances at the beginning of the second decade of this century are not any favorable than those at the first decade. The crisis of euro-zone, harmed internal political unity of EU, and left no time for other issues like accession of new members.

Apart from these three EU fatigues, the EU skeptic feelings are increasing every year within aspirant countries, which could then create a new fatigue: **commitment fatigue**, or fatigue of delivering, and not receiving aspiring status of relations with EU.⁹

3. Another lost decade of EU Enlargement in Western Balkans: 2010-2020?

The crisis of the euro-zone today is damaging the prospect for future enlargement in Western Balkans. After political crisis- of non-adoption of the EU constitution, today the Union faces the most serious economic crisis. The case of Greece's debt case has dramatically harmed the euro-zone, as well as the whole successful story of European integrations. Under these circumstances, genuinely speaking, no space is left for serious and sincere efforts of Brussels and other European capitals for future enlargement, in particular, not for the Western Balkans.

Since publication of new (2011) Enlargement package of EC¹⁰ and individual Progress Report for each country of the region, on 12 October 2011¹¹, there is no optimistic forecast for accession of the region at whole into EU. After Croatia, as the 28th member state; maybe Iceland could be the 29th member state of the Union. But, not any country from the Western Balkans could become the 30th member state of the EU before 2020. Except Croatia, which by the last and final EC Progress Report, finally got the green line for finalization of its six years of hard accession negotiations, and by 1st July 2013 will become the new member state of EU, the prospect for other countries of the region is not bright at all. Macedonia is entering into the sixth year of its candidate status history, without a set date for the start of accession negotiations with the EU. Montenegro, which became an independent state, (by mid 2006, when Macedonia was a candidate country), was recommended to start with accession negotiations. Serbia got its recommendation for candidate status from the European Commission, (which needs to be approved by the European Council, in December 2011), but without a set date for starting accession negotiations. Albania, due to internal political disagreements, has again lost the granting of the candidate status this year. Even Bosnia and Herzegovina is far from the candidate status after almost a year without a functional government and unclear constitutional arrangements. Kosova, being not recognized by five EU member states, still has no contractual relations with the EU, neither involved in the SAA process, nor trade relations with EU, and without an inclusion into the Schengen visa regime, still. If for the best accession case from the region, (Croatia) was needed six years negotiations, and will need an additional two and half years until full membership¹²; in the best optimistic scenario if Montenegro, (at the moment most advanced country of the region) start next year accession negotiations, it will not become full member of EU before 2020.

Could the next decade: 2011-2020, with only one country of the region- member of EU, become once again, another lost decade of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans?

4. EU and the Western Balkans: Between Enlargement and Soft Protectorate?

The Western Balkans has suffered unresolved territorial contests and inherited inter-ethnic problems, and its solution is not to be expected in the near future. Not entirely without any reason, besides classical criteria of enlargement, (the Copenhagen criteria, that were applied within the EU enlargement policy towards aspirants from the Central and Eastern

Europe), the European Union had set additional criteria towards the Western Balkans, which were mainly of a political and security nature, like: the implementation of the Dayton Agreement: 1995 (Bosnia and Herzegovina); full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal on War Crimes in former Yugoslavia (Serbia); implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement: 2001; and Interim Agreement with Greece: 1995 on name issue (Macedonia); or the implementation of the Ahtisaari's Plan: 2008 (Kosova).

Therefore, while the first enlargement policy, (the one applied in the 90-ties in Central and Eastern Europe), was a policy of transformation; the new enlargement policy, (which the EU is currently applying towards the Western Balkans and Turkey), seems to be more controlling and imposing; not to say as a soft- protectorate model.

This EU control toward aspiring countries from the region, was manifested through observance of the strict fulfillment of obligations emerging from the Stabilization and Association Agreement, whereas the imposition is expressed in the EU's involvement in the presence of the soft protectorate in the region (OHR in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and ICO & EULEX, in Kosova).

It seemed that during one decade of the implementation of ESDP: 1999-2009, EU was experimenting in Western Balkans, by a combination of enlargement policy and soft- protectorate, trough their military and civil missions in the field, as well as through EUSR in each country.

EU enlargement policy towards Western Balkans trough Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) was not sufficient enough. The first decade of EU involvement in the Western Balkans 1999-2009, was more a stabilization one. Association part of SAP was missing. EU invested money and civil and military presence in the Western Balkans in order to stabilize the region. But not so much to keep it associated with the EU.¹³

Was the European Union applying a classic or standard enlargement policy towards the Western Balkans? Was it a soft European protectorate; even a mixture of both? Was the policy of the European Union in the Western Balkans a new European protectorate; or a pale enlargement policy?

With the inauguration of ESDP (European Security and Defense Policy) a decade ago, the Western Balkans seemed as suitable ground to experiment with the EU defense capacities, but also its limits. The experience of the first decade of the application of this doctrine of Brussels in the Western Balkans, opened up the dilemma whether the European Union was developing a true enlargement policy; ort was it combining it, not to say- dominated by a European sophisticated protectorate?

The latter was best proven during the last decade with the powerful executive competences of European representatives, (at least in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosova). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, besides IHR, EUFOR was functioning and EU Althea Mission. In Macedonia, after the conflict in 2001, there were two European missions: Concordia and Harvest. Whereas in Kosova, initially with the presence of EU as the second UNMIK pillar, and lately with the EULEX mission but also the ICO. In these three aspiring countries, besides the standard presence of the European Commission (in the form of an EC delegation), Brussels also held the second hat- the EU Council one, through the special representative of HRCFSP or: EUSR.¹⁴

In other words, while the presence of the EC delegation in the aspiring countries would enable the EU to facilitate the country in the implementation of the norms, criteria and standards as required in the membership process; with the Special EU Representative, Brussels was holding onto the European instruments and imposing presence for the political stabilization and security of the respective country. Through the EC delegation in an aspiring country of the Western Balkans, the European Union was being represented in the technical field; while through the EUSR would represent the aspiring country mainly in the political field.

Such a practice of a dualist presence of both: the Council and European Commission in the aspiring countries, in a similar way was codified (later) by the Lisbon Treaty, after the establishment of European External Action Service (EEAS), and inauguration of a unique diplomatic representation of EU. This dualism of the technical and political presence of the European Union in the aspiring countries of the Western Balkans during the five year mandate of the EC: 2004-2009, probably explains why none of the aspiring countries from the region have failed to become an EU member?

5. The need for Re-branding the Western Balkans

As it was stated, after a decade of a waiting period: 1999-2009, the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU is still uncertain. What is needed for the success of Western Balkans aspiring countries? In short, the answer would be the need to re-brand them. After an unreformed history for almost a century: 1914-2010; along with an unsuccessful membership experience during the first post-conflict decade of the Western Balkans 1999-2009; the Western Balkans was in need for a re-branding.

The countries of the Western Balkans were being perceived in Brussels, as: conflicting countries; as former communist regimes, and until lately, countries with a centralized economy conducted by the state; countries with no rule of law and without inter-ethnic tolerance; with an enormous presence of corruption and organized crime; and countries without sufficient legal stability and safety for foreign investments; and without a sufficient experience for respecting human rights. This prospect for re-branding of the Western Balkans has two components: internal re-branding and external re-branding. This re-branding of the Western Balkans could only be carried out through an internal transformation in each of the aspiring countries, as well as with the changing of the regional approach.

Internal changes, or the internal re-branding of aspiring countries should be carried out not because such a thing is required by Brussels, but for the benefit of its citizens towards a European functioning of these Balkan societies. All of the Western Balkans countries are multi-ethnic societies, but in practice they are functioning as mono-ethnic states. New brand of Western Balkans should promote multi-ethnic state implemented, and not just constitutionally proclaimed.

External changes, or the regional re-branding of the Western Balkans towards a regional sub-integration on the basis of mutual respect of the neighbor, and closing of historical contests, once and for all, in a *Pax Balcanica*, should be undertaken in order to put an end to the infamous branding of the Balkans as a powder keg.

Such a limited geography could not absorb such unlimited history.

5.1. Internal re-branding: Changing the mentality.

The change of the mentality of political elite, but also of the ordinary citizens is the *condition sine qua non* for this proposed re-branding of old fashioned Balkans. This ultimate process should take place in each country, as soon as possible including radical internal reform starting from the: education, research, information and communication. However, this should include not only the change of state policies, but first and foremost the change of the mentality of its citizens.

Two decades of a so called post-communist transformation in the Western Balkans, have shown the inauguration of a façade-democracy, or only the change of state regimes, and their political elites, that came to power after plural post-communist regimes (it was seen as to how truly free and democratic these elections were). But, the mentality in their societies did not change after all. Regimes failed to change the minds. Therefore, nationalist politics, and somewhere even politics encouraging war, are still present in some of these regimes that were deemed democratic and pro-European.

Furthermore, as proven by this first period of two decades of post-communism in the Balkans, nationalism was and remained the opium of broad masses, the main pre-election agents to come to power, and the key instrument to stay in power.

There is a need for an internal change within each country. The need for the transformation of these countries into functional states; into genuine and true democracy and not in democrature; into free trade economy and not suspicious and criminal privatizations; into rule of law and not ruling of organized crime; with transparency, and not corruption; with interethnic coexistence and consensual democracy, and not mono-ethnic countries in multi-ethnic societies.

5.2. Regional re-branding: BAFTA, (Balkans Area of Free Trade Agreement)

External re-branding of the Western Balkans is a need to present the Western Balkans in a new regional sub-integration approach with a new peaceful, cooperating, inclusive brand- something that was tried immediately after the Second World War in the model of Benelux and later with the European Integration as we know it today.

As early as 1998, I had come up with a project for a regional sub-integration project: BAFTA, “Balkan Area of Free Trade Agreement”¹⁵, as a project aiming for the regional integration of: Albania, Macedonia, Kosova, and Montenegro (Serbia at that time was in a war-encouraging regime of Milosevic, whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina was still healing from the wounds of these war and thus were not included in this project).

Eleven years ago, such a vision seemed futurist, considering the later tragic developments in these areas. However, in the summer of 2009, the first step in the practical implementation of this my idea of 1998, was taken in Vlora, with the meeting between the four presidents of exactly these four countries: Albania, Macedonia, Kosova and Montenegro, and than continued with next-second President’s summit in Prizren, (2010), and finally in Ohrid, (2011).

So, only a package approach of the whole integration of Western Balkans into EU, could help Europeanization of the region. By this inclusive model of accession of all countries from the region, EU will prevent individual blockade of each country against other countries, due to historical, emotional, or territorial neighbors disputes

Conclusions

1. Western Balkans had experienced a one-century un-reformed history. This one-century period shows the unsuccessful path of (non) modernization of the South-East Europe. Starting with Balkans wars, (1912), continuing with the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Sovereign (in Sarajevo 1914), than the tragic two world wars, continuing with almost a half-century communist rule, and finishing this tragic road with former Yugoslav wars, (by the end of the last century).
2. After a one- century delay of the European reformation of the Balkans: 1912-2012; and a decade long status quo of enlargement: 2000-2010; the Western Balkans is facing a new historic challenge: will the decade: 2012-2022 be another decade of un-realistic expectations to become a part of the EU?
3. The Western Balkans is tired from permanent struggles between geography and history. The history is there, and we cannot change it; although, the geography has tried to do so. As a consequence of that geography, politically, the new state was created; but demographically, the same national substance remained in (the same) place.
4. The EU is tired from three fatigues: enlargement, institutional and financial fatigue; and countries from Western Balkans are tired from commitment fatigue.
5. Existing rigid enlargement policy for Western Balkans was a combination of enlargement policy and soft protectorate, where proclaimed Stabilization and Association Process was more stabilization approach rather than association one.
6. EU should change its enlargement policy toward Western Balkans, being more flexible and more associative; and the countries of the region should re-brand them, internally by changing of their mentality and externally by sub-integration of the region.

About the author

Prof.Dr. Blerim Reka is **Pro- Rector** for Research at SEEU; Former **Ambassador** of Republic of Macedonia at EU, Brussels; former **Dean** of Faculty of Public Administration at SEE University; **Doctor of International Law**; **Master of Civil and Economic Law**; **Fulbright Senior Fellow** at University of Southern California, USC, Los Angeles; **Professor** of International Law, EU Law, International Relations; and Institutions and Politics of EU; Involved in international lecturing and research projects with: Harvard University (Kennedy School for Government), Oxford University, (St. Anthony College), Graz University, Perdue University, Ghent University, U.S Institute for peace, etc; **Author of 18 books** in the field of: EU Law, International law and International Relations and more than 60 studies published in: English, German and Spanish languages; quoted in many books, journals and reviews on international law and international relations. His recent books are: **Geopolitics and Techniques of EU Enlargement**, (Aspect, Brussels, 2010); **Introduction to EU Law**, (SEE University Press,2007, and 2011); **EU Institutions and Policies**, (Universitas, Tetova, 2010); **EU Constitution: The Rubicon of Supranational**, (Logos A, Shkup, 2007), etc.

Endnotes

¹ See more: Blerim Reka: “The Geopolitics and Techniques of EU Enlargement”, Aspect, Brussels,2010, p.93

² In the explanation above was given the explanation of this inter-ethnic conflict history of the region.

³ In the study: “Minority Rights in the Western Balkans”, (European Parliament , July 2008), the authors of this research:. Stefan Wolff, Ana-Maria Angheloa, Ivana Gjuriq, Pietter van Houten, (from University of Nottingham and University of Cambridge), concluded that: in Croatia, 7,5% of its citizens not belong to Croatian majority; in Serbia 12,5% its citizens are not Serbs; in Bosnia and Herzegovina: 48% are Bosnians, 37% Serbs, and 14% Croats; in Macedonia 35,8% are non Macedonian; in Montenegro even 56,4% are not

Montenegrin; in Albania 2,15% are not Albanian. See: European Parliament: Minority Rights in the Western Balkans ,(Directorate General External Policies of the Union, July 2008)

⁴ See more about it: Enlargement Packages of EC (since 2005), and Progress Reports for each countries of the Western Balkans: 2005-2011.

⁵ Franjo Stiblar: The Balkan' s conflict and its solutions, Ljubljana, 2007, p.24.

⁶ Although strategically oriented toward EU, Serbia is against integration into NATO. Evenmore, most likely in some kind of "strategic partnership" with Russia. During his visit in Belgrade, Russian President Medvedev, in October 2009, signed with Serbian President Tadic, the agreement for bulding a "Russian emergency humanitarian base" in Serbia. According to Serbian daily "Blic", (18.10.2011), official inauguration of the construction of this base in Nish was held on 17 October 2011, by wich for the first time after the end of the cold war, Russian troops will be deployed out of its national border, and for the first time in the Western Balkans; See also: Shaban Murati: "Shqetesimi per bazen ruse ne Nish", (Lajm, Shkup, 26.10.2011, pp:10-11).

⁷ Blerim Reka: The Geopolitics and the Techniques of EU Enlargement, (Aspect, Brussels, 2010, p.36.

⁸ Commission (EC) Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Report (Staff Working Paper)SEC(02)342, 3 April 2002; Commission (EC) Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Report (Staff Working Paper)SEC (04)373, 30 March 2004; Council Decission (EC) 2004/518 on the principles, priorities and the conditions contained in the European Partnership with Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia (2004) OJ L222/20; Commission Opinion on the Application from the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia for Membership of the European Union, Brussels 09.11.2005 COM(2005)562 finalë SEC(2005)1425ë SEC(2005)1429); 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 9.11.2005, COM(2005)561 final;The Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia 2006 Progress Report, Brussels 08.11.2006 SEC(2006)1387; Enlergment Strategy and Main Challenges 2006- 2007 (Commission of the European Communities, Brussels 8.11.2006, COM(2006)649; The Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia 2007 Progress Report, Commission Staff Working Document , Brussels 6.11.2007, SEC(2007)1432ë Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2007-2008, Brussels 6.11.2007, COM(2007)663; The Former Yougoslav Republic of Macedonia 2008 Progress Report (Brussels 05.11.2008 SEC(2008)2696 final); Commission of the European Communities: "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010", Brussels, 14.10.2009 COM(2009)533;

⁹ This fatigue reflecting the fatigue of the citizens of aspiring countries, who after years of delivery by their government, became leas supporter of EU accession. It was the case of Croatia, where the citizens support in the beginning of accession negotiations was high, than every next year had significant drop. Or the case of Macedonia, where its citizens in 2006 have almost absolute support for EU accession, or nearly 90%; by end of 2011 drop to 49%, after three years non receiving date for start of accession negotiations with EU. The last poll of Rejting agency, published on 31 October 2011, showed it. (According to daily newspaper in Albanian language: "Koha", (31.10.2011, p.3); Another pool in Macedonia, by IPIS, in the period of 28.10-01.11.2011, showed drop of the support of the citizens of Macdonia for EU integration: from 83,7% for in January 2011, and 9,5% gains: to 77,5% for and 18,2% against in November 2011. (According to daily newspaper in Macedonian language: Dnevnik, 5-6.11.2011, and Utrinski Vesnik, 5-6.11.2011, p.3). Also after the last Progress Report of EC for Macedonia(2011), in the country was created anti-EU feelings, and even messages like:"No to EU slavery", (daily newspaper in Macedonian language, "Utrinski Vesnik", 31.10.2011, p.4). Is interesting that on this issue: EU accession, by end of 2011, the country was divided by ethnic lines: Ethnic Macedonian expressed their anti- EU stand, whether ethnic Albanian remained absolute pro: Euro-Atlantic integration. The similar trends were also in Serbia, where, until mid of 2011, the support of Serbian' s citizens for EU accession was more than 70%, than around 60%, and in the beginning of November only 46%. (According to Statement of the Prime Minister of Serbia Mirko Cvetkovic, given in the opening of the Conference of SEEMO/OSCE, Belgrade, 02.11.2011, (Koha, 04.11.2011, p.9).

¹⁰ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Union Parliament and the Council, Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges: 2011-2012, Brussels, 12.10.2011 COM(2011) 666 final.

¹¹ EC, Commission Opinion on the application for accession to the European Union by the Republic of Croatia, Brussels, 12.10.2011, COM(2011)667 final; EC, Commission staff working paper, Montenegro 2011 Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011, SEC(2011)1204; EC, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2011 Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011, SEC(2011)1203, COM(2011)666; EC, Commission Opinion on Serbia' s application for membership of the European Union, Brussels, 12.10.2011 COM(2011)668 final, SEC(2011) 1208 final; EC Commission staff working paper Albania 2011 Progress Report, Brussels 12.10.2011, SEC(2011)1205, COM(2011)666; EC, Kosovo 2011 Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011 SEC(2011)1207, COM(2011)666.

¹² About Croatia case see: Blerim Reka: Foreword to book of Zelko Ivancevic: Put prema EU,(On the Road towards the EU, Zagreb 2011. The book was promoted in Zagreb, 27 October 2011.

¹³ See more about it: Blerim Reka: The Geopolitics and the Techniques of EU Enlargement, (Aspect, Brussels, 2010)

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ This project was presented by me for the first time in the conference of Balkans Forum, in French Assembly, Paris 27.11.1998, than the same project was presented in various international conferences. See more about it: Blerim Reka: "The International Possition of Kosova after the war and BAFTA, the model of regional integration into EU", The Union of Albanian Economist, (UESH), Tirana, 25-26 November 1999, published in conference publication: "The economic and social development of Albania regions and their regional and world integration", (Tirana, Prishtina, Shkup, 2000, pg:214-221); See also: Blerim Reka: BAFTA, as sub-regional model of integration", (Kosova Law Review, Vol.IV, No.4/2000; Euro-Atlantic Review, Vol.I, No.2/2003).