

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies
Department of Political Science

Master's Thesis

2020

Bc. Oliver Války

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies
Department of Political Science

**Member States' Positions Towards Western Balkans
Enlargement**

Master's thesis

Author: Bc. Oliver Války

Study programme: International Relations

Supervisor: Mgr. Viera Knutelská, Ph.D.

Year of the defence: 2020

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

8. 5. 2020

Bc. Oliver Války

References

VALKY, Oliver. *Member States' Positions Towards Western Balkans Enlargement*. Praha, 2020. 57 pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies, Department of Political Science
Supervisor Mgr. Viera Knutelská, Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 85 000 characters

Abstract

This thesis studies the positions EU member states take towards the Western Balkan Enlargement. We examine what forms these positions. We examine what influence does the net contribution to the European budget have, net contributors are less likely to support further Enlargement. The levels of migration and the feeling that migration is a concerning issue do not have relevant influence on the popularity of the Enlargement. We found no relevant correlation between the feeling of European citizenship and the support for the EU membership for the Balkan countries. We can, however, see that the New Member States are much more likely to support the EU enlargement than are those who became EU members before 2004. We have chosen four cases for case studies. In the case study of France, we can observe the influence of the French president on the Enlargement process and the resulting reform of its method. In the German case, the position of the political elites is a strong support of the Enlargement, even if the public are not that enthusiastic and have a lot of influence, since the German parliament has to also approve beginning of any accession talks. In the case of Greece, we can see how Greece was able to use its position as an EU member and gain leverage in their dispute with Macedonia over the name of the country. In the case of Slovenia and Croatia, we can see the danger of bilateral disputes slowing down the accession process of the Western Balkan Countries.

Abstrakt

V této diplomové práci se zabýváme postojem členských států Evropské Unie vůči rozšíření Evropské Unie o státy Západního Balkánu. Zkoumáme, co formuje jejich pozice, jaký vliv má čistý příjem z evropského rozpočtu, čisti plátcí jsou méně pravděpodobně podpůrci dalšího rozšíření Unie. Míra migrace a pocit, že migrace je znepokojující záležitost pro Evropskou unii, nemají žádný relevantní vliv na popularitu rozšíření. Nenašli jsme žádnou relevantní korelaci mezi pocitem Evropského občanství a podporou členství krajin Balkánu v Unii. Můžeme ale vidět, že nové členské státy (státy co do EU vstoupili v roce 2004 a později) jsou většími podporovateli rozšiřování než staré členské státy. Vybrali jsme čtyři případy pro případové studie. Případová studie Francie ozřejmuje vliv francouzského prezidenta Macrona na proces rozšiřování a následnou reformu tohoto procesu. V případě Německa je pozice politických elit silná podpora dalšího rozšiřování, i když veřejnost není tak entusiastická a má prostřednictvím silného parlamentu značný vliv na tohle rozhodnutí, protože Bundestag musí schválit jakékoliv nové přístupové rozhovory. V případě Řecka můžeme sledovat, jak bylo Řecko schopné využít svoji pozici uvnitř EU a ovlivnit tak svůj spor o oficiální název s Makedonií. V poslední případové studii zkoumáme, jak vzájemné spory Slovinska a Chorvatska zpomalili cestu Chorvatska do Unie a proč je možné, že se podobná situace zopakuje.

Keywords

European Union, Western Balkans, Member states, Enlargement

Klíčová slova

Evropská unie, Západní Balkán, členské státy, rozšiřování

Název práce

Postoj členských států Evropské unie k rozšiřování o státy Západního Balkánu

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to Mgr. Viera Knutelská, Ph.D. for her time, help, and dedication.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. THEORY AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS.....	4
2.1 <i>Theoretical Framework</i>	4
2.2 <i>Method of Analysis</i>	5
2.3 <i>Case Selection</i>	6
2.4 <i>Conceptualisation of Terms</i>	7
2.4.1 <i>New and Old Member States</i>	7
2.4.2 <i>European Identity</i>	8
2.5 <i>Data</i>	8
3. STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS	10
3.1 <i>Support for the Enlargement of the European Union</i>	10
3.2 <i>Net Contribution to the European Budget</i>	12
3.3 <i>Migration</i>	16
3.4 <i>New and Old Member States</i>	21
3.5 <i>European Citizenship</i>	24
4. CASE STUDIES.....	27
4.1 <i>France and the Western Balkan Enlargement</i>	27
4.1.1 <i>The French Veto</i>	27
4.1.2 <i>Reform of the Accession Process</i>	28
4.1.3 <i>French Domestic Politics</i>	30
4.1.4 <i>The French non-paper</i>	3 Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.
4.1.5 <i>New Enlargement Method</i>	Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.6
4.2 <i>Germany and the Western Balkan Enlargement</i>	Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.7
4.2.1 <i>The Berlin Process</i>	Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.7
4.2.2 <i>The Role of Bundestag</i>	Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.8
4.2.3 <i>Support for the Western Balkan Enlargement</i>	Chyba! Záložka nie je definovaná.8
4.3 <i>Greece and the Western Balkan Enlargement</i>	41
4.3.1 <i>The Macedonian Name Dispute</i>	41
4.3.2 <i>Relations with Other Western Balkan Countries</i>	43
4.3.3 <i>Public Support</i>	45
4.4 <i>Croatia, Slovenia, and the Western Balkan Enlargement</i>	46
4.4.1 <i>Bilateral Rilationship</i>	46
4.4.2 <i>The Disputes</i>	47
4.4.3 <i>Role of the Union</i>	48
5 CONCLUSION.....	51
6. LIST OF REFERENCES	5SCHYBA! ZÁLOŽKA NIE JE DEFINOVANÁ.

1. Introduction

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991 and the subsequent Yugoslav wars, the countries who succeeded Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, and Northern Macedonia eventually started their journey towards European Integration. These journeys, however, have been very different for respective countries.

Slovenia, country less damaged by the fallout of the breakup of Yugoslavia, joined the European Union first in the Eastern Enlargement in 2004, together with seven other post-communist countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary) Cyprus and Malta.

The European Union has declared support for future European membership for the seven Western Balkan states and has developed a policy to support the gradual integration of these countries. The EU launched the Stabilisation and Association Process in 1999, a framework for relations between the EU and countries in the region, and the Stability Pact, a broader initiative involving all key international players. The Stability Pact was replaced by the Regional Cooperation Council in 2008.

The 2003 European Council in Thessaloniki reaffirmed that all the countries of Western Balkans were potential candidates for EU membership. This ‘European perspective’ was reaffirmed fifteen years later in February 2018 when the European Commission published its Western Balkans Strategy. This was followed by a summit in Sofia, Bulgaria where European and Balkan leaders agreed on the so-called Sofia Declaration, in which the promise of a future EU membership for all of the countries of Western Balkan was repeated again.

Out of the seven Western Balkan states only Croatia managed to join the Union, in 2013. The status of the remaining six countries warries. Albania applied for EU membership on

28 April 2009. In October 2013, the Commission unequivocally recommended granting Albania the status of candidate for EU membership, which it obtained in June 2014. The accession negotiations were opened in 2020. The Republic of North Macedonia applied for EU membership in March 2004 and was granted EU candidate status in December 2005. The accession talks with North Macedonia were opened in 2020, alongside Albania. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a potential candidate country. The country submitted its membership application on 15 February 2016. There is no further development, because Bosnian parliament has so far not been able to take necessary steps. Kosovo is a potential candidate for EU accession as well. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU entered into force on 1 April 2016.

Montenegro applied for EU membership in December 2008. It was granted candidate status in December 2010 and accession negotiations were opened in June 2012. Out of a total of 35 negotiating chapters, 32 had been opened by the end of 2018, but only 3 had been provisionally closed. Serbia submitted its application for EU membership in December 2009 and was granted candidate status in March 2012. Accession negotiations were formally opened on 21 January 2014. A total of 18 chapters had been opened by the end of 2019. (Vachudova, 2019)

The accession talks are conducted by various European institutions (for example European Commission, European Parliament, Council of European Union or the European Council). Both their initiation and conclusion are subjected to the unanimous agreement by the European Council. A country that wishes to join the EU addresses its application to the Council, which asks the Commission to submit an opinion. The European Parliament is notified of this application.

If the Commission's opinion is favourable, the European Council may decide, by unanimity, to grant the country candidate status. Following a recommendation by the

Commission, the Council decides, again by unanimity, whether negotiations should be opened. This means that for a country to become a member of the European Union, it needs to have support from all of the current members.

It is, therefore, very important to see, why and how are respective member states making their decisions on the issue of Western Balkan enlargement. In this thesis we will answer the question how do certain political, economic, societal, historical, strategic and cultural realities influence their positions and form their decision making.

2. Theory and Method of Analysis

2.1 Theoretical Framework

We are looking at the issue of Western Balkan Enlargement through the framework of constructivist theory. This theory is the best suited to explain the formation, shifting and development of attitudes of respective member states of the European Union towards further Enlargement. The notion that international relations are not only affected by power politics, but also by ideas, is a cornerstone of the constructivist theory.

Constructivists argue that agency and structure are mutually constituted, which implies that structures influence agency and that agency influences structures. Agency can be understood as the ability of someone to act, whereas structure refers to the international system that consists of material and ideational elements. (Wendt, 1999)

According to this view, the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material. This leads to social constructivists to argue that changes in the nature of social interaction between states can bring a fundamental shift towards greater international security. Constructivism primarily seeks to demonstrate how core aspects of international relations are, contrary to the assumptions of neorealism and neoliberalism,

socially constructed, that is, they are given their form by ongoing processes of social practice and interaction. (Baylis, 2011)

Another central issue to constructivism is identities and interests. Constructivists argue that states can have multiple identities that are socially constructed through interaction with other actors. Identities are representations of an actor's understanding of who they are, which in turn signals their interests. (Wendt, 1999)

They are important to constructivists as they argue that identities constitute interests and actions. For example, the identity of a small state implies a set of interests that are different from those implied by the identity of a large state. The small state is arguably more focused on its survival, whereas the large state is concerned with dominating global political, economic and military affairs.

This thesis is using the framework of the National Preference Formation theory to examine the processes of creating national respectively government positions towards the enlargement of the European Union. (Kassim, 2019) This theoretical framework understands creation of governmental position as an inherently domestic process of communication, competition and cumulation of the best interests of specific domestic actors, institutions, and stakeholders, such as political parties, leaders, governing bodies, ministries, business community etc..

2.2 Method of Analysis

We are using statistical techniques used to examine causal relationships between variables. Calculating the correlation between two variables, in our specific case between the levels of support for EU enlargement in all of the current member states and number of other variables such as level of migration or contribution to the common EU budget.

The correlation coefficient (also referred to as Pearson's r) is a statistical measure of the strength of the relationship between the relative movements of two variables. The values

range between -1.0 and 1.0. A correlation of -1.0 shows a perfect negative correlation, while a correlation of 1.0 shows a perfect positive correlation. A correlation of 0.0 shows no linear relationship between the movement of the two variables. (Palumbo, 1977)

This thesis hypothesizes that positions of relative member states declared in their official policy statements, pronounced by their political leaders or reflected in national polls dealing with the topic of accepting potentially new member states of the European Union are influenced by certain set of political, economic, societal and historical realities. We use quantitative statistical methods to describe the correlation between variables in accordance to states hypotheses.

We also use four case studies of selected member states to illustrate better and deeper the situation concerning the positions taken on Western Balkan Enlargement. We use four relevant cases France, Germany, Greece, and Slovenia plus Croatia. Each of these cases were chosen because of their unique relevance to the issue of EU Enlargement. France had been the country who significantly changed the dynamics of the Enlargement process with its veto in October 2019 and following push to reform the methodology of the Enlargement process.

2.3 Case Selection

Together with Germany, France is traditionally strong voice on any EU matter, especially such a relevant matter as EU enlargement is. Germany does not only play strong role in the Western Balkan Enlargement progress because of its economical and political influence inside the EU and also outside of it, Germany is also actively leading the support for further Enlargement. Both within the EU institutions and processes and in a parallel way with its Berlin Process.

Greece played the pivotal role in case of Northern Macedonia and its European path. For decades, progress of the Macedonian EU integration depended on the bilateral relations

between Macedonia and Greece. The name dispute used to put breaks on any eventual development, until it was officially solved in 2019.

And finally, we have decided to focus on the pair of former Yugoslav EU members Slovenia and Croatia. Their own example is beneficial for understanding how current member states can influence the accession process of their neighbours, or other states with which they have some bilateral disputes or even conflicts. It also illustrates what the Western Balkan Countries are possibly facing on their journey towards EU integration.

2.4 Conceptualisation of Terms

2.4.1 New and Old Member States

We use the term New and Old Member states. These two terms are defined by the era in which relative countries joined the European Union or European Community, respectively.

The Old Member states are the six founding states (Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) plus the states which joined in the First Enlargement in 1973 (Ireland, Denmark, United Kingdom) except UK which is irrelevant after its departure from the EU, those who joined in the Second Enlargement in 1981 (Greece) and in the Third Enlargement in 1986 (Spain, Portugal) and finally those who joined in Fourth Enlargement in 1995 (Austria, Sweden, Finland).

The New States therefor consist of countries which joined in the Fifth Enlargement in 2004 (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, Cyprus), Romania and Bulgaria which joined in 2007 and Croatia which became an EU member in 2013. This distinction between the Old and New Member states had been set along the lines of the 2004 enlargement, because it represents major changes in the workings of the European Union. All but two (Malta, Cyprus) of the New Member States are countries who used to be a part of the Soviet Bloc, have had very recent experience with economic, political, and societal transformation. The economic reality in those countries had differed

from the Old Member States significantly as did the view of the Union. This distinction is used very often while researching European topics and works well for this thesis too.

2.4.2 European Identity

Is the sense of personal identification with European Union, in a cultural or political sense. The establishment of common expected and desired goals. Such goals can be elaborated as partial working solutions to pragmatically felt needs, such as those postulated by neo-functionalists. (Luhmann, 2017).

2.5 Data

We are using data generated mostly from official EU sources such as Eurobarometer or from European Commission. The measure of support for EU enlargement itself is measured by public support expressed by the general public of every EU member state in the regular EU-wide opinion polls Eurobarometer. In the poll respondents were asked to declare whether they are for or against the future enlargement of the European Union. General support is counted as percentage of those who support this enlargement minus those who are against it. We are using the data from Standard Eurobarometer 92. The collection of data for this Eurobarometer took place during November 2019 and the findings were published in following December.

Further we work with another variable which is the net contributions to the common European budget from respective member states. Each country contributes certain amount of money to the European budget and also receives certain amount of money from the European budget back via for example structural funds. This produces final sum which stands as the net amount of money each country contributes to the budget is also known as Operating Budgetary Balance.

Member States' operating budgetary balances are calculated based on data on the allocation of EU expenditure by Member State and on Member States' contributions to the EU budget. It is important to point out that estimating operating budgetary balances is merely an accounting exercise that shows certain financial costs and benefits derived from the EU by each Member State. We use this variable of net contributions expressed in the form of annual contribution in the relation to the GNI (the gross national income is the total domestic and foreign output claimed by residents of a country) of each individual country. The source for this data is the European Commission which published data from the current (2014-2020) budgetary period. Specifically, the latest data that we used to form our variable is from 2018.

We also assess the numbers of migrants currently residing in the EU member states with the distinction of people coming from other EU country and people coming from outside of the European Union as well as the sum of these two. These three variables are based on data from Eurostat, which describe the situation as of 2018, and are expressed as the percentage of the overall population of said member state.

We are also using more specific data produced by YouGov, the British market research and data analyst company. They have conducted a poll of six selected EU member states in December 2018. They asked their respondents to evaluate which of the discussed European and no-European countries should be allowed or should have been to join the European Union. They asked the question: *Below is a list of countries that have recently joined the European Union, are applying to join, have applied to join in the past, or have been discussed as possible future members. In each case please say whether you think they should or should not be allowed to join the European Union?*

They asked this question in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. We are using this data to evaluate the public opinion towards Kosovo,

Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Bosnia in Germany and France. The poll also asked about Israel, Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Morocco, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, and Turkey.

In the case studies we also use data harvested from public statements, interviews, and press conferences given by various national and European political actors. We use these statements and proclamations to illustrate the level of support for EU Enlargement. Their enthusiasm towards the process, or their opposition. As well as their voiced demands or descriptions of their preferred solutions and processes.

We use the regular press conferences taking place around every European Council, where both national and political leaders express their position on the subject which are on the table, as well as comment on positions taken by other member states. We use interviews in print magazines and newspapers, where relevant opinions are stated. Third main source of information and data are various speeches made at universities, summits or other public events.

3. Statistical Data Analysis

3.1 Support for the Enlargement of the European Union

The support for the further EU enlargement is being polled regularly throughout the current member states. In the Eurobarometer database the last several polls up to the year 2019 show rise of support of new members joining the Union. The support for the enlargement was in the 2019 Eurobarometer larger than for the opposing opinion, which happened for the first time. As of November 2019, 44% of Europeans support Enlargement and 42% of them is against such a step.

The highest net support for EU Enlargement is in Spain and the least supportive of it are the Finnish. Eleven countries are in net negative numbers, meaning that more people oppose the Enlargement than support it. All these countries (Italy, Czechia, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Luxemburg, Austria, Netherlands, France, Finland) are also under the all European support of 2%. Higher support than that showed the citizens of Portugal, Estonia, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Latvia, Slovenia, Ireland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Malta, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Spain. The highest number of interviewees who did not know, meaning they did not express their stance as neither for nor against, was in Malta with 27%.

Country	For-Against-Do Not Know	Support
	%	%
Spain	66-14-20	52
Lithuania	68-21-11	47
Poland	67-20-13	47
Hungary	67-23-10	44
Romania	67-23-10	44
Malta	57-16-27	41
Croatia	64-28-8	36
Bulgaria	55-21-24	34
Ireland	59-26-15	33
Slovenia	61-30-9	31
Latvia	59-29-12	30
Slovakia	56-31-13	25

Cyprus	54-31-15	23
Greece	52-39-9	13
Estonia	44-33-23	11
Portugal	51-40-9	11
EU27	44-42-14	2
Italy	42-44-12	-2
Czechia	40-46-14	-6
Belgium	40-55-5	-15
Sweden	34-51-15	-17
Denmark	32-53-15	-21
Germany	33-55-12	-22
Luxembourg	30-54-16	-24
Austria	34-59-7	-25
Netherlands	33-60-7	-27
France	29-59-12	-30
Finland	25-59-16	-34

Support for the EU Enlargement

3.2 Net Contribution to the European Budget

The annual budgetary procedure as established by article 314 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union lasts from 1 September to 31 December. The European Union has a budget to finance policies carried out at European level (such as agriculture, regional development, space, trans-European networks, research and innovation, health, education and culture, migration, border protection and humanitarian aid).

The European Union budget is primarily an investment budget. Representing around 2 % of all EU public spending, it aims to complement national budgets. Its purpose is to implement the priorities that all EU members have agreed upon. It provides European added-value by supporting actions which, in line with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality, can be more effective than actions taken at national, regional or local level. (European Commission, 2019)

Hypothesis1: Countries who profit most from the EU budget are more likely to oppose enlargement, because they would be able to access less finances after the countries of Western Balkan which are all poorer than the current member states had joined the Union.

Hypothesis2: Countries which are the largest contributors to the budget are less likely to support the enlargement because of the probability of the need for more contributions.

The data on net Operating Budgetary Balance show that there are 10 net contributors to the budget (Denmark, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Netherlands, Italy, France, Finland, Ireland, Belgium) and their Operating Budgetary Balance is therefore negative. There are 17 net recipients with positive Operating Budgetary Balance (Luxemburg, Spain, Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Czechia, Croatian, Romania, Portugal, Greece, Slovakia, Estonia, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary).

Country	Support for Enlargement %	Operating Budgetary Balances % of GNI
Denmark	-21	-0,39

Germany	-22	-0,39
Austria	-25	-0,35
Sweden	-17	-0,32
Netherlands	-27	-0,31
Italy	-2	-0,29
France	-30	-0,26
Finland	-34	-0,25
Ireland	33	-0,12
Belgium	-15	-0,11
Luxembourg	-24	0,04
Spain	52	0,15
Cyprus	23	0,39
Malta	41	0,41
Slovenia	31	1,17
Czechia	-6	1,22
Croatia	36	1,31
Romania	44	1,61
Portugal	11	1,66
Greece	13	1,83
Slovakia	25	1,9
Estonia	11	2,15
Poland	47	2,59
Bulgaria	34	3,01
Latvia	30	3,31

Lithuania	47	3,96
Hungary	44	4,11

$$r = 0,68$$

There is a positive correlation between these two variables, meaning that the countries which are the recipients of the EU budget (their Operating Budgetary Balance is higher) are more likely to have higher levels of support for the Enlargement. The Correlation Coefficient (or “r”) between the variables of Net Support for Enlargement and Operating Budgetary balance is 0,676597. This value is sufficient enough to conclude that there is relevant correlation between these two variables.

The correlation is positive what disproves the **Hypothesis1: Countries who profit most from the EU budget are more likely to oppose enlargement, because they would be able to access less finances after the countries of Western Balkan which are all poorer than the current member states had joined the Union.**

The correlation between the two variables establishes that countries who are the net contributors to the EU budget are more likely to oppose the Western Balkan Enlargement, proving the **Hypothesis2: Countries which are the largest contributors to the budget are less likely to support the enlargement because of the probability of the need for more contributions.**

This Enlargement would bring into the Union countries who would be, best on their macroeconomic situation, net recipients. This would not necessarily mean automatically higher contributions from the net contributors to the Eu budget, that depends on the political agreement on the size and functions on the budget.

Growing single market, economic reforms executed in candidate countries, stability, development and investment may lead to higher prosperity for the Union and in the long term better the economic situation of the net budgetary recipients, both current ones and those countries that would join and of course the net contributors as well.

Further economic integration of the region is economically beneficial. However, it still is a politically tricky subject. Public opinion in those member states which are net contributors does not support accepting new members who are seen as economically draining the European resources (Garry, 2009).

3.3 Migration

With new members joining the Union they are, of course, also becoming part of the European Single Market, territory without internal borders for goods, services, and people. This means higher levels of workers who tend to move towards richer member states, seeking better working conditions, opportunities, and overall quality of life. More intense migration among European countries is therefore direct consequence of any Enlargement.

Hypothesis3: Countries where the public sees immigration as a bigger concern, will have more negative outlook on the Western Balkan Enlargement, because of fears of more intense migration.

In the recent years, migration features firmly on the top ranks of poll of issues concerning Europeans. In the both Eurobarometers from the year 2019 migration is the top issue concerning Europeans. In November, it was mentioned by 34% of respondents in the EU overall, is considered to be the most important issue facing the EU in 26 Member States (up from 21 in spring 2019), with the highest proportions in Malta (66%), Cyprus (60%) and Slovenia (53%). It is in equal first place in Austria along with climate change (both 27%). It is the second most important concern in Sweden (36%) and Ireland (28%)

(Eurobarometer, December 2019). We are using this Eurobarometer data describing the concern European public is feeling about migration and we are looking for correlation between levels of this concern and declared support for further EU enlargement.

Country	Support for Enlargement %	Immigration as the Top Concern
Austria	-25	27
Belgium	-15	44
Bulgaria	34	48
Croatia	36	46
Cyprus	23	60
Czechia	-6	48
Denmark	-21	46
Estonia	11	52
Finland	-34	38
France	-30	30
Germany	-22	38
Greece	13	51
Hungary	44	40
Ireland	33	28
Italy	-2	34
Latvia	30	46
Lithuania	47	41
Luxembourg	-24	31

Malta	41	66
Netherlands	-27	48
Poland	47	31
Portugal	11	26
Romania	44	24
Slovakia	25	47
Slovenia	31	53
Spain	52	29
Sweden	-17	36

$$r = 0,14$$

When we analyse this data using the methods of statistical analysis, we find that the Correlation Coefficient (or “r”) between these variables is 0,137. The value of r so close to zero does not suggest any reasonable correlation we would be able to establish between the levels of support for enlargement and seeing immigration as a concern.

Hypothesis3: Countries where the public sees immigration as a bigger concern, will have more negative outlook on the Western Balkan Enlargement, because of fears of more intense migration.

This hypothesis could not be proven, there is no observable correlation between these two variables.

We are further looking at data describing the immigration situation in respective EU countries, the percentage of population born outside of the respective country. We use data describing what percentage of population of given EU member state was not born in that

state and we also differentiate between those born in other EU member state and those who came from third countries. We look for the correlation between these three variables and the level of support for EU enlargement.

Hypothesis4: Countries with higher levels of immigration from the current member states or from outside of the Union are less likely to support the enlargement because of fears of further increase of incoming migrants.

Country	Support %	EU Immigration % of Population	Non-EU Immigration % of Population	Eu + Non-EU Immigration % of Population
Austria	-25	8,6	10,5	19,2
Belgium	-15	7,8	9	16,8
Bulgaria	34	0,8	1,4	2,2
Croatia	36	1,7	11,2	12,9
Cyprus	23	14,1	6,9	21
Czechia	-6	1,8	2,6	4,4
Denmark	-21	4,1	7,8	11,9
Estonia	11	1,8	13,1	14,9
Finland	-34	2,3	4,3	6,6
France	-30	3,2	9	12,2
Germany	-22	7,2	9,4	16,6
Greece	13	3,2	8,7	11,9
Hungary	44	3,3	2,1	5,5
Ireland	33	12,6	4,2	16,8

Italy	-2	3	7,2	10,2
Latvia	30	1,4	11,3	12,7
Lithuania	47	0,8	3,9	4,7
Luxembourg	-24	34,9	11,6	46,5
Malta	41	8,8	8,7	17,5
Netherlands	-27	3,6	9,3	12,9
Poland	47	0,7	1,2	1,8
Portugal	11	2,6	6,2	8,8
Romania	44	1,1	1,5	2,6
Slovakia	25	2,9	0,6	3,5
Slovenia	31	3,2	8,9	12,1
Spain	52	4,1	9,2	13,3
Sweden	-17	5,4	13,1	18,5

$$r_1 = -0,28$$

$$r_2 = -0,40$$

$$r_3 = -0,39$$

After examining the correlation between these three pairs of variables we must conclude that none of the correlations is strong enough to conclude some existing established correlation relevant enough. The correlation coefficient between the support for Enlargement and the levels of immigration from EU states is -0,276987680181838. The correlation coefficient between the support for Enlargement and the levels of immigration from Non-EU states is -0,403949838023284. The correlation coefficient between the

support for Enlargement and the levels of immigration from both Eu and Non-EU states is -0,391338216127334.

All three of the correlation coefficients are negative suggesting the direction of the correlation to mean that higher levels of non-native born population lead to lower support of EU enlargement. However, since the values of all three of the correlation coefficients are very low, we cannot conclusively declare any viable correlation between these three pairs of variables.

Hypothesis4: Countries with higher levels of immigration from the current member states or from outside of the Union are less likely to support the enlargement because of fears of further increase of incoming migrants.

This hypothesis is not valid. We were not able to establish any relevant correlation between the levels of migration and the attitude towards the Western Balkan Enlargement.

3.4 New and Old Member States

One of the most important and defining moments of the EU existence has so far been the Enlargement of 2004, also known as the Eastern Enlargement, when the EU expanded significantly and the number of Member States almost doubled, from 15 to 25. This experience of accepting significant numbers of new countries is only shared among the Old Member States. The New Member States are lacking in this aspect, there was no mass enlargement since their joining the Union, therefore they are still seen as the New States, as evidenced also by the distinction used in this thesis.

Hypothesis5: Old Member States are less likely to support the Enlargement because of their different experience with the EU Enlargement, most notably the Eastern Enlargement of 2004.

Research of European Identity shows there are strong differences between Old and New States in terms of feeling “European”. This gap in public sentiment between the Old and

the New European countries shows that even if citizens of the New States feel attached to the Union, trust European institutions and strongly support the EU membership their personal feeling as Europeans is weaker than amongst citizens of the Old European countries.

This situation may not only explain different attitudes towards Enlargement based on historical experience but also be itself a cause of a different view on the Enlargement. The Old Member States can see the lack of European Identity among New Members as a reason not to accept more countries to the Union, which would not share their European Identity in the same way the New Member states have not. (Ceka, Sojka 2016)

When we look at the support for the Enlargement of the European Union among these two groups, we can see significant differences between these two groups. Among the thirteen New Member States only Czechia has negative level of support for further Enlargement. In the group of the fourteen Old Member States there are four countries (Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Greece) who support further enlargement.

Country	Support for Enlargement %	New/Old Member State
Bulgaria	34	New
Croatia	36	New
Cyprus	23	New
Czechia	-6	New
Estonia	11	New
Hungary	44	New
Latvia	30	New
Lithuania	47	New

Malta	41	New
Poland	47	New
Romania	44	New
Slovakia	25	New
Slovenia	31	New
Austria	-25	Old
Belgium	-15	Old
Denmark	-21	Old
Finland	-34	Old
France	-30	Old
Germany	-22	Old
Greece	13	Old
Ireland	33	Old
Italy	-2	Old
Luxembourg	-24	Old
Netherlands	-27	Old
Portugal	11	Old
Spain	52	Old
Sweden	-17	Old

The average support for other countries joining the European differs significantly between the Old Member States and the New Member States. Among the Old Member States the average support for Enlargement is -7,71%, therefore on average there are more people

who oppose it than there are those who are for it. Among the New Member States the average support is 31,3%, which is a difference of 39%.

Hypothesis5: Old Member States are less likely to support the Enlargement because of their different experience with the EU Enlargement, most notably the Eastern Enlargement of 2004.

This hypothesis is true, there are relevant differences in the view of the Western Balkan Enlargement among the New and the Old groups of EU member states. The Eastern Enlargement of 2004 is such a pivotal experience which the Old states share, that it cannot be disregarded while trying to understand their position. The New Member States are of course lacking this experience, since they themselves were those joining the EU in 2004 and later.

3.5 European Citizenship

In all of the countries in EU the majority of citizens has declared that they feel as European citizens since at least 2018. According to the Eurobarometer from the December of 70% of all Europeans feel like European citizens, which is slight (3%) decline since the previous Eurobarometer came out at the beginning of that year. The most people feel like European citizens in Luxembourg with 91% of population claiming so. The fewest self-defined European citizens is in Greece with 51% of Greeks declaring their felt identity as European citizens. Since spring 2019, the feeling of EU citizenship has increased in five countries (down from 22 in spring 2019), although Czechia is the only country where the increase is more than four points (65%, +7 percentage points). In 22 countries the feeling of citizenship has declined, with the largest falls recorded in Belgium (74%, -7), Greece (51%, -6) and France (58%, -6) (Eurobarometer, 2019).

The Enlargement would necessarily bring new people into the European citizenship. This might be seen as a problem for people who see their European citizenship as part of their identity. That is why they might see European Union and European citizenship as more rigid institution which membership should not be able to redefine, achieve or extend easily.

Hypothesis6: Countries with higher levels of population identifying as European citizens are less likely to support the Enlargement, which would extend the European citizenship to more new countries.

Country	Support for Enlargement	Feeling as a Citizen of the EU
	%	%
Spain	52	86
Lithuania	47	81
Poland	47	81
Hungary	44	80
Romania	44	72
Malta	41	81
Croatia	36	66
Bulgaria	34	56
Ireland	33	80
Slovenia	31	76
Latvia	30	73
Slovakia	25	79
Cyprus	23	72
Greece	13	51

Estonia	11	80
Portugal	11	81
Italy	-2	55
Czechia	-6	65
Belgium	-15	74
Sweden	-17	79
Denmark	-21	79
Germany	-22	83
Luxembourg	-24	91
Austria	-25	73
Netherlands	-27	72
France	-30	58
Finland	-34	81

$$r = 0,07$$

We have analysed the variables of support for enlargement and the percentage of people seeing themselves as European citizens. The correlation between these two variables is extremely inconsequential with r only 0,07177. There is no relevant relationship between the level of support for the Enlargement and the feeling of European citizenship in respective member states.

Hypothesis6: Countries with higher levels of population identifying as European citizens are less likely to support the Enlargement, which would extend the European citizenship to more new countries.

We were not able to find any evidence supporting this hypothesis. The correlation coefficient is practically non-existent. Therefore, we cannot see this hypothesis as valid.

4. Case studies

4.1 France and the Western Balkan Enlargement

4.1.1 The French Veto

We are looking at the position of France towards the Western Balkan Enlargement since the position of this country and its leaders has formed the latest stages of development in this area in rather relevant way. French president Macron was the one who vetoed expected decision on the initiation of accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania on the EU Summit in October of 2019.

The decision to start next phase of an eventual EU membership was itself discussed by the pre-Summit ministerial meeting but vetoed by the French and therefore elevated for the discussion on the Summit of European leaders where was Macron backed by Netherlands and Denmark.

The decision, or more precisely the lack of a decision, was seen as a very demotivating sign towards any Enlargement in the foreseeable future both in the Western Balkans and in Brussels, where many leaders attempted to soften the impact of this step by voicing their support for the European future of the Western Balkan Countries.

At that time incoming president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen asked the EU leaders not to exclude the aspirants, saying North Macedonia and Albania had made *"enormous efforts to meet European norms. I would very much like them to receive a positive signal,"* At that time still acting President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker called this decision *"a historic error"*.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda talked about the significant steps North Macedonia had taken to come closer to the Union *"It changed the country's name, it changed its*

constitution, and it did everything to receive an invitation, so I think the absence of decision will have serious political consequences,"

German Deputy Foreign Minister for European Affairs Michael Roth said *"But clearly we also still need to learn that the Western Balkans deserve more of our attention, because stability and democracy in the Western Balkans should be in the EU's primary interest. We cannot allow a political vacuum to develop there."*

"There is no doubt that any further postponement would damage our credibility in the Western Balkans and also our ambitions to become a stronger global player, It's becoming harder and harder to provide a proper explanation. If we agreed with our partners on steps to take and our partners are delivering, it is then our time to deliver" claimed the Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Johannes Hahn.

These statements following the October 2019 European Council by various national and European leaders show the concern for the possible negative consequences of this decision. They show worry of disappointment in the European Union possibly felt in the Western Balkan countries themselves and the possible lack of enthusiasm for further reforms, work and sacrifices needed to follow the European rout. This could leave to a stronger political and economical position of countries like Russia, China or Turkey in Western Balkans which would have unwanted geopolitical strategic consequences for European Union. They also describe the threat of the EU being seen as an untrustworthy partner or indecisive actor on the global stage.

4.1.2 Reform of the accession process

President Macron of France offered several explanations for his decision to not allow the process of European Integration for the Balkan countries to move forward. He claimed a need for changes in the accession process, which at that point was not affective according

to him and also the need for reforms inside the Union itself before it can deal with accepting new members. Especially since some of the potential new EU countries are dealing with the very same issues as some of the current EU members, namely Hungary and Romania, have, such as corruption, problematic judicial system, and rule of law. French Minister for European Affairs Amelie de Montchalin explained the French veto by saying that *“Europe needs to focus on reforming the accession process before entering “an endless soap opera” of membership talks. Is this process efficient? From our point of view, no,”* Also arguing for solving the European Union’s internal problems before accepting new Balkan members with high levels of crime and Corruption. These and other European issues as well as French domestic issues are influencing the French position.

“I don’t want a Europe that, functioning with difficulty as 28 and tomorrow as 27, decides that we can gallop off to be 30 or 32 with the same rules” said President Macron in 2018.

Hypothesis7: French position on the EU Balkan Enlargement is largely formed by the internal French politics and President Macron’s ambitions for reforms of the European Union.

Current French government has described its strategy toward Western Balkans after the informal summit held in Berlin on 29 April 2019. France has acknowledge the progress that had been made in the region since the end of the Wars in former Yugoslavia and set areas in which further progress needs to be made: *“political challenges (unresolved disputes), economic and social challenges, difficulties in sustainably establishing the rule of law, security issues and external influences which distract the region from its European vocation.”*

Based on these identified issues president Macron charged his government with suggesting specific steps and measures for insuring betterment of the situation in the six non-EU Western Balkan States. They were sorted into three categories: better and more intensive

political relations between France and the region, enhanced bilateral cooperation in four fields (economic and social development through intervention by the Agence Française de Développement, Security, Justice, Defence) and strengthen the European activities in the region, mostly in the framework of Franco - German cooperation.

4.1.3 French Domestic Politics

The question of further EU enlargement into Western Balkans is an issue in French politics. The poll conducted by YouGov in France about the popular support for Western Balkan Enlargement illustrates how unpopular the EU Enlargement currently is. The citizens do not support accepting new member states into the EU. While ask if the six Western Balkan countries should be allowed to join the Union the majority of French people did not support any of these countries becoming an EU member.

Around half (44% -56%) of interviewees were against the idea that the respective country should be allowed to join the EU. The lowest support gained Kosovo and Albania, where only 13% of French public said they should be allowed to join. The Highest support for becoming an EU member state had Macedonia with 24% and Montenegro with 25%, neither of the Western Balkan countries was able to cross the 25% threshold.

	Serbia	Macedonia	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	Montenegro
Should Be Allowed to Join	20	24	13	18	13	25
Should not Be Allowed to Join	52	44	56	52	56	43
Don't Know	29	32	30	30	30	33

The question of Enlargement had become a stronger topic in French politics after the chaotic Brexit caused the decline of popularity of such ideas as France leaving the European Union or the Eurozone. These ideas were favoured mostly by the French right of the political spectrum, most notably by the Le Rassemblement National lead by Marine Le Pen, the strongest domestic competitor of President Emanuel Macron.

After abandoning the idea of France outside of the Eurozone or even European Union itself, the French right is choosing to define their antiglobalistic positions in terms of “localism” which is in direct apposition of the policies of free trade built and advocated for by the European Union. They oppose the free trade agreements EU is negotiating as well as certain aspects of the Single Market, which they see as providing certain advantages especially to the Eastern countries, mostly in terms of lower wages and lower social protections by which the Eastern Europeans can compete with the French.

Accepting more countries with very similar and even more pronounced advantages in terms of cheaper labour and weaker labour codes as are the countries of Western Balkans would make these problems, as the French far right sees them, even worse.

Another aspect of the opposition towards the Western Balkan Enlargement are the Identity changes. The idea of the EU, as Le Pen’s party, and other smaller parties on the right see it, is the Europe of Nations. This version of European Union means shifting certain powers and responsibilities back to the nation state, or at least towards those European institutions which are directly connected to the national governments, that is European Council and the Council of the European Union and away from the Commission. This change would be most significant in the are of legislative initiative which would according to Le Pen’s plan switched from the European Commission to the Council of the European Union.

This idea of more nationalistic EU of nations belonging to the European civilisation leads to the strict opposition towards further Enlargement into the Balkans, which are being

rhetorically depicted as outside of the European civilisation by the far right. This strict position to the right of President Macron forces him not to be more enthusiastic about the prospect of EU enlargement, since his support would mean clear lane of attack for his domestic political rivals, especially during at that time upcoming election campaign. Another aspect of Emmanuel Macron's European policies is his push for reform and change inside the Union. In his various speeches and interviews since taking office in 2017, he has been suggesting many ideas and proposals for reforming the Union. The most significant plans are in the area of the Economic and Monetary Union, the Schengen Agreement or the EU's Social Policy, the advancement of a European digital and industrial policy, strategic autonomy and European democracy, or serious steps towards European Defence Structure.

These reform ideas have been so far not successfully moved towards real changes in the Union. Of the reasons are in the eyes of Emmanuel Macron the distractions such as Brexit and Enlargement were it to take place. He has stated repeatedly that European Union should concentrate on fixing its problems in current form and then accept new members. The calls of more integrated Europe that are coming from Paris are often seen as unwelcomed and unsupported in many of the New Member States, most notably the countries of Visegrad Group (Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary). Hungary and Poland are also subjected to the procedure under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, which is a procedure in the treaties of the European Union to suspend certain rights from a member state, because of their worsening rule of law and declining democratic institutions. This type of development is in direct contrast with Macrons idea of deeper integrated Europe.

This is a cause of worry for Macron. To accept new member states with questionable judiciary systems, rampant corruption and unstable political systems means to threaten his

attempts of reforming Union by inviting more countries who might have similar tendencies as current Hungarian or Polish governments.

4.1.4 The French non-paper

One of the arguments offered by president Macron after his veto at the EU Summit in 2019 was the need for a new enlargement process before we put more countries into the current, in his eyes not efficient, one. Shortly after the Summit in November 2019, French officials in Brussels offered their unofficial proposal for the reform of the Enlargement Process. In the so-called “non-paper” they suggest several changes.

The document opens with declaration of support for the countries of Western Balkans *“We reaffirm our unequivocal support to the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia belong to Europe, by virtue of their history, culture and geography”*.

The new suggested process relies on four factors: gradual association, stringent conditions, tangible benefits, and reversibility.

Gradual Association means that once negotiations are opened, the integration process would no longer be based on simultaneous opening of a large number of thematic chapters, but on several successive stages, which would form coherent policy blocks and a scheme pre-established by the EU, taking into account the specific features of each candidate where appropriate. In order to move to the next stage, countries would have to effectively respect precise criteria, which would enable acquis to be adopted but also effectively implemented within the framework of participation in a given policy. The final objective would be full and complete accession. For example, connection to the instruments on the digital agenda (roaming, digital Europe, etc.) or participation in the European Research Area could be planned for an early stage in the process. Involvement in the Banking Union

or in the European arrest warrant could be envisaged in a middle stage, while access to the internal market would be better left towards the end of the process. (non-paper, 2019)

Stringent conditions are described in this circulated “non-paper” as criteria for moving from one stage to the next, set out in detail, making it possible to verify. Candidate countries would be required to adapt their institutional and administrative capabilities to the need for effective participation in the various policies. These criteria would come with easily and objectively verifiable indicators. They could be inspired by indicators set out by the European Union and other international organizations (Council of Europe, including the Venice Commission, OECD, World Bank), but would still be set and assessed only by EU institutions (non-paper, 2019).

Tangible benefits are defined as increased financial support. It could come from an increase in the envelope of the pre-accession instrument but making candidate countries eligible for structural funds could also be considered. Candidate countries could receive a share of structural funds for which they would be eligible once in the European Union, based on a gradual increase according to stages they have completed and reforms they have carried out. The eligibility requirements for these funds should be reserved for tenderers of these countries and European Union Member States, to avoid adverse external influences (non-paper, 2019).

The French non-paper also suggests introducing new way of proceeding through the accession process. They claim that *“A principle of reversibility should be established in order to address situations whereby the candidate country, in whole or in part, no longer meets certain criteria or ceases to fulfil the commitments it has undertaken.”*

There are also suggested changes in the sphere of political governance such as stronger role of the Commission in accessing the process, annual meeting of the Western Balkan heads of executives with the European Council (non-paper, 2019).

The methodology for the accession negotiations and Enlargement was revised and the changes were approved by the European Commission in February 2020. “*The whole process needs to be more credible, more predictable, more dynamic and more political*”, stated the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi and he also claimed that the purpose of the proposal is to re-establish the credible EU perspective for the Western Balkans.

The changes are mostly in keeping with the French non-paper from November 2019. They aim at making the process more political, with more summits, meetings, and contacts between European and Western Balkan leaders on all levels. It introduces ministerial meetings and Inter-Governmental Conferences to better access and navigate the ongoing process.

The changes are also aimed at strengthening the fundamental issues of the Enlargement process. The chapters in these areas should be opened first and closed last. As fundamentals are described the areas of rule of law, functioning of democratic institutions and the economic cooperation, as well as solving any regional disputes between the countries of Western Balkans.

Similar to the French non-paper, European Commission proposes organising the negotiating chapters in thematic clusters. Negotiations on each cluster will be opened as a whole. Closing benchmarks, however, would be set for each chapter. There are six proposed clusters: Fundamentals, Internal Market, Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity, Resources, Agriculture and Cohesion and External Relations.

The Commission also proposed better mechanisms for incentivising the countries to move forward with their reform efforts, as well as sanctioning them if it comes to “any serious or prolonged stagnation or even backsliding”. The possible rewards mentioned in the

Commission document are “phasing-in” to individual EU policies, the EU markets and EU programmes and increased funding and investments and “reform-oriented Instrument for Pre-accession support”. The sanctions proposed are putting the negotiations on hold or even suspending them overall or downgrading the possible rewards. (European Commission, 2020)

4.1.5 New Enlargement Method

The changes suggested by the European Commission are largely in keeping with the suggestion made by the French. They are along the lines of higher levels of politization of the whole process, in terms of meetings, summits, oversight, communication and cooperation throughout the process. They also match in terms of reversibility, gradual integration in certain programs and policies before actual Enlargement, financial and institutional rewards and also both suggestions share the stress on the fundamentals.

The French president Macron did not veto the start of accession process with Northern Macedonia and Albania again on the Summit in March 2020. He reversed his position following the adoption of the French suggestions for changes in the Enlargement methodology. He was able to implement his and his governments ideas on how the Enlargement process should be different. The accession talks were open with the two Western Balkan countries under the new rules.

The stated **Hypothesis7** was that: **French position on the EU Balkan Enlargement is largely formed by the internal French politics and President Macron’s ambitions for reforms of the European Union.**

We were able to show that the push for reforms in various spheres of the European Union and its institutions was a significant issue while considering the EU Western Balkan

Enlargement for the French president. The French veto at the EU Summit in October 2019 gave the French the leverage to reform the accession process itself.

The veto caused the postponement of the beginning of the Accession talks with Northern Macedonia and Albania and together with the success of the Enlargement process method gave Emmanuel Macron political cover for the domestic audience to be able to allow the talks to start at the Summit in March 2020.

We can therefore conclude that both French domestic political situation and the ambition of EU reform shaped the decisions taken by the President and his positions.

4.2 Germany and the Western Balkan Enlargement

4.2.1 The Berlin Process

Germany's position on the EU Western Balkan Enlargement is being developed mostly through the Berlin Process. The Berlin Process is a diplomatic initiative aimed at the future enlargement of the European Union. It started with the 2014 Berlin Conference, which was followed by the 2015 Vienna Summit, the 2016 Paris Summit, the 2017 Trieste Summit, and the 2018 London Summit followed by the 2019 Poznań summit.

The Berlin Process was initiated in order to consolidate and maintain the dynamics of the EU integration process in light of increased Euroscepticism and the negative signal that was sent by Commission President Jean Claude Juncker, when he declared that the European Union will freeze expansion over the following five years. *"There will be no new enlargement in the next five years,"* Juncker said in a speech leading up to a confirmation vote in July 2014. (Lilyanova, 2016)

The Berlin Process is an intergovernmental cooperation initiative functioning outside of the official structure of the European Union. It is aimed at revitalizing the multilateral ties between the Western Balkans and selected EU member states, and at improving regional

cooperation in the Western Balkans in the areas of infrastructure and economic development.

It is one of the flagship diplomatic initiatives on South-east Europe of the third Merkel cabinet. Together with Germany are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Poland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom also members of the Berlin Process. It is complemented by initiatives relating to specific South-east European countries (e.g., the German-British diplomatic initiative for Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession) (Fouéré, 2017).

Hypothesis8: Because of the strong position of the German Federal Parliament in the decision-making process on this issue, the German position is more dependent on the public opinion.

4.2.2 The Role of Bundestag

After the ruling of the German Constitutional Court on the Lisbon Treaty, the Bundestag got a new set of powers, including the right to acquiesce any new opening of accession talks with potential new member of the European Union. This could lead to the situation where the final decision is one that is made by a large number of politicians, which could mean higher pressure from the public than it is in the countries where such a decision can be made by the executive alone (Tomuschat, 2009).

4.2.3 Support for the Western Balkan Enlargement

The public support for further Enlargement of the European Union as expressed in the Eurobarometer from December 2019 stands at net negative of -22% with 33% of population supporting further Enlargement and 55% of Germans opposing it. When we look at the data from the YouGov poll from the 2018 and preference for specific Western

Balkan countries, we see that the most support has Montenegro whose joining of the Union supports exact same percentage (36%) of people as are against it.

Support for all of the other countries is negative with many more people opposing it. The lowest support has Albania with -34%. Second worst is Kosovo with net support of -28%.

	Serbia	Macedonia	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Kosovo	Montenegro
Should Be Allowed to Join	31	34	21	33	24	36
Should not Be Allowed to Join	43	39	55	41	52	36
Dont Know	25	27	24	26	25	28

Despite of the low levels of support for the Western Balkan Enlargement amongst the German public, German political leaders are strong supporters of the Enlargement. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas strongly restated the German support for the Western Balkan Enlargement after the veto of the French President Macron in October 2019. In his interview for Deutsche Welle from November 2019 he says *“Germany firmly believes that the Western Balkan countries are an integral part of Europe. Their future should be in the European Union. An overwhelming majority of EU member states were in favour of commencing accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, because doing so is in our own strategic interest. Germany is doing everything in its power to ensure that we in the EU agree on a common position, thus enabling accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia to begin in the near future.”*

Similar sentiments were expressed earlier that year in a speech by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel *"If you look at things geostrategically and also look at the map then there will only be a truly united Europe with the states of the Western Balkans,"*.

The strong support for the further EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans shared by the Chancellor Merkel who is nominated by the centre-right party CDU-CSU and her Foreign Minister Maas who was nominated by the centre-left SPD shows established support for this process amongst mainstream German politicians. The AfD party located at the far right of the political spectrum, the strongest opposition party, demanded back in 2018 referendum in case of any of the Western Balkan countries joining the European Union.

A Member of Bundestag for the AfD Sieberg Droese said that taking the Western Balkans countries into the EU *"would Balkanise the EU and we don't want that before we ask for our people's consent."* This idea however has not gained much political strength. During the required vote in Bundestag on allowing initiation of new accession talks with Northern Macedonia and Albania majority of MPs, 476, voted in favour of opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia while 122 were against and 16 abstained. On Albania, 395 MPs supported starting membership talks, 188 were against while 16 abstained.

Therefore, our presented **hypothesis8** that **Because of the strong position of the German Federal Parliament in the decision-making process on this issue, the German position is more dependent on the public opinion** does not seem to be supported by any evidence.

The public support for the Western Balkan Enlargement is relatively low, definitely in the negative values when we compare how many people support the Enlargement and how many do not. However, the German political leaders have enthusiastically and unequivocally supported the Western Balkan enlargement and opening of the accession talks with Albania and Northern Macedonia in March 2020.

4.3 Greece and the Western Balkan Enlargement

4.3.1 The Macedonian Name Dispute

Greece had been a key actor in the process of the Western Balkan Enlargement mostly through the prism of its conflict with Northern Macedonia regarding the official name of the latter country. The dispute that originally dates back to the Second World War was reignited after the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991. The dispute arises from the situation where a region in northern Greece shares its name with a country neighbouring Greece to the north. Greece opposed the use of Macedonia as a name for its northern neighbour, because Greeks living in the Greek Macedonia identify as Macedonians and do not share common identity with the people of the country of Macedonia.

Greece was preventing the newly established independent country to join international organisations using the name Macedonia. Macedonia was able to join using the official name of Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Greece was also disputing the use of the word Macedonian to describe people and language of Northern Macedonia. As well as appropriation of some historical figures, most notably Alexander the Great.

The conflict was settled by the Prespa Agreement in 2018. Where Macedonia Agreed to change its name to Republic of North Macedonia. The agreement was followed by ratification by both parliaments and open the door to North Macedonia's membership in North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and North Macedonia was also able to start accession talks with the European Union.

Hypothesis9: Greece is using its ability to block the accession of any Western Balkan State to achieve its goals in relations with the Western Balkan Countries, even though it is one of the most ardent supporters of the Western Balkan Enlargement. Most notable case of this is the name dispute with Northern Macedonia.

Under the Interim Accord of September 1995, Greece agreed not to obstruct Macedonia's applications for membership in international bodies as long as it did so under its provisional UN appellation. But the Greek foreign minister, Dora Bakoyannis, stated that *"the Hellenic Parliament, under any composition, will not ratify the accession of the neighbouring country to the EU and NATO if the name issue is not resolved beforehand."* After years of negotiations and various failed solutions the deal was reached on 12 June 2018, when Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras announced that an agreement had been reached with his Macedonian counterpart Zoran Zaev on the dispute, *"which covers all the preconditions set by the Greek side"*.

The proposal would result in the Republic of Macedonia being renamed the Republic of North Macedonia, with the new name being used for all purposes (*erga omnes*), that is, domestically, in all bilateral relations and in all regional and international organizations and institutions. The deal includes recognition of the Macedonian language in the United Nations, noting that it is within the group of South Slavic languages, and that the citizenship of the country will be called Macedonian/citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia. Also, there is an explicit clarification that the citizens of the country are not related to the ancient Macedonians.

There was a strong opposition against this deal in northern Macedonia. It was opposed by the president and many political leaders, mostly from the radical parts of the political spectrum. There were riots happening opposing the name change as well as some attacks on politicians involved in the negotiating and signing the deal with Greece. Even though a non-binding referendum took place in Macedonia, where huge majority of 91% approved the Prespa Agreement. However, the participation was lower than required 50% of the population.

The name dispute had during the years grown into a dispute over language, historical memory, nationality, cultural heritage, folklore and over all identity. Greece gradually reframed this dispute as a problem of good neighbour relations. As something that needs to be resolved for future peaceful cooperation and stability. (Armakolas, 2017)

If Macedonia wanted to have any future within the European Union and/or NATO it had no choice but to solve this issue with Greece. In these negotiations, Macedonia had very little leverage compared to Greece who is firmly settled in both of these organisations. Greece took an immovable position on the issue and was not willing to accept any other solution than an adoption of an official name for Northern Macedonia that would be approved by both countries.

During the duration of the name dispute progress coexisted with progress in Macedonia's ambitions in terms of EU integration. It is possible to say that the that the success of negotiating with Greece had relevant impact on the continuation of integration into European structures. In times when the relations between these two countries were seen as productive, mainly between 1995 and 2006, significant steps were taken towards a closer relationship with the Union. This progress stalled during the problematic era before 1995 and between 2006 and 2011. (Tzianpiris, 2012)

4.3.2 Relations with Other Western Balkan Countries

There were persistent issues not only between Greece and Macedonia but also between Greece and some other Countries of the Western Balkans, some of which still remain.

There are certain tensions between Greece and Albania regarding the status and conditions of the Greek minority in Albania, this might be potential issue on Albania's road towards

EU membership. Another potential issue for the European integration of the Balkans is the question of Kosovo.

Greece is (together with, Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus and Romania) one of the five European Member States which do not recognize Kosovo as an Independent state. In spite of that, Greece is supporting European future for Kosovo, but only if bilateral deal between Kosovo and Serbia is reached. This position is in keeping with other Member States which do not recognize Kosovo and is not specific for Greece.

Meanwhile Greece remained strong supporter of the Western Balkan Enlargement at large.

It supports all six of the Western Balkan Countries in their attempts of joining the Union.

There are many reasons for Greece as an immediate neighbour to support Western Balkan Enlargement. The long-awaited stability in the region would bring many political improvements as well as societal, economical, ecological and in terms of security.

This strong support for Western Balkan Enlargement is visible in positions Greek governments of any political persuasion have taken throughout the decades. One of the strong symbolical and practical steps was the Thessaloniki summit in 2003, where the EU promised European future to the seven Western Balkan countries (since then, only Croatia have joined the EU).

Greece showed its diplomatic support most recently after the French veto at EU Summit in October 2019. The Greek government tried hard to ensure the countries of Western Balkans of EU's continual support and to keep the Enlargement process moving. The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias organised in December 2019 a meeting in Brussels between twenty European Ministers of Foreign Affairs and their colleagues from Albania and North Macedonia.

“Greece is the oldest EU country in the region. It is a key factor in the stability and promotion of cooperation and will continue to take concrete initiatives in this direction.

The objective is a positive result possibly next March". said Dendias in Brussels December 2019. A positive result Dendias was referring to was indeed achieved following March at the EU Summit, when the talks with Albania and North Macedonia were opened.

4.3.3 Public Support

The support for the Western Balkan Enlargement of the European Union is also shared by the Greek public. In the Eurobarometer conducted in November 2019 more than a half (52) of Greeks answered that they support further Enlargement of the European union. Against were 39% of the public and 9% did not know.

The **Hypothesis9** that we established says that **Greece is using its ability to block the accession of any Western Balkan State to achieve its goals in relations with the Western Balkan Countries, even though it is one of the most ardent supporters of the Western Balkan Enlargement. Most notable case of this is the name dispute with Northern Macedonia.**

We can see that Greece has in the region of Western Balkans more relations, more interest and more connections, whether they are political, economic, cultural, or historical. It is only logical given that it shares border with Albania and North Macedonia. Therefore, its position towards the Western Balkan Enlargement is at certain places more ambivalent than is the case of many other EU countries. Greece has interest in stable, prosperous, integrated European Western Balkans, at the same time is trying to solve its issues with some of these countries and its position within the EU gives Greece more leverage in these conflicts and Greece is not afraid to use this leverage, most visibly in the name dispute with Northern Macedonia.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude that our hypothesis is correct, and Greece is indeed using its ability to block Western Balkan Enlargement to achieve its goals.

4.4 Croatia, Slovenia, and the Western Balkan Enlargement

4.4.1 Bilateral Relationship

Croatia is the only country of the Western Balkan region which managed to become a member of the European Union and together with Slovenia are the only two countries who used to belong to Yugoslavia that became EU members. Slovenia joined during the Eastern Enlargement in 2004 and Croatia, as of now the last country to join to European Union, became a member in 2013.

Croatia and Slovenia share centuries long common history with the other six Western Balkan Countries and with each other. During the twentieth century these countries went through several period of armed conflicts in some standing at the same side, in some fighting against each other. This shared history as well as indescribable number of various ties – economic, political, language, cultural, family, geographical puts Croatia and Slovenia in an extraordinary position in the context of the Western Balkan Enlargement (Petrovic, 2020).

Hypothesis10: Croatia and Slovenia are able to offer a unique point of view on the Western Balkan Enlargement because of their similarities to the countries of Western Balkan and also because of their successful integration into the European Union as countries involved in the Yugoslav wars.

Both countries declared independence in 1991, these acts were followed by armed conflicts with the Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army. The Slovenian War of Independence only lasted ten day, hence so-called Ten-Day War. The Croatian War of Independence lasted until 1995. On June 26, 1991, a mutual recognition agreement was signed and the

diplomatic relations between these two countries were established on February 6, 1992. In 1998 Croatia and Slovenia began solving their bilateral issues in a relevant way.

4.4.2 The Disputes

The bilateral relationship shifted significantly in 2014 when Slovenia became a member of the European Union. Since Croatia was at that time engaged in negotiating its membership, Slovenia's position became much stronger. Slovenia has supported the accession of Croatia to the European Union but has demanded that the opened bilateral questions be resolved before Croatia's accession to the Union. In 2008 Slovenia went as far as blocking the accession process of Croatia. This issue was solved by arbitration sponsored by the EU in 2009. On 3 March 2013, Croatia and Slovenia reach an agreement on Ljubljana Bank. A month after that, the Parliament of Slovenia unanimously ratified the Croatian accession treaty.

The Ljubljana Bank Dispute was a dispute spanning from the issue of Croatian customers of a Slovenian bank from the Yugoslav era. Another dispute was the Croatian exclusive economic zone in the Adriatic Sea. Not only Slovenia but also Italy opposed the proclamation of the Croatian Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone (Exclusive Economic Zone) in the Adriatic Sea. In the negotiations with the European Union, it was decided that Croatia can proclaim an ecological protection zone for third countries, but not for the countries of the European Union. About 40% of all the catchment of Slovenian fishermen originates from this zone and this is therefore essential for Slovenian fishery. Slovenia and Croatia had to solve some other relatively minor issues (such as the Krško nuclear power plant which the two countries manage jointly). The largest dispute was however the one regarding borders. The border issue arose from the situation where certain

parts of the border both land and maritime were not exactly set during the Yugoslav era and after the breakup of Yugoslavia, the countries disputed each other's claims.

The disputed escalated sever times over the years. Croatia often blamed Slovenia for blocking or slowing down their integration into the European Union, which Slovenia denied. In 2008 Croatia included in documents presented to the EU during their negotiating process their border proposal, without clearly demarcating the disputed status of parts of the borderline. Slovenia saw this as a prejudicing the ultimate borderline outcome. After this, Slovenia blocked Croatia's negotiation chapters for its EU membership that included the controversial documents for several months. After several failed attempts to solve the issue, Slovenia and Croatia agreed on subjecting themselves to the decision of an arbitration by the United Nations.

After a scandal in 2015 when Slovenian government attempted to influence the decision, Croatia left the Arbitration tribunal and even after it published its decision, Croatia is disputing it. After Slovenia and Croatia brought an issue resulting from the border dispute in front of the European Commission in 2018 it claimed neutrality and refused to act on the issue. Slovenia also accused Croatia of violating the Common Fisheries Policy by sending police escorts to guard its fishing boats in contested waters and preventing Slovenian inspectors from boarding the vessels. In January 2020, the Court of Justice said it had no jurisdiction to rule on the dispute and merely urged both sides to resolve their differences. (Petrovic, 2020)

4.4.3 Role of the Union

Throughout all these disputes the European Union played active role even if it did not always influence the decision or took a stance. The EU is trying to push past the disputes

and continue the European integration where it is possible and beneficial. (Bickl, 2017).

This decades long issue that started among two countries outside of the Union, continued after Slovenia joined the EU and Croatia was going through the process of accession and continued long after both of these countries joined the Union.

This put the European Union and its institutions into various new situations as arbiter and especially European Commission as a guardian of the treaties. This has very significant impact on the Western Balkan Enlargement. All of the countries in this region share very similar issues and disputes. We have seen in the case of Croatia and Slovenia as well as in the case of Greece and Macedonia that when the issues are not solved beforehand, it can complicate the Enlargement process itself. We might already see something similar in the case of Croatian position towards certain issues regarding Serbia.

With the amount of territorial disputes such as the sea border between Croatia and Montenegro at Prevlaka/Kotor Bay, the sea border between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina at Neum and Bosnia's access through Croatian internal waters to the sea, and the land border between Croatia and Serbia along the Danube and other even more politically sensitive disputes it is obvious that these bilateral issues need to be solved outside of the Enlargement process as bilateral issues, otherwise they might stall the process significantly (Bickl, 2017).

Croatia especially is able to provide vision for the other six Western Balkan countries.

Croatian road to the Union shows that it is possible to deal with troubling issues and disputes typical for the region well enough to gain the EU membership. The countries of former Yugoslavia have different pathway to other post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As Petrovic writes this is not necessarily fault of the Western Balkan countries themselves.

There are many similarities with those post-communist countries who already are members of the European Union. The western Balkan countries have been offered the possibility of the European membership. They however have been much slower in their progress towards EU. Petrovic claims that the” reasons for relative lack of success do not primarily stem (as often emphasised by EU officials and some scholars) from the structural inabilities of the Western Balkan states to adopt the EU’s values and norms, but rather from inconsistencies in the accession conditions and some EU policy incentives towards these states.” (Petrovic, 2020)

This road might be made much trickier by the constant threat of bilateral issues with Croatia, Slovenia or Greece. Croatian experience, however, is also in the unique position of being able to help, since it is the only country of Western Balkans who successfully gained the EU membership, whilst dealing with bilateral issues with its neighbour and EU member Slovenia.

Public support for the Western Balkan Enlargement is very high in both of these countries. In Slovenia as well as in Croatia twice as many people support the Enlargement than oppose it. In Croatia, the support stands at 64% with 28% of the public opposing it. In Slovenia, the Enlargement has the support of 61% of the population and 30% Croats opposing further EU Enlargement.

The Western Balkan Enlargement has also been set as one of priorities for the Croatian presidency of the Council of the European Union taking place in the first half of the year 2020. This resulted into Zagreb Summit where the European leaders met with their counterparts from the six Western Balkan Countries. In the adopted Zagreb Declaration EU declares *unequivocal support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans*. European countries also declared their support in other areas and pushed for further

cooperation among the western Balkan Countries with pledged economic support from the EU.

The **hypothesis10** states by us that **Croatia and Slovenia are able to offer a unique point of view on the Western Balkan Enlargement because of their similarities to the countries of Western Balkan and also because of their successful integration into the European Union as countries involved in the Yugoslav wars** stands.

We are able to conclude that the Slovenian and Croatian experience offers immense amount of lessons for both the European Institutions and member states, as well as for the countries of Western Balkans in terms of problem solving and building successful bilateral relationships.

5. Conclusion

In this thesis we have examined the attitudes of the current Member States of the European Union toward the Western Balkan Enlargement. We have asked the question how certain economic, societal, historical, political and strategic realities inform the position on the Western Balkan Enlargement in respective member states. We have stated ten hypotheses based on the situation throughout the European Union and specific member states. After examining these hypotheses, we have been able to conclude that countries who are net contributors to the EU budget, that means that they put more money into the common EU budget than they receive from the Union, are more reluctant to support the Enlargement. Member states who are net recipients of the European finances are more enthusiastic about the prospect of the Western Balkan Enlargement. We were not able to prove our two hypotheses concerning immigration There was no relevant correlation between the

percentage of foreign-born population of member states and their support for the Enlargement. Nor did we find any correlation between the number of citizens who see immigration as the top concerning issue and their support for the Western Balkan Enlargement. The New Member states, those who joined the European Union in 2004 and later are significantly more supportive of the membership for the Balkan countries than the Old Member States, which are seeing the issue in a different light, since their experiences with EU Enlargements are very different, which is also shown in their views on European Identity.

The question of European citizenship, however, does not seem to be relevant to the formation of a stance on the Eu Enlargement, since we could not established any correlation between the values of support for the Enlargement and the feeling of European Citizenship.

While studying the four chosen cases of France, Germany, Greece and Slovenia plus Croatia, we were able to conclude that the French positions on the Enlargement, most notably the veto at the EU summit in October 2019, are strongly motivated by the French domestic politics and the reform ambitions of the French President.

We also concluded that even though the German political system gives much more power to the Bundestag compared to most of the other member states, this does not mean that the position of Germany on the question of enlargement is more sensitive to the public opinion, as would the need for the members of Bundestag to approve starting of accession talks with any country, suggest.

In the case of Greece, the dominant topic is the name dispute with Macedonia. This issue illustrates how was Greece able to use the Enlargement process as a leverage for its bilateral conflicts with mainly Macedonia but also some of the other six Western Balkan countries.

And finally, we came to the conclusion that the unique position of Slovenia and Croatia as former Yugoslav countries is very relevant for the present and future of Western Balkan Integration. Their bilateral dispute had great impact on the accession process of Croatia and multiple similar issues have the probability of causing similar issues for other Balkan countries on their way into the European Union.

6. List of References:

Hussein Kassim, Sabine Saurugger, Uwe Puetter. (2019) The Study of National Preference Formation in Times of the Euro Crisis and Beyond. *Political Studies Review* 108, pages 147892991987326.

Silvana Târlea, Stefanie Bailer, Hanno Degner, Lisa M Dellmuth, Dirk Leuffen, Magnus Lundgren, Jonas Tallberg, Fabio Wasserfallen. (2019) Explaining governmental preferences on Economic and Monetary Union Reform. *European Union Politics* 20:1,

Min-hyung Kim (2016) Theorizing national preference formation, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 29:1, 290-308,

Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Palumbo, D. J., & Palumbo, D. J. (1977). *Statistics in political and behavioral science*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Bulmer, S. (2020). *The member states of the European Union*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Ceka, B., & Sojka, A. (2016). Loving it but not feeling it yet? The state of European identity after the eastern enlargement. *European Union Politics*, 17(3), 482–503.

Ioannis Armakolas, Giorgos Triantafyllou. (2017) Greece and EU enlargement to the Western Balkans: understanding an ambivalent relationship. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 17:4, pages 611-629.

Aristotle Tziampiris (2012) The Macedonian name dispute and European Union accession, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 12:1, 153-171, DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2012.661225

- John Agnew (2007) No Borders, No Nations: Making Greece in Macedonia, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97:2, 398-422, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8306.2007.00545.x
- Bickl, T. (2017). 'Reconstructing the Intractable: The Croatia-Slovenia Border Dispute and Its Implications for EU Enlargement', *Politička misao*, 54(4), str. 7-39.
- Theresia Töglhofer & Cornelius Adebahr (2017) Firm supporter and severe critic – Germany's two-pronged approach to EU enlargement in the Western Balkans, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 17:4, 523-539, DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2017.1397961
- Fouéré, E., & Blockmans, S. (2017). The 'Berlin Process' for the Western Balkans--is it Delivering?. CEPS.
- Lilyanova, V. (2016). The Western Balkans' Berlin process: A new impulse for regional cooperation. *European Parliamentary Research*.
- Luhmann, S. (2017). A Multi-Level Approach to European Identity: Does Integration Foster Identity?. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 55(6), 1360-1379.
- Tomuschat, C. (2009). The ruling of the German Constitutional Court on the Treaty of Lisbon. *German Law Journal*, 10(8), 1259-1262.
- Baylis, John (2011). *The Globalization of World Politics*. Oxford University Press Inc. p. 237.
- Džankić, J., Keil, S., & Kmezić, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans: a failure of EU conditionality?*. Springer.
- Garry, J., & Tilley, J. (2009). The macroeconomic factors conditioning the impact of identity on attitudes towards the EU. *European Union Politics*, 10(3), 361-379.
- Petrovic M. (2020) The Post-communist Transition of the Western Balkans: Europeanisation with a Small Enlargement Carrot. In: Akimov A., Kazakevitch G. (eds)

30 Years since the Fall of the Berlin Wall. Palgrave Studies in Economic History. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore

Vachudova, M. A. (2019). EU enlargement and state capture in the Western Balkans. In The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans (pp. 63-85). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

How is the EU budget prepared?

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/how-it-works/annual-lifecycle/preparation_en

France's strategy for the Western Balkans

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/europe/western-balkans-62918/>

Non-Paper, Reforming the European Union accession process, 2019

<https://g8fip1kplyr33r3krz5b97d1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Enlargement-nonpaper.pdf>

New methodology for EU accession of Western Balkans proposed: More credibility, predictability, dynamism and political steer, 2020

https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-enlargement-and-neighbourhood-relations/74141/new-methodology-eu-accession-western-balkans-proposed-more-credibility-predictability-dynamism_en

Zagreb Declaration, 2020

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/43776/zagreb-declaration-en-06052020.pdf>

YouGov / Eurotrack Survey Results, 2018

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/ofavfkfy8j/YouGov%20Eurotrack%20EU%20membership%202.pdf

The Bundestag's rights to participate in EU affairs

https://www.bundestag.de/en/europe/european_policy/mitwirk01_neu

Merkel: ‘Truly united Europe’ includes Western Balkans, 2019

<https://www.politico.eu/article/german-chancellor-angela-merkel-truly-united-europe-includes-western-balkans/>

Heiko Maas: “The Western Balkan countries are an integral part of Europe”, 2019

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-deutsche-welle-western-balkans/2268946>

Emmanuel Macron in his own words (English), 2019

<https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-in-his-own-words-english>

AfD demands a referendum before further EU enlargement, 2018

<https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2018/10/11/afd-demands-referendum-eu-enlargement/>

Latest press releases and statements, 2019

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/>

Eurobarometer, 2019

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm>