

The question of an alternative to the EU membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

In a recent survey conducted by the Directorate for European Integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it appears that 43.6% of respondents believe that there is an alternative to the European Union (EU) membership. The survey was conducted by using the Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) method, on a sample that is representative for the entire country. Therefore, this article will explore the possibility of pursuing foreign policy that is geared towards several geopolitical centres and implications for the country. Primarily, this refers to alternative development models offered by international actors such as China, Russia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia. Although the EU often emphasises commitment to the Western Balkan region, both internal and external processes are becoming heavily politicised. In this regard, the author will also attempt to examine some of these processes and the main stakeholders (both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union), who could stall the future European integration.

Keywords: alternative to the membership, European Union, public opinion, development, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Kwestia alternatywy dla członkostwa w UE Bośni i Hercegowiny

Streszczenie

W ostatnim badaniu przeprowadzonym przez Dyрекcję ds. Integracji Europejskiej w Bośni i Hercegowinie, prawie 43,6% respondentów uważa, że istnieje alternatywa dla członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej (UE). Badanie przeprowadzono metodą wywiadu telefonicznego wspomaganego komputerowo (CATI) na próbie reprezentatywnej dla całego kraju. W związku z tym, w niniejszym artykule zbadana zostanie możliwość prowadzenia polityki zagranicznej ukierunkowanej na kilka centrów geopolitycznych oraz jej implikacje dla kraju. Dotyczy to przede wszystkim alternatywnych modeli rozwoju oferowanych przez takie podmioty areny międzynarodowej, jak Chiny, Rosja, Turcja i Arabia Saudyjska. Chociaż UE często kładzie nacisk na zaangażowanie w regionie Bałkanów Zachodnich, zarówno procesy wewnętrzne, jak i zewnętrzne stają się mocno upolitycznione. W związku z tym, w artykule podjęto również próbę zbadania niektórych z tych procesów oraz głównych

zainteresowanych stron (zarówno w Bośni i Hercegowinie, jak i w Unii Europejskiej), które mogłyby opóźnić przyszłą integrację europejską.

Słowa kluczowe: alternatywa dla członkostwa, Unia Europejska, opinia publiczna, rozwój, Bośnia i Hercegowina

The *European Union – Western Balkans Summit* in Sofia in 2018 confirmed EU perspective for the Western Balkans (WB) countries, but even the most optimistic forecasts did not predict the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to the EU near future. Directorate for European Integration's public opinion polls from 2019 demonstrate that 43.6% of respondents believe, that there is an alternative to the European Union membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The survey was carried out using the computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) method, on a sample of 1201 respondents, which is representative for the entire country. The issue of "alternative" is seldom considered analytically, since political elites from BiH, the EU delegation and the Office of the High Representative see the European path of BiH as the only development model. The new EU strategy for the Western Balkans confirms the EU's involvement in this region, but the rise of euroscepticism and the different standings of countries on the EU path could stall the future integration process. Therefore, due to its internal structure, BiH could pursue a policy that is geared towards several geopolitical centres, not only the EU. Chinese projects such as 17+1, together with Russian and Turkish expansion of influence, could become alternative development models in the Balkans. Similarly, actors from the Middle East (such as Saudi Arabia) have been trying to generate more influence through the mechanisms of soft power.

Between the EU and neutrality

Though Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) still has no law on foreign affairs, but the *Foreign Policy Strategy of BiH 2018-2023* adopted in March 2018 emphasises the country's commitment to pursue the accession to the European Union and NATO. Leaving aside quality and structure, compared to the three-page General Directions, the new *Strategy* with its 11 pages has more to say (Vuletić 2018: p.7). Nevertheless, this document represents a framework for the stable functioning of the state in the field of foreign affairs, and therefore, it is important to have it even in this form. BiH's decision makers devoted more attention to the new *Strategy* and took into account some of the global and regional changes: economic and political growth of the People's Republic of China, as well as strengthening of other developing countries; the challenges faced by the European Union, Croatia's accession to the EU, cooling of the Western forces – Russian Federation relations; the consequences of the so-called "Arab Spring", and others (see: Presidency of BiH 2018).

One of the key points of the *Foreign Policy Strategy of BiH 2018-2023* is that in the future BiH should actively follow the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU. Firstly, this refers to the support of the measures and the foreign policy moves that

the EU makes. Harmonisation, of course, is not a strict obligation that leads to the full membership, but an important message is then sent as to whether the state has the same values as the EU. In other words, the progress of each country would depend on its own ability and its own political will to accomplish the necessary and proclaimed reforms, as well as to implement and to respect the appropriate rules and standards (Hadžović, Vishinova 2018: p. 5). However, looking backwards, we see very few resolutions and measures that have been accepted by BiH, which in most cases remains neutral. The analysis of the the alignment of BiH in the period between 2014 and 2017 demonstrates, that BiH did not support any of the more than 20 EU declarations related to Moscow's actions in Ukraine and cyber-attacks directed to EU member states, for which the EU accuses Russia (Centre for Security Studies 2018). For example, during the Georgian War, Bosniak politicians supported the EU and Serbian supported Russia. A similar situation took place during the Syrian Civil War, the Ukrainian crisis, and the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Additionally, there is no official position of BiH in regards to the status of Kosovo.

Public opinion and foreign policy ineffectiveness

Directorate for European Integration's (DEI) public opinion polls noted a sharp decline in the support for the accession of BiH to the EU from 2016 to 2018 (see: Direkcija za evropske integracije 2016, 2017, 2018). In 2016, 76% of respondents stated that they support BiH's EU membership. In 2017 the number dropped to 69.2%, and in 2018 it dropped further to 56.5%. However, in the most recent survey published in July 2019, the overall support for EU membership has increased by 20% compared to the previous year (Direkcija za evropske integracije 2019). False political promises and a long lasting process are increasingly moving away BiH citizens from the EU idea. One of the key findings from 2019 is that 43.6% of the respondents considered, that there was an alternative to the European path, but the issue of alternative is seldom approached analytically in the country.

Due to its internal arrangements, Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the worst position out of all remaining countries on the EU path. Although the process of accession began at the same time as for Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia, BiH is at the bottom of the waiting list. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's analyst Tanja Topić believes that the reason, why the support of BiH citizens for European integration is relatively low, is because the process of integrations is too long (Katana 2018). Although one of the few issues, for which the internal consensus of the political elite of all three constituent peoples exists is BiH's EU path, the *Report of the European Commission on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018* once again pointed to the complicated arrangement of the state and large decentralisation. As a direct result of this, the functioning of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina was affected by the expression of divergent positions by its individual members on a number of issues under its competence over foreign policy (European Commission 2018a). Impossibility of harmonisation stretches through other sectors, such as environment, energy and rural development. Little progress has been made in the area of public

administration, the fight against corruption and the judicial system, where large fragmentation leads to the politicisation of all important processes. Despite the fact that Bosnian politicians claim, that the strategic goal of the country is Euro-Atlantic integration, few of them are attempting to make this happen (Brļjavac 2011: p. 404). Citizens also see politicisation as a stumbling stone, where political elites are only declaratively pushing for initiatives. The conclusion reached at the Commission is devastating for BiH, because it is stressed that every politician in Bosnia and Herzegovina has "about seven sentences" about the EU, which repeats as needed, but their commitment does not go deeper than that (Mulaosmanović 2019). The Reform Agenda has been effectively implemented only when the state level and entity levels have cooperated in a coordinated manner (European Commission 2018a). A mixture of post-conflict reality, ethnic fragmentation and social disparity is jeopardising the BiH society from undertaking the right path towards EU (Stefano 2018a: p.7). The analytical report of the European Commission on BiH, published in May 2019, although the first of its kind, did not provide any new information about the overall situation in the country. The mandatory reforms and monitoring of trends within the EU are still underlined as the main objective, with a special focus on protection of the fundamental rights, the public administration reform and the fight against corruption. Speaking of economic criteria, the need for improvements of the business environment for investments and the quality of education are highlighted as the main objectives. In general, the EU acts only suggestively towards BiH, without taking a substantial or leading role. Even when BiH was late in answering additional questions from the Questionnaire of the European Commission, no sanction was imposed.

History of animosity

In 1995, an agreement that marked the end of the bloody war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was signed. Although Europeans have proclaimed that the crisis in Bosnia represents "the hour of Europe", the Dayton agreement was eventually signed because of the U.S. mediation. Indecisiveness and apathy of large European countries, fuelled by the lack of adequate response in their own backyard, eventually produced bitterness not only in the Bosnian civil society, but also around the world. The Europeans played a marginal role most of the time, when international community was involved in conflict resolution. After the war, animosity was felt towards many European countries, such as the Netherlands, whose soldiers, members of the UN battalion, did not prevent the genocide in Srebrenica. Likewise, former French President François Mitterrand faced a major public criticism over his controversial policies, as did former British Prime Minister John Major.

For BiH, the *Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)* started in 1999. Soon after, the September 11, 2001 events completely shifted the public's focus to the other side of the world. The U.S. has radically altered its foreign policy, prioritising other world regions over the Western Balkans, which has left a significant power vacuum, making it difficult for other global powers such as the EU, Russia, China, and even Turkey to exert more influence in this highly problematic region (Brļjavac 2011: p. 413). The EU, on the other hand,

took care of the region after 2001, but upcoming issues shifted their focus from it as well. First, there was an enlargement process for Central and Eastern European countries, then the 2008 financial crisis and finally the refugee crisis. For years, there was a vacuum, that somebody had to fill in.

Euroscepticism and Christian Europe

The European Commission's new *Strategy for the Western Balkans* confirmed a perspective of membership in 2025 for Montenegro and Serbia. Additionally, the strategy says, that the Western Balkan countries now have a historic window of opportunity to firmly and unequivocally bind their future to the European Union (see: European Commission 2018b). BiH is hoping to get a candidate status in 2019, but several obstacles could slow down its momentum towards the EU. For years, the right-wing parties in France, Germany, Finland, Austria, Hungary and other countries have gained strength and increased in scope. Before the 2019 European Parliament elections, there was a justifiable fear, that the Eurosceptics could win, and that the issues of European integration will be completely removed from the agenda. The European elections have confirmed these fears to some extent. The results of the elections demonstrated significant growth of right-wing parties, liberals and Greens, while significantly smaller number of seats was reserved for traditionally large centrist parties.

Disharmony within the EU directly affects the EU identity, which has become an intangible notion. First, Eurosceptics like to claim, that European integration represents nothing short of the wholesale handover of national sovereignty to an overbearing EU bureaucracy that regulates every aspect of life (Grabow, Hartleb 2014: p. 26). Second, growing support for populism and far-right political movements in EU member states makes the decision-making process regarding accession of the Western Balkan countries more unpredictable, considering the fact, that accession decisions are taken by unanimity in the EU (Gözübenli, Tekeshanoska 2018, p.7). Additionally, the anti-Islamic rhetoric, that many EU countries with strong right-wing parties are propagating, could endanger the EU perspective for BiH, Albania and Kosovo, which all have a majority Muslim population. Previously, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has openly blamed immigrants for undermining Christian Europe and so-called "Christian revival" spread across other EU countries as well.

Foreign influence and alternative development models

The strategic change of the alliance is not new in international relations. Especially in the 21st century, a quality foreign policy requires permanent "field tests" and monitoring of global movements. The Diplomatic Revolution of 1756 launched the avalanche in the shape of the alliance pattern changes, which ultimately led to a greater focus on preserving the European balance of power. The same concept of power balance after two world wars acquired global characteristics. In World War II, Romania sought its

ideal position through the alliance with both Allied and Axis powers. On the other hand, Somalia fell between two stools, when they used the benefits of the Cold War logic and the U.S.–Soviet rivalry. For the region of the Western Balkans, the most recent example is “the game” of Yugoslavia, which found its alternative in the Non-Aligned Movement. In contemporary international relations, alternatives can generally be described as “shifts in foreign policy” or strategic pivots. For instance, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte made one such move by turning to China and a large number of investments. This way, smaller powers have sought to preserve a measure of autonomy, avoid overdependence on any external actor, extricate themselves from great power rivalries in periods of conflict, and, if necessary, play bigger powers against each other for leverage and strategic benefits (Heydarian 2018). Essentially, the leading factor in selecting strategic allies becomes a stable and peaceful economic (and every other) development in an unpredictable international environment.

The rapid development of Japan and South Korea in the 20th century, and the growth of China and India in the 21st century have shifted the traditional American notion of “going westward for prosperity.” In the world, that is increasingly inclined towards multipolarity, the West is no longer seen as the sole carrier of development. The East is increasingly becoming an alternative to many countries, especially those with less economic and political power. The cumulative effect of these events is to make self-evident a new geopolitical reality: the consequential shift in the “centre of gravity” of global power and of economic dynamism from the Atlantic towards the Pacific, from the West towards the East (Brzezinski 2013: p. 12). Changes in global flows are also evident in the Western Balkans, which is gradually becoming a geostrategic location, where the presence and influence of other countries, outside the EU framework, is felt. The EU’s hesitance to develop a clear perspective for the Western Balkans gives an opportunity to other important international actors, such as Russia, Turkey and China, to get more space to spread their interests (Hadžović, Vishinova 2018: p. 6). In the WB, Russia, Turkey and China are displaying development models decoupled from political conditionality or based on alternative values, that can qualify as alternatives to the model that the EU champions. A fading EU commitment is what could strengthen alternative development models (Tafuro Ambrosetti 2018).

Russia’s use of ethnic cleavages

Russia has been playing an increasingly assertive role in the Western Balkans region since the outbreak of the world economic and financial crisis in 2008 (Belloni 2016: p. 12). The EU’s renewed interest in its southern backyard has been prompted partly by fears about Moscow’s role there – from giving fighter jets to Serbia to an alleged role in a coup attempt in Montenegro (Weise 2018). In BiH, the closest force to Russia is represented by Republika Srpska (RS), more specifically Moscow’s fruitful relation with the Bosnian Serb member of the Presidency of BiH – Milorad Dodik – a long lasting relation, considered in the international political arena as destabilising for BiH stability and integration (Stefano 2018b: p. 8). The foreign policy activities with Russia are solely left to the Republika Srpska

(RS) entity, which hosted the last visit of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The absence of presidential visits to/from Russia in the period after the *Dayton Peace Agreement* reveals the unsuccessful channelling of foreign policy, which operates exclusively on the basis of ethno-religious ties. Moreover, the lack of BiH Presidency's appearances as a whole takes away important strategic alternatives, where approaching Russia can be used as a mechanism to draw attention of EU and NATO to BiH.

Russia supplies one hundred per cent of gas demand in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia and Serbia. This gives them the opportunity to project the power through the politics of energy. Russia is also actively working to maintain and expand the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), whereas "formalising" BRICS as a union could open up a new vacuum, which states such as BiH could fill. After the scandal involving the largest privately owned company in Croatia – Agrokor, which is in the hands of Russian state-owned Sberbank and VTB Bank, Russia has been given the opportunity to slowly build its influence in this country as well. This can spill over in BiH, where the strongest Bosnian Croat party *HDZ BiH*, follows the same policies as its larger counterpart in Croatia (*HDZ Croatia*). Additionally, Russia is in the UN Security Council and the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), which aims to implement the Dayton Agreement in BiH. Russian President Vladimir Putin has taken full advantage of national cleavages and socioeconomic weaknesses to revive his country's traditional Balkan sphere of influence (Skrpec 2017).

China's great puzzle

China is becoming an important actor in the WB, especially through the 17+1 Initiative (also known as China-CEE), which includes sixteen Central and Eastern European Countries. In the past three years, EU officials have lambasted China for allegedly undermining the European integration process by turning the CEE countries into "Trojan horses" and sowing division in the continent (Kavalski 2019). Chinese investors have already entered BiH and invested EUR 550 million in the construction of the Stanari Thermal Power Plant, which has been described as the first successful project of the 17+1 Initiative. The largest Bosnian public electric utility company *Elektroprivreda BiH* recently received a government guarantee for CEXIM bank loan of approximately EUR 640 million for the largest infrastructure project in BiH – the construction of a thermal power plant in Tuzla. The latest agreed project is the construction of the Banja Luka – Prijedor highway, whose value should reach EUR 300 million. For the small states of the relatively poor region, such investments represent important step forward for their economy. BiH lacks the alternative sources for financing infrastructure, and Chinese investors are looking for similar trading partners.

In the aforementioned research of the Directorate for European Integrations, the majority of respondents said, that they expect better infrastructure once BiH enters the EU (Direkcija za evropske integracije 2018). In the Balkans, many Chinese deals are focused on infrastructure, including railways, that host states feel western European nations have been reluctant to fund (Kynge et al. 2018). These kinds of alternative models and funding channels for projects are becoming widely accepted by politically and economically

weak countries. Although financial experts warn of the so-called "China's debt-trap", it is clear that small states do not want to wait for the benevolence of the Western powers, but rather attempt to produce gains for themselves. China has already agreed to finance the construction of a railroad in Serbia and a highway in Montenegro. China invests in energy, infrastructure, real estate, and thus, puts economic influence ahead of the political. The most of the money within the 17+1 Initiative actually goes to non-EU countries.

The Balkans can serve as a transit route for Chinese goods, which can continue their journey to Central and Northern Europe through Piraeus, Thessaloniki and Bar. However, there is a fear that countries of the Western Balkans will not be able to repay debts, and that economic impact could grow into a political one. In July 2016, several EU countries, among them Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, and Greece, refrained from supporting the EU's statement after the international court in The Hague had condemned China's mischief-making in the South China Sea (Pepermans 2018: p.16). In 2017, Greece, which also heavily depends on Chinese investments, blocked the EU's condemnation of China for violating human rights. The majority thinks that China saw cooperation with the Western Balkans as a long-term investment in the countries that will one day be part of the EU, which will lead one day to the having six pro-Chinese countries represented in EU institutions lobbying for Chinese political interests (Mulaosmanović 2019).

Islamic world and the Western Balkans

Another regional actor is trying to expand its influence in BiH, aligning itself with the interests of Bosniak Muslim population – Turkey (European Western Balkans 2018). The leading Bosniak party in BiH – *SDA*, and the Turkish *AK Parti* foster friendly relations and the leaders of these two parties, former member of the BiH Presidency Bakir Izetbegović and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan constantly emphasise this. Last year, there were indications that *AK Parti* is planning to open the office in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which caused negative reactions and fears that *AK Parti* could interfere in political issues in BiH. After several European states, among them Austria and Germany, banned pre-election rallies of the Turkish president, he (with the help of *SDA*) organised a joint pre-election assembly of the *AK Parti* and *SDA* in May 2018 in Sarajevo. The same year, the pro-Turkish lobby group – the Union of European Balkan Democrats (*UEBD*) was founded. This group designed promotional materials, in which the local population demonstrates its support to Turkish military operations in Syria.

French president Emanuel Macron said in the past, that he does not want the Balkans to "turn towards Turkey or Russia." Brussels is not worried about economic co-operation, but rather about the spread of political influence in the countries of the Western Balkans. With Ankara, Moscow, China and the Gulf States all showing economic and political interest in the region, Western Balkan governments can form close relations with partners less interested in democratic standards than the EU (Weise 2018). Although Turkey has been trying to become part of the EU for decades, the European Parliament and its member states have been trying to suspend accession talks. This has led to the adoption of the term "Turkish scenario", which denotes inability of the state to become a part of

the EU. According to Petkovski, nearly half of the Macedonian population believed that its political elite should seek an alternative basis for political development outside the EU. In particular, local media frequently depict Turkey as a symbol of success without EU integration (Petkovski 2014)

Turkey is currently working on a EUR 3 billion highway construction project that should connect BiH and Serbia. The agreement was made through mechanism of tri-lateral consultations between these three countries. However, according to all relevant indicators, Turkey still does not invest significant amounts of money in BiH. Certainly, the idea of the Ottoman legacy is present and Turkey wants to be involved in countries that were once part of the Ottoman Empire.

The Gulf States are strongly and conspicuously represented in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) entity in the areas of religion, culture, economy (medium-sized businesses), tourism (visa-free entry) and consumption (Dümmel 2018: p. 15). The leader in this segment is Saudi Arabia, which has invested money in cultural and religious institutions such as libraries, schools, museums and mosques. A big chunk of the aid was dedicated to building and reconstructing mosques and Islamic schools (*madrassas*), but was not limited to this; efforts also focused on fighting poverty, improving the health system, and investing in education and culture (European Parliament Think Tank 2017). They currently provide free education in their cultural centres in Sarajevo and Mostar. After the Arab Spring, which led to a reduced interest in traditional tourist destinations in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, BiH became the new hotspot. In addition to the high number of tourists, there was also an increase in the purchase of real estate and land by investors from the Gulf region. This economic interest produced mixed reactions among civil society and political elites.

Alternative channels

Currently, BiH faces the so-called "brain drain" issue, where many young people choose to go to EU countries. In this way, they are searching for their own alternative to the EU membership of BiH, which is leaving the country and not waiting for it to become part of the EU. The paradoxical situation in the country is also reflected in the passport issues. Namely, once Croatia entered into the European Union, a large number of Bosnian Croats with a dual passport had the opportunity to be part of the European family. If Serbia joins the EU, Bosnian Serbs could also get a great chance to become part of the EU in the same way. This fact leaves the Bosniaks in a situation, where they become isolated in relation to other peoples in BiH.

The foreign policy of each country is a reflection of its domestic policy and as such is subject to adjustments and changes. These changes can occur due to geostrategic and geopolitical opportunities, global movements and regional occurrences. BiH's foreign policy has not been able to produce a professional diplomatic service that would pursue policies towards more geopolitical centres in the name of the whole country. Seeking other alternatives, does not necessarily mean searching for an identical option.

Furthermore, it is impossible to find anything similar to supranational character that the European Union has, and therefore an identical replacement does not exist. Alternative development model can be defined as simple channelling of foreign policy objectives into several directions. The specificity of BiH and its demographic and religious diversity allows this. However, for this to happen, it is necessary that political will of all three constituent peoples exist in order to act outside as one.

Conclusions

The political elites are only declaratively pushing for BiH's European path and little real progress can be seen. Likewise, this state is not following the *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)* of the EU, but rather foreign policies of other countries. DEI's public opinion polls (Direkcija za evropske integracije 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019) from the last years demonstrate the importance of the question of alternative. BiH is in the worst position of all remaining non-EU Western Balkan countries, even though it began the process of integration together with all other countries. Some analysts believe, that the actual process is too long, and the European Commission's *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 Report* demonstrates, that the process of reforms is slow due to high decentralisation and divergent positions of different ethnic groups (see: European Commission 2018a).

The European Union is going through identity crisis, which has led to the strengthening of the euroscepticism. This occurrence could stall the integration process, and the so-called "Christian revival" in combination with anti-Islamic sentiment could pose a problem for the remaining non-EU states, that have a majority of Muslim population. Historically, alternatives were "shifts in foreign policy" or "strategic pivots". The power balance is gradually shifting from the West to the East, and therefore there is an emergence of alternative models of development. These models of development are the product of the mere channelling of foreign policy in many directions, which in the case of BiH is possible due to ethno-religious diversity.

Russia's foreign policy towards the Republika Srpska (RS) entity and Milorad Dodik is based on the use of ethnic cleavages and it is not directed at BiH as whole. Chinese projects and investments are currently generating economic influence. In the future, once (and if) BiH and similar states become the EU members, economic influence could turn into a political one. Turkey and Middle Eastern actors traditionally try to maintain strong ties with the Muslims in BiH. According to all relevant indicators, the Turkish influence is not economic, since it is not a significant investor in BiH. Actors from the Middle East, primarily Saudi Arabia, build mosques, education centres and cultural objects. After the Arab Spring, BiH has become an important tourist destination. The supranational framework of the EU is unique and it is impossible to find anything similar. However, the specificity of BiH allows it to steer its foreign policy in several directions, where all ethnic groups could have benefits. However, for this to happen, it is necessary that political elites start acting at the state level, without exclusively conducting foreign policy on the basis of "particular ethnic group – particular state".

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