

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S STATE-BUILDING EFFORTS IN THE CASE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA*

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Abstract

The conflicts in the Balkans were dealt with throughout the 1990s from the perspective of traditional diplomacy, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance. Accordingly, strengthening the state capacity was seen as the key for stability in the region. While the European Union (EU) has become the central actor in transforming of the region in 2000s, its state-building policy has resulted in the strengthening of the state by means of institutional capacity building. However, the level of socio-political cohesion of the state cannot be "imposed" externally, but rather must be accepted and built internally. This article argues that the strengthening of the state in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) should be founded upon a democratic system that encourages citizen participation rather than ethno-politics. This study aims to analyze the EU's state-building efforts in BiH critically.

Keywords: *State-building, Nation-building, Bosnia Herzegovina, European Union*

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Bosna Hersek Örneğinde Avrupa Birliği'nin Devlet İnşası Çabaları

Özet

1990'lı yıllar boyunca Balkanlar'daki çatışmalar, geleneksel diplomasi, barışı koruma ve insani yardım çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, devlet kapasitesinin güçlendirilmesi, bölgedeki istikrar için anahtar olarak görülmüştür. Avrupa Birliği (AB) 2000'li yıllarda bölgenin dönüşümünde temel aktör haline gelirken, Birliğin devlet inşası siyaseti, kurumsal yeteneklerin inşası yoluyla devleti güçlendirmeyi hedeflemiştir. Bununla birlikte, devletin sosyo-politik bağlaşma düzeyinin, dışarıdan "empoze" edilerek değil, içeride kabul ve inşa edilmesi gerekir. Bu makale, Bosna-Hersek örneğinde devletin güçlendirilmesinin etnik siyasetten çok vatandaş katılımını teşvik eden demokratik bir sistem üzerinden gerçekleşeceğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, AB'nin Bosna-Hersek'teki devlet-inşa çabalarını eleştirel bir tutumla analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Devlet İnşası, Ulus İnşası, Bosna-Hersek, Avrupa Birliği

Introduction

Over the past years, the general situation in the Balkans has evolved without a major recourse to violence. However, for some states and state-like entities, state and nation building still constitute the prime agenda. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is not an exception to this debate. BiH declared its independence in 1992, which followed by a bitter conflict ensued between Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats. Eventual international military intervention under United Nations (UN) auspices culminated in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing campaign against Bosnian Serb forces in 1995. This led to the Dayton Agreement (DA) that created the current constitutional structure of BiH.

In order to preserve BiH as one country, a peculiar federal system was established that forced the former warring parties recognize each other, and provided some common institutions. Conceptually, peace agreements prescribe the new institutional set up or make significant changes to the existing one. But this institutional set up can further solidify the divisions by granting rights and benefits on basis of ethnic identities.¹ In this framework, it is relatively difficult for the citizens to transcend ethnic borders and coalesce over issues of common interest. Ethnicity becomes the main building block in all social arrangements, notably in state institutions.²

¹ Dane Taleski, "Comparing Models of Interethnic Coexistence and Practices of Political Parties in the Western Balkans", Ernst M. Felberbauer and Predrag Jurekovic eds., in **From Bosnia and Herzegovina to Northern Kosovo: Coping with the Remaining Impasses in the Western Balkans**, Vienna, Study Information Group, 2011, p. 37.

² Dimitar Bechev and Svetlozar Andreev, "Top-Down vs Bottom-Up Aspects of the EU Institution-Building Strategies in the Western Balkans", **Oxford University St Antony's College Occasional Paper**, No. 3, 2005, p. 9.

In terms of BiH, the international community's main objective was to create a viable state in which all ethnic groups could live peacefully together and the rights of all citizens were effectively guaranteed. This objective was seen as the essential precondition for reaching the long-term goal of BiH's integration into the European Union (EU).³ However, contemporary political situation in BiH remains difficult and uncertain. Twenty years after the DA, BiH is a fragmented state with weak state institutions and a complex institutional architecture. On the other hand, the country is currently going through the European integration process, and so it is important to understand if, and to what extent, the on-going process of Europeanization has affected state and nation-building processes in post-war Bosnia. Although BiH has made significant transformation from a war torn country to a semi-functional state, ethnic tensions, nationalistic rhetoric and political disagreements are still evident, which inhibit Bosnian progress towards the EU.⁴

In regional conflicts, states weakened by ethnic divisions and secessionist forces represent clear challenges to European security. That is why, the EU has expressed its readiness to assume more responsibilities in the Balkans; due to the direct negative effect of regional conflicts have on EU member-states. The EU's long-term policy goal is to create a situation in the Western Balkans in which military conflicts become unthinkable. In order to reach this long-term goal, the EU is assisting the transition process of the Western Balkans, which is a new phase of state-building based on the principles of liberalism and democracy. The way in which the state-building process will develop in the Balkans will affect the EU as an institution since EU engagement is considered to be a test of the capability of the EU to come up and implement a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).⁵ Accordingly, in post-Dayton era, the EU has actively supported BiH on its way to become a functioning state based on democratic values. So the EU has involved in ongoing attempts to promote reform of the Dayton constitution in order to improve the functionality and efficiency of the Bosnian state and make it possible for Bosnia to meet the responsibilities of membership of the Union. This article aims to extract some ideas for

³ Jens Woekl, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Trying to Build a Federal State on Paradoxes", Michael Burgess and Alan Tarr eds., in **Constitutional Dynamics in Federal Systems: Sub-national Perspectives**, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press 2012, pp. 109-110.

⁴ Hasan Korkut and Muhidin Mulajic, "Implications of Dayton Peace Agreement on Current Political Issues in Bosnia-Herzegovina", **SDU Faculty of Arts and Sciences Journal of Social Sciences-Special Issue on Balkans**, Vol. 27, 2012, p. 107.

⁵ Albert Rakipi, **Weak States and Security: Rethinking The Balkan Post-Cold War Security Agenda**, Tirana, Albanian Institute for International Studies, 2008, p. 183.

analyzing the EU's approach to state and nation-building in BiH. Thus it is aimed to explore whether the EU contribution to the state-building process in BiH has been appropriate and effective or not. In this study, firstly the concept of state-building will be evaluated through a critical manner. Secondly, after briefly presenting the situation of the post-Dayton era BiH, the relationship between democracy and ethno-nationalism will be examined in the country. In final section of the study, the EU's efforts in the state-building process of BiH and its implications on the consolidation of democracy will be analyzed.

Thinking Beyond State-Building

The state-building processes of the weak states in the Balkans are closely related to the European integration process of the region. But most of the threats targeting the physical integrity and dignity of human beings are locally produced and unique to the region. Therefore, it is argued that a bottom-up approach which would provide participation of civil society in agenda making process is necessary rather than setting up a human security agenda in Brussels.⁶ Because a top-down approach of state-building ultimately leads to a "top-down local democracy", which does not answer to people concrete needs. So the priorities of the international community should be in line with the needs of human beings in the region.

The conflicts in the Balkans were dealt with throughout the 1990s from the perspective of traditional diplomacy, peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance, and strengthening the state capacity was seen as the key to building sustainable stability in the region. As efforts in the Balkans illustrate, this essentially top-down approach has been only partially successful.⁷ In this respect, international community should focus more on understanding socio-political contexts, how local societies relate to the state and how historical and cultural factors shape public perceptions. Therefore, the relationship between identities, institutions, social cohesion and state legitimacy is critical to understanding social and political progress in fragile states. Indeed, constituting a state is not necessarily the only way of

⁶ A. Şevket Ovalı, "What is to Be Done: A Complementary Security Architecture for the Balkans", **The Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Security, Challenges to Balkan Security and Contribution of the International Organizations**, İzmir, Dokuz Eylül University Press, 2009, p. 177.

⁷ Denisa Kostovicova and Vesna Bojicic-Dzelilovic, "Human Security in a Weak State in the Balkans: Globalization and Transnational Networks", Wolfgang Benedek, Christopher Daase, Vojin Dimitrijevic and Petrus Van Duyne eds., in **Transnational Terrorism, Organized Crime and Peacebuilding: Human Security in the Western Balkans**, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 50.

achieving security. The measures such as equitable ethnic/national minority representation, educational and administrative rights and self-governance, and the integration of the members of ethnic/national minorities into state institutions should be introduced.

State-building means the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of a public structure in a given territory capable of delivering public goods.⁸ The key goals of state-building include “provision of security, establishment of the rule of law, effective delivery of basic goods and services through functional formal state institutions, and generation of political legitimacy for the (new) set of state institutions being built”.⁹ However the building of state institutions that provides security (e.g. army, policy, and judiciary) or human development (e.g. education, economy, social policy) largely depends on the abilities and interests of the local actors.¹⁰ Therefore, in addition to developing viable domestic institutions with international support, international intervention should encourage bottom-up initiatives aimed at re-establishing economic and social ties across different communities.¹¹ The knowledge of the local context and a bottom-up approach are crucial to increasing the chances of success for international engagements.

Bosnia-Herzegovina in Post-Dayton Era

During the dissolution process of former Yugoslavia, three main ethnic communities in BiH, namely Croats, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims, were involved in nationalist and religious tensions among themselves. Subsequently, in 1992, the war started and the three ethnic communities were locked in bitter conflict for almost four years. The war resulted in not only deaths, displaced persons and economic destruction but also destruction of civilian and social values.

On November 1995, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initiated in Dayton, Ohio, and signed in Paris,

⁸ Robert I. Rotberg, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators”, Robert I. Rotberg ed., **State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror**, Washington, Brookings Institution Press, 2003, pp. 583-584.

⁹ Verena Fritz and Menocal R. Alina, “Understanding State-Building from a Political Economy Perspective: An Analytical and Conceptual Paper on Processes, Embedded Tensions and Lessons for International Engagement”, **Report Prepared for DFID’s Effective and Fragile States Teams**, London, Overseas Development Institute, 2007, p. 13.

¹⁰ Taleski, op.cit., p. 21.

¹¹ Roberto Belloni, **State Building and International Intervention in Bosnia**, New York, Routledge, 2007, p. 6.

on 14 December 1995.¹² The Dayton Agreement (DA) sought to preserve the territorial integrity of the state while retaining internal separation of two semi-independent entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) (mainly controlled by the Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats) and the Republika Srpska (RS) (mainly governed by the Bosnian Serbs). However, the entity model affirmed ethnically based division of the country.¹³ The FBH has decentralized system of government composed of 10 cantons and a municipal level. The RS has much more centralized governmental system, with only a municipality level.¹⁴ The State of BiH has as many as 13 Constitutions: one at the State level, two Entity Constitutions, 10 cantonal Constitutions, plus the Statute of the Brcko district. According to the Constitution of BiH, both entities have its own complete state-like institutional structures with a President, a government, legislative institutions, and a judicial system. But the two come together to form a central, federal government with a rotating presidency held equally by a Bosniak, a Croat and a Serb.

Under Dayton designed state structures, central governing powers were kept weak, with many governing functions remaining at the entity level. The central state level is responsible only for a limited number of matters; (1) foreign and foreign trade policies, (2) customs and finances, (3) inter-entity law enforcement, (4) immigration, transportation and communication. Thus, the central state institutions in BiH have had limited decision-making capacities, with the sub-state units able to paralyze state-level decisions.

In order to overcome paralyzing effects of sub-state units and ensure a proper implementation of the DA, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) has been instituted as a civilian authority. The OHR would have the power to directly impose legislation, to veto political candidates and dismiss “unco-operative” elected members of Bosnian governing bodies.¹⁵ As a result of the “controlled democracy” with excessive involvement of the international community and the OHR, local political actors could not often reach agreement on important political issues and instead, the High

¹² Full text of the Dayton accords can be found at <<http://www.oscebih.org>> (10 August 2015).

¹³ Ahmed Kulanic, “International Political Actors and State-Building Process in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, **Epiphany - Journal of Transdisciplinary Studies**, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2011, p. 169.

¹⁴ David Chandler, “State-building in Bosnia: the limits of “informal trusteeship”, **International Journal of Peace Studies**, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2006, pp. 18-38.

¹⁵ For the Mandate of the Office of High Representative, <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/default.asp?content_id=38612> (10 August 2015).

Representative had to make inevitable decisions.¹⁶ For example, the OHR period from 2000 to 2005 imposed 757 decisions, removed 119 officials and enforced 286 laws or amendments to the laws.¹⁷ The frequent interventions by the OHR clearly demonstrated that some “corrections” of the system established by the DA were necessary in order to make it work. Because this top-down approach can be considered as the source of BiH’s inability to assume the ownership of the process and become viable and self-sustainable state.¹⁸ Likewise, Carl Bildt, the first international High Representative for BiH, argued that the DA was not a product of popular consensus and was seen by many Bosnians as an external imposition.¹⁹

Even though it is necessary to make certain adjustments to the current system in order for BiH to become sustainable functioning state capable of assuming the obligations deriving from the EU membership, the perception of the constitution drafters was that the concept of consociational democracy was the most appropriate, if not perfect solutions for BiH and its divided society after violent civil war.²⁰ However, the power-sharing mechanisms based solely on the principle of ethnicity and the permanent blocking of state institutions on the basis of the “national interests” of Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats by using the entity veto within the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, turned out to be major obstacles for decision making in the country and for reforms needed in the context of EU integration.²¹ More recently, observers and political actors inside and outside BiH have increasingly argued in favor of reforming the 1995 state structure in order to steer the country towards reconciliation and fuller integration.²² Lord Paddy Ashdown, the former representative of international civilian authority in BiH, called Dayton “a

¹⁶ Kulanic, op. cit., p. 173.

¹⁷ Woekl, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁸ Nikola Lazinica, “Main challenges in the future of Western Balkans Integration to the EU – The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Analytical Journal*, Vol. 4, 2011, pp. 69-70.

¹⁹ Carl Bildt, Response to Henry Kissinger’s Article in the Washington Post of 8 September entitled, “In the Eye of a Hurricane”, 14 September 1996, <<http://www.ohr.int/articles/a960914a.htm>> (10 September 2015).

²⁰ Mitja Zagar, Constitutional Reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Few Comments, Reflections and Recommendations, University of Trento, School on Local Development Working Paper, No.3, 2009, p. 10. <<http://web.unitn.it/files/download/19157/wp032009zagar.pdf>> (15 July 2015).

²¹ Vedran Dzihic and Angela Wieser, “Incentives for Democratisation? Effects of EU Conditionality on Democracy in Bosnia & Hercegovina”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 10, 2011, p. 1806.

²² Heleen Touquet and Peter Vermeersch, “Bosnia-Herzegovina-Thinking Beyond the Institution-Building”, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 2, 2008, p. 266.

superb agreement to end a war, but a very bad agreement to make a state”.²³ Actually, BiH is still largely dysfunctional and inefficient state, which is not able to fulfill the requirements, set by the EU.

In order to be a part of Euro-Atlantic community, substantial economic, political and especially constitutional/legal reforms are needed. That’s why; changing the Dayton-created Constitution of BiH has become one of the top-priority tasks facing the international community and BiH politicians alike.²⁴ Accordingly, some steps are taken for constitutional amendments. In March 2005, the Venice Commission published its “Opinion on the Constitutional Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative,” known as the Venice Commission Report. It concluded that Bosnia’s current constitutional arrangements were neither efficient nor rational, and that state-level institutions needed to become far more effective for Bosnia to move closer to EU integration.²⁵ Actually, without constitutional change, the country cannot realistically address the imperatives of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Under the supervision of international community Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats reached a consensus on the need to resolve the issues raised by the Venice Commission in 2006. They had agreed on the need to reinforce the state structure that could lead BiH towards EU integration. But the result was that on April 26, 2006, in a 26-16 vote, the Parliament of BiH failed to ratify the amendments known as “April Package”. This failure led to ensure a significant delay in the EU membership process and leave BiH with a weak and dysfunctional government.²⁶

Thus, it can be stated that there is no consensus regarding the contents and extent of constitutional reforms in BiH. This lack of consensus was obvious during the recent round of discussions on constitutional changes in

²³ Julie Kim, *Bosnia: Overview of Problems Ten Years After Dayton*, CRS Report for Congress, 14 November 2005, <<http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/57459.pdf>>. (2 July 2015), p. 2.

²⁴ Ahmed Zilic, “Dayton Agreement Challenges of Change”, *International Conference on Interethnic Relations in the Western Balkans: Problems, Instruments and Prospects for the Future*, Berlin, 12-13 September 2003, <<http://www.suedosteuropa-gesellschaft.com/pdf-berlin/zilic.pdf>> (20 August 2015).

²⁵ European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), *Opinion on the Constitutional Situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Powers of the High Representative*, Venice, 11 March 2005, paragraphs 20, 26. Text of the report can be found at <<http://www.venice.coe.int>> (10 September 2015).

²⁶ Don Hays and Jason Crosby, “From Dayton to Brussels, Constitutional Preparations for Bosnia’s EU Accession”, United States Institute of Peace, Special Report, No. 175, October 2006 Washington, <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR0ct06_2.pdf> (1 July 2015), p. 10.

October and November 2009 that was based on the so-called Butmir constitutional package.²⁷ So, the constitutional reform in BiH was in a deadlock, following the refusal of the proposed package of constitutional reforms within the “Butmir Process” of dialogue with BiH leaders. As a result, although the constitutional and other reforms are all internal affairs of BiH and depend on the participation of all relevant internal actors, the roles and importance of the international actors should not be underestimated. However, ethnopolitics in BiH constitutes the main obstacle for reforming the constitutional structure of the state.

“Dayton Ethnocracy” and Ethnic Polarization

While probably necessary for ending hostilities, the institutionalization of ethnicity and the continued ethnic identification of territory have further entrenched ethnic divisions and prevented progress in establishing peaceful relations and the reconstruction of the country. Although more than twenty years passed after the war, ethno-political segregation and ethnic polarization are still key features of the Bosnian social and political climate, preventing almost any democratic initiative in the country.²⁸ Indeed, the current political elite in BiH have focused exclusively on its own ethno-national interests and policies that move away from any kind of compromise. The concept of “ethnocracy” refers to a system where political elites use fear as a “political principle” to maximize their power and leave aside the interests of citizens.²⁹

Ethnicity was explicitly recognized in the post-Dayton constitution. The extensive veto rights established in Dayton have been (ab)used by those groups that have no interest in strengthening the common State, especially Croat and Serb nationalists, to block each step towards integration. The entity parliaments of the RS and the Federation of BiH have themselves become battlegrounds for political competition along ethno-national lines. Political leaders in both entities continuously refer to the “political will” of “their” people represented by the majority in the entity parliaments in order to block critical reforms.³⁰ This situation results in group-based features of the political system that is against individual rights and needs.

In BiH, local political elites in the political competition continuously rely on ethno-nationalist arguments and changing the state structure would

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5-7.

²⁸ David Chandler, **Bosnia: Faking Democracy**, Second ed., London, Pluto Press, 2000, p. 111.

²⁹ Dzihic and Wieser, *op. cit.*, p. 1811.

³⁰ Dzihic and Wieser, *op. cit.*, pp. 1811-1812.

impede their established forms of retaining power.³¹ For example, the parties involved in the police-reform process were not willing to make a compromise. On the one hand, the RS sought to maintain full political control over the police structure of the entity, while agreeing to a rather weak form of state-level coordination of police forces. On the other hand, Bosniak political parties demanded the abolition of the separate police structure of the RS that had been recognized within the framework of the DA.³² Under these circumstances, it is argued that local policy makers are actually not acting politically in order to reach consensus and cooperation for the sake of citizens, but are strengthening lines of division for the sake of an ethnic group. This situation motivates foreign powers to proclaim external governance as the only viable solution for this post-conflict area.³³ Therefore, exogenous state-building appears increasingly the most viable option. At this point, the prospect of EU enlargement can help to improve the capacity of state structures in BiH.

However, in the general elections in October 2010, conflicts between ethno-nationalist parties continued with aggressive election campaigns along ethno-national lines and election results mainly reaffirming ethno-national cleavages in the country. Despite signing the SAA in 2008 and thus reaching a formal crossroads in the Europeanization process, the ethno-politics continues to obstruct concrete progress towards EU accession. So the institutionalization of ethnic divisions in BiH complicates the applicability of EU conditionality and its impact on democratization. Although all major parties in BiH -at least rhetorically- share the final goal of integration and accession to the EU, EU-led reforms and conditions have increased the antagonism within the country.³⁴

The models of inter-ethnic coexistence are more dependent on the institutional design and on the practices of the local actors than on the international actors. However, the way the EU effectively governs Bosnia entrenches partitions: it deals with nationalist elites as their privileged partners, mediating within them.³⁵ Ethnic political elites have proved unable or unwilling to engage and participate in a democratic political process that requires continuous negotiations, cooperation and deliberation of all

³¹ Ibid., p. 1808.

³² Ibid., p. 1813.

³³ Miruna Troncota, “Balkanization of the Europeanization Process”: How State-building was Affected by Axiological Matters in the Western Balkans”, **Western Balkans Security Observer**, Vol. 6, No. 21, 2011, p. 76.

³⁴ Dzihic and Wieser, op. cit., pp. 1808-1812.

³⁵ Ibid.

participating actors that need to search, determine and develop common interests as the necessary basis for stability and democracy, the future successful political, social and economic development of the country and well-being of all its citizens. Considering experiences of the post-war development, the Dayton arrangements as well as international influences obviously failed to transform these ethnic elites into less nationalistic ones or replace them with new democratic and inclusive political elites that would be able to reach beyond ethnic divisions.³⁶ But it should be stated that a civic identity must be created that can transcend ethnic or group identity.

EU Efforts: What It Had Done?

The case of Bosnia is one of the greatest tests for the EU but specifically for its CFSP. For two decades, the EU improved its institutional capacity; financial programs and military capability but the Balkans - especially Bosnia- remains problematic. This challenge was accepted by the EU for BiH in 2004. EUFOR took the responsibility from NATO; and the EU became the pioneering international actor for a secure and democratic society with an efficient market in BiH. This was also an important opportunity to adopt the EU foreign policy tools, processes, principles, values and discourses. Any considerable positive improvement in Bosnia case will contribute to peace, prosperity and democracy in the region; and also will strengthen EU's power as a global actor.

It is evident that security comes first but not enough. To keep the peace through coercive means can only prevent conflicts for today. But the tension among the parties in the country will remain. In the post-Dayton period the major concerns of international community were about ensuring security, ending the conflicts, disarming the parties, institution building and elections. When the EU has engaged in such an issue, we start to observe another Europeanization process in the case of BiH. Also it should be expected that while domestic policies of BiH gradually Europeanize, the discourses of the political elites should be in a desecuritization process. By doing so, these two connected processes would produce significant contribution for the future of BiH.

The International Commission on the Balkans calls the EU to have direct involvement in the Balkans and argues that "We should clearly bring the region into the EU... We need policies so that the region can get on, get in and catch up with the rest of Europe".³⁷ Accordingly, in recent years

³⁶ Zagar, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁷ International Commission on the Balkans, *The Balkans in Europe's Future*, 2005, <www.cls-sofia.org/download.php?id=44> (1 July 2015).

European integration has clearly become the central goal of the transition process in the Western Balkans. In order to develop a strategy towards the countries in the region, the EU has promised that they are “potential candidates” for membership through the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), launched in May 1999. The central objective of the SAP was to push democratic transition of the countries from the region through substantial domestic reforms which are based on European values and structures.³⁸ In the framework of the SAP, all states have to respect and fulfill concrete conditions set up by the EU. These conditions translate principles such as the Copenhagen criteria into specific parameters that have to be met and implemented, while the process of implementation is assisted and monitored by EU institutions. In addition to the Copenhagen criteria, all states aspiring membership have to meet EU conditionality before acceding to the EU. In terms of the case of BiH, EU conditionality has included conditions related to the implementation of DA.³⁹

In this respect, in March 2000 the EU announced a Road Map as a first step for Bosnia in the SAP. This document established 18 key conditions⁴⁰ which Bosnia had to fulfill in order to start the preparation of a Feasibility Study which would then form the basis of negotiations for a SAA. These conditions covered far reaching policy reforms concerning elections, the civil service, state institutions, border services, the judiciary, trade regulations, foreign direct investment, property laws and public broadcasting.⁴¹ While the Road Map document strengthening the EU involvement and role in Bosnia, at the Zagreb summit of the EU, in November 2000, the leaders of Bosnia fully committed themselves to meeting the Road Map conditions.⁴² Finally, in September 2002 the accomplishment of the Road Map was announced by the European Commission. The Road Map can be addressed as the first page of the book of Europeanization story of BiH which is expected to have significant contributions to state and nation-building in BiH.

³⁸ Bedrudin Brljavac, “Europeanisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: European Union (Non) Actorness”, *Marmara Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2011, p. 97.

³⁹ Othon Anastasakis and Dimitar Bechev, “EU Conditionality in South East Europe: Bringing Commitment to the Process”, *European Studies Centre South East European Studies Programme Policy Paper*, Oxford, Oxford University St Antony’s College, 2003, p. 8.

⁴⁰ In the Road Map, there are three topics which are called as “steps”. These steps are “political”, “economical” and “steps in the field of democracy, human rights and the rule of law”.

⁴¹ EURM, EU “Road Map”, Reproduced in *Europa South-East Monitor*, Issue 11, May 2000, <<http://www.ceps.be/files/ESF/Monitor11.php>> (12 July 2015).

⁴² David Chandler, “State-building in Bosnia: The Limits of “Informal Trusteeship”, *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2006, p. 29.

After the Road Map, the EU established some bodies in BiH. One of them is the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) in BiH which is currently acting as a High Representative as well. In March 2002 Lord Paddy Ashdown was named as the first EUSR in BiH.⁴³ The objective of the EUSR is to ensure a coordinated EU approach to build self-sustaining peace and stability by assisting the country move beyond peace implementation towards European integration. Thus, there has been serious imposition of reform process from the HR/EUSR on local politicians.⁴⁴

At its June 2003 Thessaloniki summit, the EU committed to create new instruments to foster closer ties with Western Balkans, including the SAA. Thus, the EU was accepted by both international and local actors as the most significant integrating catalyst for the region. Indeed, for BiH's development agenda the prospect of future integration into the EU is central. Report from the Commission to the Council on the preparedness of BiH to negotiate the SAA with the EU argues that "the goal of integration into EU structures, and eventual EU membership, enjoys widespread support in BiH. To achieve this goal, however, the country will first need to demonstrate that it shares certain fundamental EU values and that it has the capacity to meet the obligations of a SAA".⁴⁵ Through the negotiation of the SAA the EUSR and the executive policy-making institution of the DEI (Directorate for European Integration) would maintain full regulatory control over the post-Dayton process.⁴⁶ One of the objectives was the putting pressure on domestic political leaders to continue the EU-related reform process. The EU expects Bosnian government to implement necessary economic, political, legal and administrative reforms as a part of the country's Europeanization process through which it has been going through since late 1990s. But they also know that it is a sort of mission impossible.⁴⁷

For the conclusion of a SAA, reform of the police structures in BiH has been a necessary precondition. The EU first called for reform of the police structures in BiH in the 2003 'Feasibility Study', in which the EU formally declared police reform as a necessary step for the establishment of the rule of

⁴³ Chandler, *ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴⁴ Bedrudin Brljavac, "Assesing the European Criteria in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Litmus Test for the European Union", *Journal of Comparative Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 2012, p. 12.

⁴⁵ European Commission, Report From the Commission to the Council on the Preparedness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union, Brussels, 18 November 2003, <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52003DC0692>> (10 July 2015).

⁴⁶ Chandler, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁴⁷ Brljavac, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

law.⁴⁸ The Feasibility Study's central evaluation was that the wartime divisions of the country have not yet been overcome. "Dealing with these divisions and securing a functioning state is important in the context of a SAA, as *only coherent, functioning states can successfully negotiate an agreement with the EU*".⁴⁹ However, transferring controls over the police from the entity level to the central government proved to be the most difficult obstacle to overcome. For instance, the RS Parliament repeatedly rejects the proposals of the EU to unify and reorganize police structures across entity lines.

During 2007, the major political parties repeatedly failed to agree on police reform. This provoked one of the largest political crises in the country since 1995, led to institutional gridlock and almost completely stopped any common efforts at the state level to fulfill the prerequisites for a SAA.⁵⁰ Finally, the EU accepted the minor and somewhat formal reforms, opening the way for signing the SAA. Thus, the SAA was signed in June 2008 in the framework of the SAP. In spite of fully entering into force of the SAA in 2015, there are rising ethnic tensions, nationalistic rhetoric and political disagreements, which inhibit Bosnian progress towards the EU.

In 2003 the EU Police Mission (EUPM) in BiH became the EU's first ever Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission with the task of supporting the establishment of a 'sustainable, professional and multi-ethnic police force operating in accordance with European and international standards'.⁵¹ It replaced the UN's International Police Task Force (IPTF) and became responsible for the implementation of Dayton requirements. Moreover, as the security situation improved, the NATO formally concluded its Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission in BiH and handed over peace stabilization duties to a European force (EUFOR) on December 2004. The fundamental objective of the EU's Operation Althea has been to contribute to a 'safe and secure environment' in BiH.⁵² Although the political context in the country was difficult, all sides wanted to prevent further violence and therefore supported the operation. The Presidency, representing all three

⁴⁸ Dzihic and Wieser, op. cit., p. 1813.

⁴⁹ European Commission, op. cit., p. 14.

⁵⁰ Dzihic and Wieser, op. cit., p. 1814.

⁵¹ See Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostraukaite, **European Union Peacebuilding and Policing**, New York, Routledge, 2006, pp. 52-78; Kari M. Osland, "The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina", **International Peacekeeping**, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2004, pp. 544-560.

⁵² See, Jannik Knauer, "EUFOR Althea: Appraisal and Future Perspectives of the EU's Former Flagship Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", EU Diplomacy Paper, October 2011, <<http://aei.pitt.edu/33452/>> (10 July 2015).

constituent peoples of BiH, thus, eventually welcomed the NATO–EU transition and 74 percent of the country's population supported the EU force, once the troops were deployed.⁵³ The police and military missions of the EU in BiH aim to strengthen the role of the EU in the country in order to more effectively promote EU's values, norms, and standards.⁵⁴

In the post-Dayton era, the return of the refugees was another very crucial issue for international community and the EU. Approximately 2.3 million people left their homes during and in the immediate aftermath of the conflict, from an original population of 4.4 million.⁵⁵ Also discrimination and violence towards minorities were great challenges to the EU. Individuals who were not Bosniak, Serb or Croat had also limited political rights.⁵⁶ In April 29, 2010 decision of the Parliamentarian's Assembly of the European Council emphasized the need for a comprehensive constitutional reform package in BiH. The decision of the Assembly calls for an end to the constitutional discriminations against those described as "others" in the constitution - groups that belong to none of the three main entities in BiH.⁵⁷

Good and efficient governance in BiH has always been an important issue for the EU, and preparing BiH for membership to the EU has been the principal vehicle for such capacity-building.⁵⁸ Providing efficient governance was harder than disarming of conflicting sides. Because governance is not only about building new governmental institutions but also those institutions should be operative. The governance is some kind of an "understanding" or a "way of doing" which needs to be internalized by the individuals, government officials and political elites. According to the EU, governance in BiH is built on a highly decentralised and very costly structure with competences divided between the state level, entities, cantons and municipalities and facing a lack of functional coordination and policy-

⁵³ Annemarie Peen Rodt and Stefan Wolff, "EU Conflict Management in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia", Richard G. Whitman and Stefan Wolff eds., **The EU as a Global Conflict Manager**, New York, Routledge, 2012, p. 145.

⁵⁴ Ana E. Juncos, "The EU's post-Conflict Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina: (re)Integrating the Balkans and/or (re)Inventing the EU?", **Southeast European Politics**, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2005, p. 99.

⁵⁵ Belloni, op. cit., 125.

⁵⁶ James Dobbins, et al., **Europe's Role In Nation-Building: From Balkans To The Congo**, Santa Monica, RAND Corporations, 2008, p. 144.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe, "The Urgent Need for a Constitutional Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Working Documents, 2010. <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc10/EDOC12222.pdf>, quoted Murat Önsoy, "Coping with Bosnia-Herzegovina's Critical Problems: Reconsidering The International Community's Role", **Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika**, Vol. 7, No. 25, 2011, p. 129.

⁵⁸ Dobbins et. al., op. cit., p. 145.

making mechanisms and processes.⁵⁹ Therefore, governance and public administration reform are key priorities in the enlargement strategy of the EU for BiH.

Strengthened democratic institutions, an inclusive democratic process, a strong role for the civil society and further progress with electoral, parliamentary and public administration are key reforms for the accession process. The development of democracy in BiH and SAA seems closely related. The main elements of SAA are promoting the free movement of goods; creating efficient institutions; developing a market economy; reducing crime and corruption; promoting higher education reform; developing democracy, human rights, and an independent media and improving the region's transport infrastructure.⁶⁰ In terms of such structural reforms there is a need for strong central government and to create a task force with the specific goal of reform leading towards accession.

Economic reconstruction is a vital issue for any post-war county. The complex structure of BiH created by DA is an important obstacle to create a nation level market. As a small open economy, BiH is highly dependent on developments in foreign markets. Despite tentative signs of recovery, labour market conditions are still extremely difficult. Unemployment remains very high at 44.5% in 2013, in particular amongst youth. The education systems do not sufficiently respond to the needs of the labour market. Social services lack capacity to evaluating the needs of vulnerable and financing to provide the appropriate support.⁶¹

Also without justice, accountability and transparency political and social reforms would be subject to fail. The fragmentation of the judicial system and of the law enforcement sector aggravates the fight against corruption and organized crime. Complex administrative laws cause legal uncertainty for citizens and enterprises and are not conducive for the attraction of foreign investments. In 2011, the Commission launched the structured dialogue on justice to assist BiH in consolidating an independent, effective, efficient and professional judicial system. The implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2009-2013) and some additional judicial reforms are done but political interferences continued. According to Progress

⁵⁹ European Commission, Instrument For Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II) Indicative Strategy Paper For Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2017), 2014, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/news/annexe_acte_autonome_nlw_part1v1.pdf> (25 July 2015).

⁶⁰ European Commission's Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2007, <http://europa.ba/?page_id=490> (1 July 2015).

⁶¹ European Commission, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

Report 2014, the political establishment has applied pressure on issues related to processing war crimes.⁶²

In the context of reconstruction efforts of BiH, from 1991 till today the EU's financial aid to BiH amounts to almost 2.5 billion Euros. In the framework of the OBNOVA and Phare programs focusing on refugee return and the reconstruction of BiH between 1996 and 2000, the country profited of donations amounting to 890.700 million Euros. Moreover, the EU countries donated some additional 1.8 billion Euro financial aid also for the reconstruction of the country.⁶³ In May 2000 the European Commission exchanged the former reconstruction programs Phare and OBNOVA by a united one, the so called: Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratization and Stabilization (CARDS). Since 2001, assistance of more than 240 million Euros has been committed under the CARDS Programme, supporting Bosnia's participation in the SAP. Furthermore, CARDS Programme was also aiming at strengthening of democratic structures and laws. The EU has supported reforms of transition and institutional building under IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance) since 2007. The priorities were between 2011 and 2013 in the national programme of IPA: 1) to strengthen the rule of law by assisting the country to reform its justice sector and to fight against organised crime and corruption; 2) to support country's efforts to improve functioning of institutions at all levels of governance and (3) to support the social and economic development. In this context, between 2007-2013, the EU budgeted 612 million Euros in the framework of the IPA for BiH.⁶⁴

Recent document adopted by the EU about BiH is "Indicative Strategy Paper for Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2017)" sets out the priorities for EU financial assistance for the period 2014-2017 to support BiH on its path to EU accession. Financial assistance under IPA II pursues the following four specific objectives: (1) support for political reforms; (2) support for economic, social and territorial development; (3) strengthening the ability of the beneficiaries; (4) strengthening regional integration and territorial cooperation.⁶⁵ The IPA II states that financial assistance shall mainly address

⁶² Ibid., p. 12.

⁶³ Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, op. cit.

⁶⁴ Viktoria Endrödi-Kovacs, "Bosnia and Herzegovina's way to the European Union", **International Relations Quarterly**, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2013, pp. 2-3; Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu and Miruna Troncotă, "The Ambivalent Role of the EU in the Western Balkans - "Limited Europeanisation" between Formal Promises and Practical Constraints. The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina", **Romanian Journal of European Affairs**, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2012, p. 12.

⁶⁵ European Commission, op. cit., p. 2.

five policy areas: (1) reforms in preparation for EU membership and related institution-and capacity-building; (2) socio-economic and regional development; (3) employment, social policies, education, promotion of gender equality, and human resources development; (4) agriculture and rural development; (5) regional and territorial cooperation.⁶⁶

The EU and Ethnocracy in BiH

In the Western Balkans, the strength of ethno-politics represents serious obstacles for development of democracy and EU-related reforms since the political leaders of ethnic groups fundamentally oppose the democratic progress and political reforms needed for EU integration. In the case of BiH, the institutionalisation of ethnic discourses through the post-conflict Dayton arrangements has diluted incentives to fulfill EU conditions.⁶⁷ Although all major parties in BiH -at least rhetorically- share the final goal of accession to the EU, EU-led reforms have increased the antagonism within the country. Because the costs of compliance with EU conditionality are too high for national leaders in BiH since political competition in the country relies on ethno-national representation.⁶⁸ In the general elections in October 2010 political polarization along ethno-national lines continued with aggressive election campaigns along ethno-national lines and election results mainly reaffirming ethno-national cleavages in the country. Despite signing the SAA in 2008 and thus reaching a formal crossroads in the Europeanisation process, the conflicts continue to obstruct concrete progress towards EU accession.⁶⁹

Dayton-designed mechanisms like the entity veto right became useful tools in the hands of political elites – mostly of those in RS – to control the political process and pursue their own ethno-national and particular interests. For any transitional country to apply EU conditionality efficiently, parliament must pass a large number of laws. However, the entity veto right in BiH has stopped over 160 legal acts and proposals. The RS has used the entity veto to block 140 of these 160 laws.⁷⁰ Apart from the frequent usage of entity veto in the state-level Parliamentary Assembly, the entity parliaments of the RS and the Federation of BiH have themselves become battlegrounds for political competition along ethno-national lines. Political leaders in both entities continuously refer to the “political will” of “their”

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Džihic and Wieser, *op. cit.*, p. 1808.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1822.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1809.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1811.

people represented by the majority in the entity parliaments in order to block critical reforms.⁷¹

Integration into European institutions depends on the creation and/or strengthening the range of state institutions effective in solving policy issues and addressing societal demands. Indeed, the EU's state-building policy has resulted in the strengthening of the state by means of institutional capacity building. The main instrument is membership perspective and conditionality principle. However, the level of socio-political cohesion and the consistency of the idea of the externally built state cannot be "imposed", but rather must be accepted and built internally which means that conditionality is not enough for these objectives. In the context of state-building, EU conditionality is weakened by the increasing domestic political costs of compliance.⁷² This results in EU conditionality having a limited appeal for political elites in pursuit of reforms, and limited incentives for political elites to refrain from policies and actions that undermine statehood and endanger democratic reforms.

The political conditionality of the EU in BiH has to respond to issues of challenged statehood and the dysfunctionality of state structures. Although the state structure in itself has not been considered as an obstacle to the EU membership of BiH, the limited functionality of Bosnia's central government is an obstacle to further progress towards accession.⁷³ EU conditionality has contributed to the adoption of international human-rights and minority-rights standards, it supported the effectiveness and efficiency of democratic institutions, and it emphasized the need to fight corruption and organised crime. Thereby, it mainly relies on elected representatives to implement necessary reforms coherently. This inherently top-down process provides limited incentives to citizens to participate in the reform process.⁷⁴ For instance, the talks on constitutional reform have excluded civil society participants and instead only involved political party leaders. Moreover, in terms of funding, EU support for civil society organisations in BiH has been small in comparison with more top-down projects. As Bechev and Andreev state, the EU funding under the CARDS programme was heavily focused on top-down institution-building projects, with less than a third of funds over the period 2002 to 2004 going to bottom-up initiatives.⁷⁵ According to the

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 1812.

⁷² Frank Schimmelfennig, "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2003), pp. 495-518.

⁷³ Dzihic and Wieser, op. cit., p. 1806.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 1803-1804.

⁷⁵ Anastasakis and Bechev, op. cit. p. 18.

European Commission, a total of 522.55 million Euros was allocated to Bosnia under CARDS and its replacement, the IPA, over the period 2001 to 2008. 16.8 million Euro of this was accounted for the civil society and media category.⁷⁶

Therefore, it is argued that top-down approach should be balanced with bottom-up policies aimed at enhanced citizen participation and pro-reform consensus building.⁷⁷ Accordingly, it is crucial to provide assistance in order to develop a democratic political culture through civil society-building. Because an active civil society could exert significant influence on local politicians to push Bosnia further along a path of European integration.⁷⁸ Indeed, local ownership would signify the transition from imposed reforms linked to the DA to a reform process driven by domestic actors and directed toward the objective of EU accession. Thus, the change from an externally imposed to a generally accepted constitutional system can be considered as the true defining moment for BiH in the process of transition.⁷⁹ Neither the EU nor the local political actors alone should decide on the state structure, as peace building is a process that is of primary importance to the people.

The EU seeks to promote further constitutional reform to improve the governing effectiveness of Bosnia's political institutions. And also the citizens of Bosnia are united in aspiring EU accession and its benefits. However, the constitution as it stands will greatly inhibit Bosnia's ability to move toward accession. Despite numerous state-building reforms, it is questionable whether the state can implement the broad range of measures the EU requires for accession. Under the current constitution, ethnically based political parties still can thwart the state and prevent Bosnia from entering the EU. Thus, rather than focusing on issues related with the European integration and the well-being of the ordinary citizens, most of Bosnian politicians try to win votes by emphasizing fear from other ethnic groups in the country.⁸⁰ In spite of this reality, the "Butmir Process", which aimed to make constitutional adjustments, focused only on political leaders

⁷⁶ European Commission, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brussels, 1 July 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/mipd_bosnia_herzegovina_2009_2011_en.pdf (10 August 2015), p. 25.

⁷⁷ Anastasakis and Bechev, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷⁸ Martina Fischer, "Introduction: Moving Out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?", Martina Fischer ed., **Peacebuilding and Civil Society in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ten Years after Dayton**, Münster, Lit Verlag, 2006, p. 16.

⁷⁹ Woelk, op. cit. p. 27.

⁸⁰ Brljavac, 2011, p. 95.

of major ethnic groups in Bosnia.⁸¹ That is why it can be argued that the elite-focused EU conditionality may have negative repercussions on democracy, since it does not provide incentives for fostering alternative discourses to ethno-nationalism.

Government institutions in BiH are currently used to exploit ethnic/religious differences and influence for the mobilization of voters along ethnic lines. The EU has reacted to this by advocating policies that facilitate power-sharing, protection of minority rights, regional autonomy, decentralization and quotas for representation of groups. However, these policies bear the risk of polarization. Therefore, the EU's effort for transformation of BiH should consist of enabling de-ethnicisation of politics in the long-term. In other words, one could say that the current ethnocracy should be transformed into a true (pluralist) democracy, in which civic principles should be strengthened.⁸² Indeed, insisting on an ethnic statehood certainly jeopardises both economic progress and EU integration. Therefore, a successful integration needs overcoming certain identities created by the former conflicts, which are currently triggering the on-going tensions. So the inclusion in European institutions can help "soften" local identities and mitigate domestic competition over control of the state.

The Europeanization process has been an important force for strengthening political stability, economic prosperity, democracy, rule of law, and peace in the Western Balkans. Also, the Europeanization process does not only entail the adoption and implementation of EU policies, rules, and laws but also it has promoted its norms, values, and identity in EU candidate and potential-candidate countries. Hence, the Europeanization process can influence identity-building process in the EU aspirants, especially in post-conflict societies such as BiH.⁸³ Indeed, the Europeanization process can provide the citizens of BiH with a new social, legal, and political space to develop and strengthen alternative identities that can cross ethnic lines, leading to growing awareness that there are supranational causes which are universal values and as such are equally important to all citizens in BiH.⁸⁴ In fact 88 percent of Bosnians support BiH's European ambitions, according to the poll conducted by the Bosnian

⁸¹ Dzihic and Wieser, op. cit., p. 1817.

⁸² Zagar, op. cit., p. 12.

⁸³ Bedrudin Brljavac, "Bosnia and Herzegovina and Europeanization: between Ethnic-national and European Identities", 25 April 2012, <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/bedrudin-brljavac/bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-europeanization-between-ethnic-national-and-european-id>> (1 August 2015), p. 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

agency for European integration. The poll results show that support for EU membership is strongest in Bosnia's Muslim community, with 97 percent in favour, while 85 percent of Bosnian Croats and 78 percent of Bosnian Serbs support it.⁸⁵ Despite serious challenges, which have attempted to prevent such a democratic process, the policy of inclusive and democratic citizenship is unavoidable if Bosnians want to be a member of the EU in the future.

Conclusion

Since the early 2000s the EU has emerged as the primary actor in state-building process in the Western Balkans. Based on a dual strategy of state-building and European integration, the EU has gradually replaced other international organisations in the post-conflict reconstruction of the Western Balkans.⁸⁶ Thus, the goal of extending Kant's perpetual peace to the region is sought through the European integration.

The major policy instrument for achieving integration should be the reform of the region's weak states. However, in post-conflict period of weak states, state-building process treats the symptoms, but rarely treats the underlying pathologies.⁸⁷ Much of the focus in state-building has been on building the capacity of state institutions. But attention must also be paid to supporting civil society and citizen engagement such that they can hold the state accountable and make it responsive to society. In this respect, the EU integration process of BiH can help to developing and strengthening of such social forces.

For contemporary BiH, the perception of a shared past seems to be a divisive rather than an integrative factor, whereas the shared EU perspective can facilitate the cooperation initiatives among peoples of BiH. Yet although the EU accession is a shared goal, it still seems secondary to the aim of preserving the relative power of one's own group. For example, it is suggested that strengthening the state threatens the full autonomy of RS and favours the positions of Bosniaks (and, to a lesser extent, Croats). There is still no common vision for the country, and the polarization produced by war has been preserved and prevails in the political positions of the various groups.⁸⁸ Despite of the existence of ethnocracy in domestic politics of BiH,

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁶ Florian Bieber, "Building Impossible States? State-Building Strategies and EU Membership in the Western Balkans", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 10, 2011, p. 1783.

⁸⁷ Emel Akçalı, "The European Union's Competency in Conflict Resolution: The Cases of Bosnia, Macedonia (FYROM) and Cyprus examined", Thomas Diez and Nathalie Tocci ed., *Cyprus: A Conflict at the Crossroads*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009, pp. 180-181.

⁸⁸ Woekl, op. cit., p. 29.

the goal for the EU should be the promotion of capable, inclusive, participatory, responsive and accountable governments. Efforts to promote an inclusive political settlement can re-shape relations and contribute to political and social transformation in the country. But at the end, in the context of bottom-up approach of peace-building in the BiH, the question of whether Bosnia is doomed to partition or can survive as one state -and in what form - largely depends on its institutions and citizens' commitment to them.⁸⁹ While the EU expecting a well-functioning federation, if the country remains in its *de facto* divided form, the EU will not able to negotiate further with Bosnia towards official candidacy and lately membership.

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⁸⁹ Belloni, op. cit., p. 43.

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