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INTERNSHIP REPORT

LUDOVICA DAFFINI

DEGREE PROGRAMME

GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LEADERSHIP

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PREFACE

Rarely in life I managed to shape my choices with the high level of determination and self-awareness that I have developed over the last two years. Beginning my undergraduate program in Global Responsibility and Leadership (GRL) was a testament to my ability to aspire and challenge myself, that I can transform failure into profound learning, and that I have the power to manufacture positive change for myself and my community through this process. Looking back, my first year at GRL was a moment of major academic discovery on sustainable development, and the second year blended theoretical and practical components through projects like the Living Lab. With this trajectory in mind, pursuing an internship during my minor seemed a logical step forward in my impact-driven journey as a responsible leader.

Reflecting on my internship applications, I acknowledge that preparing CVs, cover letters, and other required documents was not an easy process. This is not only because the workload was intense, but also because my efforts led initially to several rejections. Ultimately, my persistence flourished into an exciting outcome when I successfully reached out to and interviewed for the think tank European Policy Centre in Belgrade (Serbia). I was beyond excited to embark on a governance-centred internship and to research current social, economic and political challenges in the Western Balkans' (WB) enlargement project. On the one hand, these themes are strongly tied to my Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) major. On the other hand, my research in Serbia represented an opportunity to expand my comfort zone, applying my knowledge to a non-EU context that I had never visited before.

As my internship has reached its conclusion, I wish to sincerely thank my supervisors, Campus Fryslân Professor in Political Philosophy, Élise Rouméas, and CEP Programme Manager and Senior Researcher, Strahinja Subotić. They not only supported me at every stage of my internship, but also offered their kind words and warm encouragement for my achievements at every step of the way.

To a future of exciting collaboration, research and further academic and professional development!

Ludovica Daffini

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INTRODUCTION

Description of the Internship Organization

The European Policy Centre (CEP) is a think tank engaged in the development and implementation of policies aimed at facilitating the accession of candidate countries to the European Union (EU). It is especially focused on the Serbian and WB context.

One of the ways in which CEP achieves its mission is through designing and implementing Public Administration Reform (PAR), a task that is carried out by CEP's Good Governance team. By bettering Serbia's and the WB public administration and service delivery systems, CEP guarantees equal and fair access to opportunities for all citizens, and it brings these countries closer to EU accession.

Milena Mihajlović, CEP Programme Director

> *"CEP in three words? Evidence-based, professional, and motivated.*
>
> *In the upcoming and long-term future, CEP will continue to contribute to evidence-based policy-making in Serbia and the Western Balkan region, working towards full EU membership."*

INTRODUCTION

The second pillar at CEP is represented by the Our Europe team, which is directly engaged in studying the EU's enlargement policies, funding packages, and how to utilize these resources optimally. Lastly, CEP's work encompasses some additional program areas, including Internal Market and Competitiveness, Energy, and Environment.

Within these diverse thematic horizons, CEP strives to provide detailed research outputs that inform citizens as well as national, regional and international organizations. While ensuring that the highest research and peer-revision standards are met, these outputs are diverse in nature. For example, CEP features policy briefs, which have the primary aim of assessing a policy issue, and provide feasible recommendations to address it. CEP also works on shorter blog articles, which are an opportunity to learn about policy developments and challenges in the WB through an easily-readable and engaging medium. A final example are podcasts, where international and local experts are invited to exchange their views with CEP's researchers.

Since its foundation in 2011, CEP has built a strong reputation locally and internationally. Today, CEP features a dedicated team of around 25 employees and collaborates with prominent agencies such as the European Commission, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Besides these partnerships, CEP has been recognized as one of the top ten think tanks in Central and Eastern Europe and the top one from the Western Balkans, according to the Global Think Tank Index Report.

CEP's recent publications, as per CEP's website

INTRODUCTION

Internship Overview

My internship at CEP began on September 9th, 2024, and ended on January 3rd, 2025. Over these months, I worked full-time for around 40 hours per week, across the Good Governance and Our Europe teams. While I have spent the great majority of my workdays at CEP's office in Belgrade, I was occasionally asked to work from home, depending on what tasks and meetings I was required to contribute to.

While conducting my internship, I engaged in formal and informal training opportunities, where I gained relevant skills applicable to the workplace. Indeed, I have solidified my efforts to learn French by regularly studying on an AI writing and conversation platform. Moreover, I have enhanced my public speaking skills while I prepared my speech for the TEDxZavoi Park Youth event, which happened on November 9th, in Romania. These learning moments were coupled with more informal efforts to perfect my writing skills as I applied to graduate programs in the United States, requiring me to prepare several essays, statements of purpose, and fellowship statements.

Overall, growing my language, communication and writing skills proved to be an invaluable asset in my work at CEP, as I have often read articles and listened to interviews in French, intervened during presentations and meetings, and written briefings and articles.

INTERNSHIP TASKS, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

During my internship, I worked on a diverse set of tasks, which I have grouped in three different thematic areas for the purpose of this report:

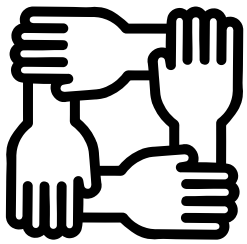
Conducting my own research

Since the beginning of my journey at CEP, I was asked to reflect my research interests and prepare a list of topics I was passionate about. Subsequently, I met with the CEP Good Governance team and we decided that my core focus would be to write a policy brief. In this piece, I would investigate how foreign nationals coming to Serbia experience service delivery when applying for a visa, residence and work permit. Having identified a core topic, I began reviewing literature, legislative texts, and government reports, as well as testing first-hand the digital application process for visa, residence and work permits.

Following my colleagues' directions, I translated this research into a draft outline. CEP designed a specific structure to follow for preparing a comprehensive outline, which requires writers to provide a detailed claim for every paragraph, followed by some pieces of evidence and a forward-looking conclusion. Having implemented these guidelines, my outline was approved and I could begin the policy brief writing process. At the same time, me and my colleagues secured contacts with the Ministry of Interior, where I conducted interviews to understand public servants' perceptions on visa, residence and work permit policies and their applications. Having incorporated these insights and identified relevant policy recommendations, I submitted my brief for a final round of review, and published it.

INTERNSHIP TASKS, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

Supporting other employees in their research activities



Besides conducting my own research, my time at CEP was enriched by various activities and tasks. Examples of these assignments include preparing briefings on current political and economic events, as exemplified in the Appendix. Moreover, I proof-read CEP articles before publication, to ensure correct in-text referencing and style compliance. Lastly, I am grateful that my supervisor invited me to participate in multiple webinars and on-site conferences, as a representative of CEP. These occasions were not simply an opportunity to take notes about relevant interventions and speech, but allowed me to expand my network and connect with Serbian as well as international personalities.

Sharing insights from my country and background

When I recall my interactions at CEP, I have noticed a genuine interest in my cultural background and country of provenance. This didn't only happen during informal conversations with my colleagues, but also in more structured situations. For example, I engaged in preparing a presentation for all CEP researchers and administrative staff about the Meloni's Government, which I attach in the Appendix. During my talk, I described the historical roots and growth of Meloni within the Italian context, Meloni's current political plans and policy proposals, as well as attitudes towards the enlargement process for Serbia and the Western Balkans.

INTERNSHIP TASKS, OUTPUTS, AND OUTCOMES

Summary of Tasks, Outputs, and Outcomes for Myself and the Organization

Tasks	Outputs	Outcomes for	
		Myself	**Organization**
Conducting own research	• Policy Brief	Structured writing skills	Introduction of new research topic
Assisting colleagues	• Briefings • Webinars • Referencing	Networking skills	Good organizational branding
Sharing my home culture	• Presentation	Reflection on my origins and background	Organization's cultural enrichment

EVALUATION

How has the internship influenced my personal, professional and academic development?

Flexibility as a resource rather than a challenge

CEP is a very flexible environment. On a practical level, this meant that I was allowed to come to the office between 9.00 and 10.00 and to take unscheduled breaks if I felt tired. Flexibility also had deeper implications on my personal and professional development, as at CEP I could decide how much I wanted to be challenged by joining more or less difficult projects. The need to be very proactive in choosing what I wanted to do and how I wanted to shape my experience was partly new and challenging to me. Especially during the first weeks, I was missing a clear structure with specific guidelines, like it happens in university, where students can read what they have to achieve in a syllabus. After these initial moments of confusion, however, I realized that CEP's flexible policies can be an opportunity to lead my own professional development, to be proactive and choose to grow my talents and skills. This mindset accompanied me ever since, and was a key factor in pushing me through the complex process of writing my policy brief as well as assisting CEP researchers with their projects.

My journey towards making 'the strange familiar and the familiar strange'

Embracing a proactive and self-reflective mindset was not the only obstacle I encountered during my internship. The projects I was assigned were strongly aligned with my major in terms of their focus on political and economic issues. The challenge for me was rather discovering the Western Balkan context and its specific connections to broader socio-economic and political theories. At the beginning of my internship, as well as after I had settled at CEP, I had moments where I recognized my limits in understanding Serbia and the WB. Despite my efforts to inform myself through articles and podcasts, and by talking with my colleagues at work, new nuances and perspectives kept emerging. Overall, the gap between my knowledge and the specific connotations of the WB illuminated the awareness that in every country or region there are ungraspable and unique components, rooted in their historical, social, political foundations.

EVALUATION

Within this picture, my desire as a research intern and scholar was not centred on making Serbia a completely 'familiar' environment. Rather, I aimed to keep a curious and respectful attitude, learning, discovering, listening, and admiring the wealth of cultural shades that surrounded me.

Parallel to appreciating my knowledge limits, working at CEP gave me the opportunity to transform my certainties about my home country and personal background, to the point of noticing that there are still some aspects of its social and political dimensions that I do not grasp fully. This realization especially happened during the presentation I held on Meloni's Government, when I noticed that I couldn't answer one of the questions from the audience, regarding long and short-term migration trends and Meloni's responses to those. Reflecting on my pitch, I realized that my role as an insider can lead me to underestimate certain assumptions within the Italian political and economic debate. For this reason, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to hold this presentation and have acknowledged the role of my colleagues in shaping the understanding I have of my own country.

A collaborative and supportive network

CEP is also a strongly collaborative workplace, and the interactions I had with the other researchers brought me new insights on teamwork. Since the first day, my colleagues were very supportive and helped me in dealing with technical visa issues, and, most importantly, they gave me feedback on my proposed research questions, and shared some CEP papers I may be interested in reading. Their enthusiasm motivated me to be also very proactive in challenging myself with enriching tasks and conversations. Looking back, I think that there were some key features within the team that made us work in synchrony together. Indeed, I think that me and my colleagues managed to build a dynamic leadership atmosphere, where everyone could lead in different ways and moments, depending on the situation and area of expertise. Other values that describe this team experience are inclusivity, empathy and listening skills. Overall, I think that the combination of these factors made everyone feel empowered and engaged in a process of mutual growth. Ultimately, spending time at CEP's office was not just a way to strengthen my attitude towards interacting and leading with people in a professional environment, but it also offered a blueprint for building stronger group relationships in other contexts that I will encounter in my future.

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How does the internship relate to my GRL studies?

GRL skills at CEP

During my time at CEP, I applied various skills gained through my studies in *Global Responsibility and Leadership* (GRL). For instance, I practiced on a tentative version of a blog outline, analysing large datasets with thousands of entries to measure the evolution of short exchange programs for Serbian students. While the piece was a learning exercise rather than being intended for publication, this experience was very rewarding, as it allowed me to apply the quantitative analysis skills I developed in GRL courses like *Worldwide Analyses of Global Health Issues*. Additionally, my previous participation in the *Qualitative Methods* course, as well as my work as part of the Living Lab project, equipped me with solid interview skills, which I used for my policy brief, during my interactions at the Ministry. It prepared me to ask well-structured and concise questions, letting my interlocutors reveal key insights and reflections on visa, residence, and work permit policies in Serbia.

GRL *for* other ideological standpoints

The GRL program also brought me to deep reflections on the ethical value of including diverse perspectives within my research. When taking foundation courses like *Ethics and Global Responsibility*, I appreciated the key role of a bottom-up approach to present findings that are not just academically sound, but that can speak to society, institutions, and citizens. This awareness enriched my research projects at CEP. For example, I recall a conversation with my supervisor Strahinja, where I proposed the idea of interviewing public servants, besides studying the topics of visa, residence and work permits on my own, as an outsider. During our meeting, Strahinja asked me what new insights I could gain from talking with public servants. I replied by sharing that research is not just about obtaining new information and data, and that giving voice to the people who design and implement the services for foreign nationals seemed like an undeniable ethical step to me. Overall, I am thankful to CEP's openness to consider and incorporate my insights as a GRL student, resulting in a well-rounded policy brief, as well as profound exchanges and broader conversations.

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GRL *with* other ideological standpoints

At CEP, I recognized various similarities between my GRL education and the themes that I have encountered while conducting my research and collaborating with my colleagues. More specifically, I identified these shared values and attitudes while I was attending a conference as a representative of CEP. The event was organized in Belgrade by the Italian Institute for Culture and focused on cohesion policy and EU enlargement. The discussions centered on ensuring that this process leads to tangible impacts at regional and local levels, with speakers from the Serbian Ministry of EU Integration, the European Commission's Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, and public servants from Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. During the event, I asked a question about the importance of tailoring public services and EU actions to diverse local dimensions. This question drew directly from the core principle of the GRL program: local solutions to global challenges. Both the speakers and I agreed on the necessity of recognizing the diversity of regions and communities, each featuring distinct cultural, social, and economic needs. In summary, this interaction demonstrated to me the strong bond between GRL and my internship experience, confirming the applicability of what I am learning to broader and diverse professional dimensions.

GRL *and* other ideological standpoints

My internship also featured moments of discordance with what I studied as a GRL student. For example, I attended a presentation by the Italian Ambassador to Serbia, Luca Gori, and the head of the World Bank in Serbia, Nicola Pontara, on their recent co-authored book. The discussion focused on Serbia's path toward EU accession, emphasizing themes like economic growth, political cohesion, and productivity. While listening to their arguments, I noticed a significant contrast with what I am learning at GRL, particularly in courses like *Political Economy and Degrowth* and *22nd Century Economy*. During these classes, me and my classmates discovered the challenges behind the notion of infinite growth, especially concerning its unsustainable nature in a planet that has finite resources. The emphasis during the presentation on continuous growth left me with questions on whether such a path can truly align with sustainability. While the speakers advocated for equitable

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distribution of growth-related benefits, I wonder whether any type of distribution will be possible if our planet is not sustaining humanity anymore. This experience deepened my uncertainty about reconciling economic growth with environmental limits and motivates me to understand where I wish to stand between these sides. I hope I will find my own take in the future, and that I will leave positive impacts based on this awareness.

Future Prospects

Looking at the future, my internship at CEP has provided me with a strong foundation as I prepare to continue my graduate education in the United States and deepen my knowledge of the public policy field. On the one hand, I have sharpened my research and writing skills, gaining experience that will benefit me in my research-centred graduate journey. On the other hand, I also had the possibility to formulate concrete policy recommendations through my policy brief. I believe that this training will be a valuable asset within my project to study public policy, and later become a public policy expert within an international organization like the United Nations (UN). Ultimately, while my internship has reached its conclusion, I look forward to applying my learnings during graduate school and keep regular contacts with the CEP team, welcoming future collaboration opportunities and shared projects.

EVALUATION

Summary of My Development Milestones and Their Connection to GRL

Milestones	GRL Connection	
Flexibility as a Resource	Data anaysis and interview skills →	Possibility to experiment flexibly across different disciplines and research approaches
The Strange Familiar, the Familiar Strange	GRL *with* other standpoints GRL *and* other standpoints →	Engagement in a journey of doubts and new truths, in constant interaction with my GRL background
Strong Support Network	GRL *for* other standpoints →	Open-minded team, curious and eager to be enriched by my GRL perspective

APPENDIX

Conducting My Own Research: Publishing a Policy Brief

Policy Brief

Author: Ludovica Daffini, CEP Intern

A Place to Call Home?

Addressing Foreign Nationals' Challenges to Entering, Residing and Working in Serbia

Living in a foreign country means gaining exposure to diverse cultural perspectives, as well as sharing personal and professional contributions across the world. Although the prospects of embarking in international adventures are appealing to many, there are several practical obstacles that may prevent a foreigner from travelling internationally and settling abroad. More specifically, foreign citizens' journey to entering, residing and working in Serbia can be disrupted by different obstacles, mainly concerning the availability of clear and accessible information on travelling and living in Serbia on institutional websites. While responsible authorities acknowledge these issues and claim to be making significant efforts to improve services,[1] remaining obstacles can still negatively influence foreign nationals' decision to move to Serbia. These challenges in attracting foreign workers could also have negative effects on Serbia's growing economy, an awareness that urges policymakers not only to continue improving successful reforms, but also to address remaining weaknesses.

The need to attract foreigners is deemed as a priority given that Serbia is traversing an economic growth phase, with GDP projected to increase between 3% and 4% in the next years,[2] and at the same time dealing with a rapidly ageing population.[3] This evidence seems to motivate the Government as well, with high officials highlighting the need to import as much labour as possible from other regions of the world in the coming years.[4] Welcoming foreigners, however, can go far beyond economic progress, and initiate a process of mutual exchange of resources, good practices, skills and diverse cultural perspectives between Serbia and the rest of the globe. Ultimately, in a world faced by unprecedented environmental, geopolitical and economic crises, building international connections is one of the ways forward.

1 As explained during an interview with an officer from the Ministry of Interior.

2 World Bank. (2024). *The World Bank In Serbia – Overview*, Retrieved October 7, 2024, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/serbia/overview#3

3 United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Why population in Serbia keeps declining?* UNDP. https://www.undp.org/serbia/stories/why-population-serbia-keeps-declining

4 Radio 021. (2024, May 16). *Vučić: Moraćemo da uvozimo radnu snagu iz svih delova sveta što je više moguće*. Vesti Novi Sad | Novosadski Informativni Portal 021, Retrieved October 7, 2024 https://www.021.rs/story/Info/Srbija/375651/Vucic-Moracemo-da-uvozimo-radnu-snagu-iz-svih-delova-sveta-sto-je-vise-moguce.html

From the Start: a Challenging Departure on the eGovernment Portal

From the very first visit, the Government's online services for foreigners present certain accessibility limitations. The eConsulate service, available from the eGovernment portal,[5] offers innovative tools to foreigners, such as the possibility to book an appointment online to speak with the diplomatic missions of the Republic of Serbia from their home countries.[6] However, these options are advertised unevenly. For example, the Serbian Embassy in Australia[7] and the Serbian Embassy in Kenya[8] feature no link to register for an appointment on eConsulate, while the Serbian Embassy in Germany[9] presents a clear appointment booking option. It is important to note that the scheduling service was initially designed for Serbian citizens abroad, and not to directly target foreign nationals.[10] The limited accessibility of services offered on eGovernment for foreigners reveals that these services need not simply to exist to be effective, but that clear communication is the key to fully achieve their purpose. Further expanding the accessibility and citizens' awareness regarding these services is a step towards ensuring a smoother transition for foreigners to Serbia.

Foreign citizens' journey to entering, residing and working in Serbia can be disrupted by different obstacles, mainly concerning the availability of clear and accessible information on travelling and living in Serbia on institutional websites.

The second service available for foreigners can be found on eForeigner, where Serbian nationals can register a foreigner who is coming to Serbia and whom they are hosting. However, this option comes with practical shortcomings too. On the one hand, the address provided was not accessible through the link shared on the eGovernment portal.[11] On the other hand, it can be reached through searching for keywords such as 'eForeigner Serbia' on major search engines like Google[12]. This inconsistency can mean that some users are smoothly able to access the service relying on Google, while others can face some confusion when approaching the service from the eGovernment portal. The mentioned discrepancy highlights the need for continuous technical updates and improvements to guarantee that public digital platforms function seamlessly and meet the needs of all. Ultimately, this is a prerequisite to ensure that services are fully user-centric and that they inspire a sense of trust and efficiency for both citizens and foreign nationals in Serbia.

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5 The eGovernment portal is a comprehensive government platform allowing Serbian citizens and foreign nationals to access public services. Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *eUprava: eGovernment Portal of the Republic of Serbia*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, https://euprava.gov.rs/

6 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *eConsulate Portal*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, https://ekonzulat.gov.rs/

7 Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Australia. (n.d.). *Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Australia*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from http://canberra.mfa.gov.rs/index.php

8 Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Republic of Kenya. (n.d.). *Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Republic of Kenya*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from http://nairobi.mfa.gov.rs/index.php

9 Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Federal Republic of Germany. (n.d.). *Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from http://berlin.mfa.gov.rs/index.php

10 As explained during an interview with an officer from the Ministry of Interior.

11 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *eForeigner Portal*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://livinginserbia.gov.rs/

12 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). eForeigner. EUprava. Retrieved October 9, 2024, from https://cms.test-uzda.gov.rs/usluge/4675

Good practices from the EU: Rapid Progress on User Centric eService Delivery in Malta

Malta has achieved progress regarding digital service delivery. These advancements have been so important that the European Commission's *eGovernment Benchmark 2024 Insight Report* ranks Malta as the top digital government provider in the EU.[13] Malta scored positively on each of the four dimensions of the Commission's Benchmark: transparency, user centricity, key IT enablers, and cross-border services. The country especially excels in the 'user centricity' indicator, with a score of 99 out of 100. Malta's excellence in this area finds a concrete materialisation in the eServices portal,[14] where citizens and foreign nationals can access a variety of services, including filing visa or residence applications. When foreigners enter the portal's section dedicated to visa and residence applications, they are welcomed by a digital assistant that provides prompts on commonly-asked questions. Moreover, users can reach out to human agents through dedicated email addresses and phone numbers. Additionally, service users can provide feedback through the 'Rate the Public Service' tool, a graphically appealing evaluation system with the possibility to express overall satisfaction as well as leave detailed comments. In summary, Malta is not simply offering high-quality services to users, but this case could be taken as an example, and spark good practices across other EU countries, as well as candidate countries like Serbia.

Travelling on uneven roads: challenges and opportunities of the Welcome to Serbia Website

Welcome to Serbia is a website aiming to present the most important information foreign nationals need to prepare for their entrance and stay in Serbia, and it can be accessed through the eGovernment portal or through internet research. However, two parallel versions of the website are currently active, with the risk of creating confusion for foreigners from the very beginning of their journey of entering and living in Serbia. The first version[15] offers basic services such as connecting users to the e-applications for visa, residence and work permits. The second[16] is a trial version with additional information, including the cost of living in Serbia, education in Serbia, and an overview of visa categories and application requirements. While the comprehensiveness and depth of information on the second version better aids foreign nationals, this website is not easily accessible, as users are directed by default to the first version when searching for the keyword 'Welcome to Serbia' on major search engines like Google. This parallelism of sources of information could push users to seek information through secondary sources which may not always be reliable and may even discourage people wanting to settle in Serbia to use them.

Welcome to Serbia is a website aiming to present the most important information foreign nationals need to prepare for their entrance and stay in Serbia, and it can be accessed through the eGovernment portal or through internet research. However, two parallel versions of the website are currently active, with the risk of creating confusion for foreigners from the very beginning of their journey of entering and living in Serbia.

13 Capgemini, Sogeti, IDC, & Politecnico di Milano. (2024). EGovernment Benchmark 2024 Insight Report. European Commission. https://doi.org/10.2759/0684

14 Government of Malta. (n.d.). *Your Online Guide to Government Services*. Servizz.gov. Retrieved October 8, 2024, from https://www.servizz.gov.mt/en/Pages/default.aspx

15 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *Welcome to Serbia homepage*. Welcome to Serbia. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://welcometoserbia.gov.rs/home

16 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *Home*. Welcome to Serbia Homepage. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://welcometoserbia.test-uzda.gov.rs/home

Additionally, a closer look to the services and information offered through the default Welcome to Serbia website uncovers that some key features could be improved. More specifically, the tool *'My Entry / Visa / Residence Guide'*[17] provides an overview of what visa is needed based on the information entered by users, such as their nationality. However, it does not display the benefits and achievements of the Open Balkan initiative[18] when choosing 'North Macedonia' or 'Albania' as 'nationality', which may generate confusion for the citizens of the Open Balkan countries.[19] Additionally, information in the FAQ section[20] is disorganized, lacking sub-headings with specific information concerning different groups of foreign nationals, such as those requiring a visa and those who can stay in Serbia for up to 90 or 30 days within a six-month period without it.[21] Such discrepancies illuminate the need to adequately and equally adapt services to different foreign nationals, which would allow them to fully and easily understand their possibilities to enter and reside in Serbia.

Lastly, the Welcome to Serbia platform faces challenges due to coordination issues among the various public institutions responsible for managing it. The website is the result of an interdepartmental cooperation process, and the contributing institutions range from the Ministry of Interior as the leading one, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all the way to the employment and security services.[22] In addition, the postal service and tax administration systems are expected to be included in the process.[23] This complex structure leads in practice to inefficiencies, for example concerning the availability of clear and updated information for all institutional actors and the time required for finalising the application procedures. Ensuring interdepartmental efficiencies and synergies remain paramount for smooth user experience and further success of the Welcome to Serbia initiative.

The evidence so far presented paves the way to bettering public services for foreign nationals coming to Serbia. Achieving improvements is certainly not a simple process, but rather a complex one, that requires time and resources.

Beyond Arrival: Developments on the Practicalities of Living and Working in Serbia

Parallel to having an informative function, Welcome to Serbia is intended to guide users to apply for visa and residence applications through an online form.[24] However, this guidance consists only of basic tips on application preparation with users being hardly in focus. For example, while each step of the form features a 'more information' icon to clarify what data users need to provide, it does not offer templates for the documents that users need to upload. In addition, while the form provides a support email, it only appears on the bottom of the homepage of the form, with no reference to it after users have entered the application flow. Moreover, the form does not offer a phone number or a chat bot for users to reach out in case they encounter any difficulties and there is no possibility for users to provide feedback on the form's functioning. Providing a diverse range of support tools may be especially valuable to foreign nationals, especially to those belonging to vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities or the elderly. In practical terms, the lack of more user focused guidance during the application process may lead to difficulties in completing each application step correctly and diminish the portals' purpose.

The form on the website does not offer a phone number or a chat bot for users to reach out in case they encounter any difficulties and there is no possibility for users to provide feedback on the form's functioning.

17 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.-a). *Discovery tool.* Welcome to Serbia. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://welcometoserbia.gov.rs/discovery-tool

18 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *The aim and purpose of Open Balkan*. EUprava. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://euprava.gov.rs/openbalkan/english

19 Besides not informing citizens fully about the Open Balkan initiative, there are some contradictions between the provisions set by this agreement and the information provided on the Welcome to Serbia website. For example,the Open Balkan agreement enables "a citizen of a Contracting Party to stay in the territory of the Receiving Party for up to two years", while the Welcome to Serbia website allows for a permanence of 'up to 36 months', when a citizen is granted temporary residence. See the Open Balkan agreement here.

20 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.-c). *Help*. Welcome to Serbia. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://welcometoserbia.gov.rs/help

21 This category of nationals who can stay up to 90 days without a visa includes citizens of the United States, Canada, Australia, Turkey, EU, and Western Balkan countries, as well as a significant number of Asian and Latin America nationals. Chinese and Russian citizens can stay up to 30 days without a visa.

22 As explained during an interview with an officer from the Ministry of Interior.

23 Ibid.

24 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *Welcome to Serbia homepage*. Welcome to Serbia. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://welcometoserbia.gov.rs/home

International mobility of the workforce is limited due to domestic policies and administrative burden, and Serbia has taken additional measures in the direction of facilitating this process. With the exception of Albanian and North Macedonian citizens who enjoy the right to access Serbia's labour market in a simplified manner,[25] other foreign nationals need a permit to find employment in Serbia.[26] When a visa is granted on the basis of employment, no further application or procedure is needed, and work permit is automatically granted for a defined period.[27] In all other cases, a single permit application—for both temporary residence and work—is necessary and can be completed on the Welcome to Serbia website. The latest version of the single permit was introduced in February 2024 through the Law on Amendments to the Law on Foreigners.[28] The rationale behind the law was to create a 'one-stop shop' for foreigners interested in finding a job in Serbia, which allows them to work, but also facilitates visa and residence applications. In particular, the platform assesses users' visa requirements, and, once the assessment is completed, it directs foreigners to the single permit application. Ultimately, these developments showcase the awareness of public authorities in Serbia to ensure a smoother and more empowering user journey for foreigners, but the recent introduction of these enablers calls for scrutiny of their practical gains.

These developments showcase the awareness of public authorities in Serbia to ensure a smoother and more empowering user journey for foreigners, but the recent introduction of these enablers calls for scrutiny of their practical gains.

The validity period of the single permit was originally set at 12 months, but it was extended to 36 months through the aforementioned Law amendments. Moreover, employers can hire a larger number of employees through a single procedure (up to 50), with the requirement to provide them with a final employment contract before the issuing of the permit, which adds predictability to the single permit application process.

Moreover, while the overall procedure welcomes foreign workers to Serbia, it keeps a focus on the interests of Serbian citizens. This is, for example, achieved through a labour market test. Such tests, designed to assess whether there are qualified unemployed Serbian citizens who could work before hiring a foreigner, should serve the purpose of reducing the domestic unemployment first and foremost. Though these measures may seem to thwart the proclaimed intention of welcoming foreigners, the position the latter group holds in this process is also evolving and improving. For instance, the validity period of the single permit was originally set at 12 months, but it was extended to 36 months through the aforementioned Law amendments. Moreover, employers can hire a larger number of employees through a single procedure (up to 50), with the requirement to provide them with a final employment contract before the issuing of the permit, which adds predictability to the single permit application process. Ultimately, the policies aimed at attracting foreign workers in Serbia are delicately balancing between prioritising domestic employment and accommodating the evolving role of foreign labour, subtly highlighting the complexities in defining and meeting domestic interests or broader economic growth intentions.

25 Government of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *The aim and purpose of Open Balkan*. EUprava. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://euprava.gov.rs/openbalkan/english

26 National Employment Service of the Republic of Serbia. (n.d.). *Employment of foreigners in the Republic of Serbia*. Retrieved October 7, 2024, from https://www.nsz.gov.rs/nsz/employment-of-foreigners-in-the-republic-of-serbia/11181

27 A work visa is a D visa type issued for the purpose of work. This visa allows individuals to stay and work in Serbia for a maximum period of 180 days, in which case a person does not need to obtain a work permit. If one wants to stay longer and continue with the same employment, application for a single permit for temporary residence and work is necessary, see more information here, on the trial version of the Welcome to Serbia website.

28 The Law on Foreigners, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 24/2018, 31/2019, 62/2023, https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/24/1/reg

Good Practices from the EU: Skilled Immigration Act and Further Development of Skilled Immigration Act from Germany

Every migrant can bring different skills and professional contributions to a foreign country. With this awareness in mind, Germany has introduced the Skilled Immigration Act in 2020, followed by the Further Development of Skilled Immigration Act in 2024.29 In other words, as Federal Labor Minister Hubertus Heil explained, "with the Skilled Immigration Act, [Germany is] laying the foundation for a modern immigration country that not only accepts qualified immigration, but also wants it".30 These new laws greatly simplify the visa and residence application process for specific groups of professionally and academically skilled workers, including IT and healthcare specialists, as well as entrepreneurs. On the one hand, these regulations allow for a regulated migration flow that can respond to Germany's job market needs. On the other hand, they recognised the professional competences of certain groups of workers, motivating them to settle in Germany and enrich the country with their expertise. Looking at Serbia, assessing the state of the job market and incentivising the migration of professionals critical to Serbia's needs could benefit in planning or redesigning policies related to foreign workers in the future.

Moving closer to address the highlighted challenges will not only enable a smoother journey for foreign citizens when moving to Serbia but will also open opportunities for more collaboration and diversification domestically.

A Journey of Barriers and Breakthroughs: What Are the Ways Forward?

The analysis of Serbia's services for foreigners, presented in this brief, converges on three lessons. First, it has shown that the success of public services lies not merely in their existence, but in their ability to effectively reach and address the needs of a variety of users. This applies to the eGovernment portal, which features challenges such as the unequal coordination with Serbian embassies and consulates in informing users about services, and to the Welcome to Serbia website, which is currently available in two distinct versions. Secondly, the analysis has uncovered that tailoring services plays a crucial role in effective delivery. While the Welcome to Serbia website already has tools that respond to the situations of different foreign nationals, some issues in adapting information to these diverse audiences persist. Thirdly, it was noticed that periodically reviewing policies can be beneficial to achieve desired policy results, but also broader country goals. The introduction of a single permit for working and residing, and recent changes to the Law on Foreigners in Serbia, is an example of redesigning approaches to attract more foreign workforce; however, it also highlights this is not straightforward as it intertwines with balancing between domestic and foreign labour demand. Overall, moving closer to address the highlighted challenges will not only enable a smoother journey for foreign citizens when moving to Serbia but will also open opportunities for more collaboration and diversification domestically.

29 Federal Government of Germany. (2024, September 17). *The Skilled Immigration Act*. Work in Germany. https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act

30 Federal Government of Germany. (2024). *Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz | Bundesregierung*. Die Bundesregierung Informiert | Startseite. https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/arbeit-und-soziales/fachkraefteeinwanderungsgesetz-2182168

The evidence so far presented paves the way to bettering public services for foreign nationals coming to Serbia. Achieving improvements is certainly not a simple process, but rather a complex one, that requires time and resources. This brief not only aimed to describe main developments and challenges, but also to move towards solutions through suggesting the following policy recommendations:

- Regarding the eConsulate service, foreign nationals should be offered standardised information and appointment options for any diplomatic or consular mission selected online. This could be achieved, for example, by sharing updated guidelines on service delivery to embassies and consulates.
- Periodic technical checks should be performed on the eGovernment portal to allow seamless access to services, such as the eForeigner.
- Users should have the possibility to access only one, comprehensive version of the Welcome to Serbia website.
- Given the different policies in place towards different countries' nationals, the Government of Serbia should consider providing tailored support as part of the Welcome to Serbia website.
- The online application for visas and residence permits, through the same website, could better serve users by providing more user-friendly explanations, such as step-by-step instructions for filling out documents, and templates for preparing and submitting them.
- This website could also feature additional support tools, including an easily accessible email address, phone number and virtual assistant.
- Finally, the Welcome to Serbia website should facilitate users' feedback, for example by featuring a dedicated form where users can rate their experience and identify what could be further improved.

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The Law on Foreigners, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 24/2018, 31/2019, 62/2023, https://pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2018/24/1/reg

About European Policy Centre - CEP

European Policy Centre - CEP is a non-governmental, non-profit, independent think tank, based in Belgrade. It was founded by a group of professionals in the areas of EU law, EU affairs, economics and public administration reform, with a shared vision of changing the policy making environment in Serbia for the better – by rendering it more evidence based, more open and inclusive and more substantially EU accession driven. Profound understanding of EU policies and the accession process, the workings of the Serbian administration, as well as strong social capital combine to create a think-tank capable of not only producing high quality research products but also penetrating the decision making arena to create tangible impact. Today, CEP organises its work into four programme areas:

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2) Internal Market and Competitiveness
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4) Our Europe

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Supporting Other Employees in Their Research Activities: Mapping Information for a Study on the Impacts of External Actors on the Western Balkan Countries (Economy Dimension Not Required)

Grid of the index

Targeted country: Bosnia and Herzegovina

External Actor: Turkey

Element of analysis	Year	Qualitative assessment or numerical value	Sources of evidence (links to documents, analyses, speeches, etc.)	Assigned indicator value (0-3)
POLITICAL-SECURITY DIMENSION				
Bilateral and multilateral platforms				
Level of bilateral partnership	2013	Personalised diplomacy: 'Erdogan's personal relations with Vucic, Thaçi, Bosnian leader Bakir Izetbegovic, and Albanian prime minister Edi Rama form the backbone of the newest phase of Turkey's outreach in the Western Balkans'.	https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-with-the-balkan-region.en.mfa https://ecfr.eu/publication/from_myth_to_reality_how_to_understand_turkeys_role_in_the_western_balkans/	
	2018			
	2023			
Participation in Russia/China/Turkey-led multilateral political initiatives	2013	2013: Trilateral summit: Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Results: reinforcing friendship between the three countries, and supporting each other in regional projects such as the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECP), and supranational projects such as joining the EU.	https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-serbia-trilateral-summit.en.mfa https://www.mfa.gov.tr/ankara-summit-declaration-adopted-at-the-conclusion-of-turkey-_-bosnia-herzegovina-_-serbia-	
	2018			
	2023			

		July 2019, the President of Turkey visited Bosnia and Herzegovina to attend the summit of the South-East European Cooperation Process.	trilateral-summit_-15-may-2013_-ankara.en.mfa https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-000908_EN.html	
Bilateral high-level visits	2013 2018 2023	2015: Erdogan visits Sarajevo + visit meant to reinforce ties with Bosnian Muslim party. 2021: Bosnia and Herzegovina's presidential council visited Turkey. Again, the government officials praised cooperation with Turkey, and foresee constant increase of partnerships in the future. September 2024: latest meeting, closed doors.	https://balkaninsight.com/2015/05/20/turkish-president-erdogan-visits-bosnia-s-capital/ https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/bosnian-presidential-councils-visit-to-enhance-ties-with-turkey https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/turkiye-will-continue-to-stand-with-bosnia-and-herzegovina https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240914-turkish-president-erdogan-meets-with-head-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina-presidency-in-istanbul/	
Internal politics				

Relations with political parties	2013 2018 2023	The relationship between Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina became stronger as the AKP obtained power. First, focus on ties between the AKP party and Bosnia's nationalist SDA party (President Erdoğan and Bakir Izetbegović). Then, also connections with other leaders: Erdogan has ties with Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb leader.	https://kirj.ee/wp-content/plugins/kirj/pub/TRAMES-1-2024-3-21_20240225192917.pdf	
Parliamentarian cooperation	2013 2018 2023	2012: strong connections between parliaments are identified as key in promoting good economic relations between countries, allowing for enterprises to easily invest, as well as movement of people through tourism. 2024: ‘ “Türkiye considers it a mutual responsibility to increase bonds of fraternity and friendship, as well as inter-parliamentary cooperation with Bosnia-Herzegovina,” Numan Kurtulmuş told Marinko Cavara, the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s House of Representatives, during talks on bilateral ties, Balkan developments, the Russia-Ukraine war and Israel’s war on Gaza.’	https://www.parlament.ba/Publication/Read/2767?title=delegacija-predstavnickog-doma-zvanicno-se-sastala-se-sa-predsjednikom-parlamenta-r-turske-&pageId=238&lang=en https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/future-of-balkans-lies-in-cooperation-turkish-parliament-speaker	
Election interference	2013 2018 2023	June 2018: Erdogan is present in rallies and meets with political leaders before the elections.	https://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-erdogan-rallies-supporters-in-bosnia-herzegovina-ahead-of-elections/a-43861792 https://balkaninsight.com/2018/05/20/erdogan-sarajevo-rally-is-the-sign-of-his-great-victo	

		Further visits and support: ‘Erdogan’s visit to BiH was an element of his support for Izetbegović and his Party of Democratic Action (SDA) ahead of the general election held on 9 October 2022’	ry-in-coming-elections-05-20-2018/ https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2022-11-22/bromance-turkeys-activity-western-balkans	
Legislative interference	2013			
	2018			
	2023	New amendments against foreign espionage: ‘influence agent law’. This law also targets civil society organisations and journalists, leading to threats to freedom of expression and free press.	https://balkaninsight.com/2024/05/09/turkeys-foreign-influence-agent-law-alarms-media-civil-society/ https://medyanews.net/new-bill-proposal-in-turkey-dubbed-foreign-influence-agent-law-targets-free-press/	
Military sphere				
Military cooperation	2013	Projects to increase military cooperation.	https://www.azernews.az/region/231251.html	
	2018			
	2023	2023: signed Bilateral Military Cooperation Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Turkey.	https://avaz.ba/english/news/852649/bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-turkey-sign-bilateral-cooperation-plan-for-2023	
Military presence	2013	Stable: 2020, 250 Turkish forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina (means 250 men or troops?)	https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352778999_Turke	

	2018 2023	2004: 242 troops.	y_as_a_regional_security_actor_in_the_Black_Sea_the_Mediterranean_and_the_Levant_Region https://www.cats-network.eu/topics/visualizing-turkeys-foreign-policy-activism/excursus-turkeys-military-engagement-abroad	
Arms trade	2013 2018 2023	In 2013, Bosnia and Herzegovina exported weapons to Turkey for a value of 2.038.292 euros. In 2019, Bosnia and Herzegovina exported weapons to Turkey for a value of 9.637.482 euros. Turkey exported to Bosnia and Herzegovina arms and ammunition, parts and accessories for a value of US$2.93 Million during 2023 In 2013, exports from Turkey to Bosnia were ?? I found world bank data, but it is not clear.	https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/seesac_regional_report_on_arms_exports_in_2013.pdf https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/regional_report_2019.pdf https://tradingeconomics.com/bosnia-herzegovina/imports/turkey/arms-ammunition-parts-accessories https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPRT.KD?end=2022&locations=TR&start=1980&view=chart	
Foreign policy				

CFSP alignment in relation to Russia/China/Turkey	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Involvement in the pursuit of key national interests (e.g. EU/NATO membership, territorial integrity, etc.) - contestation or support	2013	Recently, Turkey is using the difficulties that Bosnia and Herzegovina is encountering in accessing the EU as an instrument to portray itself as a better option. Why join the EU, when you can have a great alliance with Turkey?	https://www.kosovo-online.com/en/news/politics/hoti-turkey-strengthening-its-influence-kosovo-and-bosnia-and-herzegovina-using	
	2018			
	2023			
ECONOMIC DIMENSION				
Trade and investment relations				
The official level of economic/trade partnership	2013		https://balkaninsight.com/2015/12/11/bosnia-s-presidency-visit-to-turkey-highlights-ankara-role-in-bosnia-12-10-2015/	
	2018			
	2023			
Foreign Direct Investments - FDI inflows	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Foreign Direct Investments - FDI Stock	2013			
	2018			
	2023			

Trade Intensity (goods and services trade) - Imports	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Trade Intensity (goods and services trade) - Exports	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Strategic economic dependence				
Strategic assets ownership	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Energy dependence	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Official Foreign Debt	2013			
	2018			
	2023			
Presence of foreign firms	2013			
	2018			
	2023			

SOCIETAL DIMENSION				
Mobility and connectivity				
Diaspora	2013 2018 2023	Policies towards the diaspora were activated more under the AKP government. Rooted in the Millî Görüş movement that was active in diaspora for decades helped AKP to strengthen diaspora policies. Other target groups were the Turks that traditionally live in the Balkans and Cyprus. Especially the wellbeing of the Turks in the Balkans became an important foreign policy agenda of the Özal government when a concept of Dış Türkler8 started taking shape. With the end of the Cold War Turkey will extend Turkic peoples and other Muslim communities in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus to the concept of “Overseas Turks and therelative communities.	https://www.tdbb.org.tr/tdbb/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Jahja-Muhasilovic-11022021-internet-icin.pdf p. 214	
		2010, foundation of YTB, Turkish agency for diaspora. Agency reformed in 2018.	https://ytb.gov.tr/en/corporate/presidency-for-turks-abroad-and-related-communities	
		Over his time in power, Erdogan has focused a lot of diaspora. The goal is influencing people abroad to vote.	https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/PB_UNDERSTANDING_TURKIS	

		What is the percentage of Turkish immigrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina? I could not find recent data.	H_DIASPORA_POLITICS_Febr2021.pdf https://www.dailysabah.com/turkiye/education/bosnias-turkish-graduates-gather-for-reunion-in-sarajevo	
Visa Requirement	2013 2018 2023	2014: citizens of Turkey are exempted from the obligation to obtain a visa for entry, exit, and transit and stay on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina up to 90 days within the six month period from the date of first entry: Same situation also in the years after 2014. Erdogan 'also stated that in the near future, Turkish citizens will be able to travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina using just an ID card.'	https://www.mvp.gov.ba/konzularne_informacije/sta_konzul_moze_uciniti_za_vas/DECISION%20ON%20VISAS%20%20-%2018.12.2014.pdf https://embassies.net/bosnia-and-herzegovina-visa-for-turkey-citizens#google_vignette https://www.azernews.az/region/231251.html	
Tourism	2013 2018 2023	'Billboards advertise round-trip flights to Istanbul for the equivalent of $75' No data available from the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina for years before 2017. In 2018, 7.4% of tourists were from Turkey and Turkish tourists were the third most numerous group after Croatians and Serbs (39,532 tourists). For Turkish people, the average number of nights after arrival was 1.7.	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/02/bosnia-turkey-ottoman-influence-balkans-sarajevo https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325217271_Perceptions_of_Turkish_Cultural_Diplomacy_in_Bosnia-Herzegovina p. 494 - 507	

		In 2023, 7.6% of tourists were from Turkey. The total number of Turkish tourists was 95.852 and the average number of nights after arrival was 1.4.	https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopstenja/2018/TUR_02_2018_06_0_EN.pdf https://bhas.gov.ba/data/Publikacije/Saopstenja/2023/TUR_02_2023_08_1_EN.pdf	
Education/student exchanges	2013 2018 2023	'The biggest outposts in Bosnia have been the two Turkish-backed universities, which have mostly Turkish student bodies.'	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/apr/02/bosnia-turkey-ottoman-influence-balkans-sarajevo https://www.meb.gov.tr/education-cooperation-between-turkey-and-bosnia-herzegovina/haber/9986/en https://balkaninsight.com/2018/04/18/turkey-welcomes-albanian-and-bosnian-language-classes-in-schools-04-18-2018/	
Local/provincial government partnership, city twinning	2013 2018 2023	According to Wikipedia, there are 55 Turkish sister cities in Bosnia. Same report also from the website Everything Explained Today. References on the two websites are from years 2019, 2020, so recent.	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_twin_towns_and_sister_cities_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina http://www.enjoyed.today/List_of_twin_towns_and_sister_cities_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina/	
Cultural and informational sphere				

Foreign media presence and influence	2013 2018 2023	2011: Turkish television series and movies are spreading abroad, especially in the WB and middle east, but ‘according to AKP deputy from Istanbul Halide Incekara, Turkish TV series don't represent the Turkish family and morals. "The TV series hurt the image of Turkey abroad as they are so full of corrupt storylines and unacceptable behaviours," she tells SETimes.’ 2014: the Anadolu Agency, Turkish state-run news agency, opened a new office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representatives of the agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still active today. 2023: Also, Turkish companies pay Bosnian television.	https://www.academia.edu/6367667/The_soft_power_of_Turkish_Television https://www.aa.com.tr/en/corporate-news/anadolu-agency-albanian-service-marks-5th-anniversary/1598904 https://www.dw.com/en/how-a-turkish-industrial-firm-expands-to-bosnian-propaganda/a-67769270	
The presence of foreign cultural centres	2013 2018 2023	2024: Turkish is the most spoken second language in Bosnia. Over the years, increased activities of the Yunus Emre Institute’s (YEE) centres.	https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/yee-holds-press-talks-in-bosnia-serbia-to-improve-media-cooperation/news https://www.turkiyetoday.com/world/turkish-most-spoken-foreign-language-in-bosnia-12299/	

Religious bonds and cooperation	2013 2018 2023	‘ Furthermore the Turkish development agency TIKA is active in almost all Western Balkan countries, but places special focus on Muslim communities. For instance, TIKA has participated in the renovation of Islamic heritage sites such as mosques, bridges and fountains across the region, and especially in BiH.’	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2017/607300/EPRS_ATA%282017%29607300_EN.pdf	
Public perceptions				
Perception/Public Opinion (on cooperation benefits, on donation intensity, on global influence, on leader popularity, donor perception)	2013 2018 2023	2017: Gallup International survey: In Bosnia Herzegovina, 61% of the people are in favour of Erdogan, 29% against. 2018: Bosnia and Herzegovina’s population is divided about Turkey: ‘While a slim majority of Bosniaks surveyed in IRI’s poll considered Turkey Bosnia’s greatest ally, only 13 percent of Bosnian Croats and 5 percent of Bosnian Serbs agreed. Likewise, while 76 percent of Bosniaks said Turkey’s role in the country was a positive one, only 39 percent of Bosnian Croats and 28 percent of Bosnians Serbs see Turkey’s role positively.’ 2024 regional survey in the Balkans: in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 61% of the respondents favoured Erdoğan,	https://www.gallup-international.com/fileadmin/user_upload/surveys_and_news/2017/2017_Global-Leaders.pdf https://www.iri.org/news/iri-bosnia-poll-cited-by-foreign-policy/ https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/erdogan-named-western-balkans-most-admired-leader	

Supporting Other Employees in Their Research Activities: Briefing on Cluster 2 and 3 of the Accession Process

Cluster 2: Internal market

What is Cluster 2 and why is it important?

Cluster two entails the entrance of candidate countries in the EU Single Market. Opening the chapters within this cluster is the way forward to unlock the four freedoms established through the EU Single Market: free movement of goods, people, services and capital. Practically, it can imply the possibility of using the Internet and making phone calls at lower rates when travelling. It can also mean receiving packages quickly by reducing customs procedures, and having one's educational qualification recognized across a variety of job markets.

Summits and decisions related to the cluster's chapters

- Common Regional Market has so far led to four agreements: Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, Freedom of Movement with Identity Cards, Recognition of Professional Qualifications for Doctors of Medicine, Dentists and Architects, Recognition of the professional qualifications of nurses, veterinarians, pharmacists and midwives.

  (Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4)

  - The Berlin Process Summit on 16 October 2023, held for the first time in the region (in Tirana), saw progress in the Common Regional Market, with the signature of the Agreement on recognition for professional qualifications for midwives, vets, nurses and pharmacists and a number of joint statements related to regional cooperation.

- Meeting of the European Political Community (Moldova 1 June 2023)
  Connectivity and mobility in Europe: leaders will focus on how to make the European continent more interconnected. The roundtable on this point will include discussions on infrastructure and electricity, but also on strengthening and expanding exchange programmes for students or civil servants.

  (Chapters 1 and 2)

Case Study on the Progress of Candidate Countries: Albania and North Macedonia

October 2022: Screening of Internal Market cluster as part of negotiations process kicks off with Albania and North Macedonia.
November and December 2023: last screening meetings, revising progress on all the clusters. The Commission presents to the Council the screening report on cluster 1 (Fundamentals) and the Council communicates the conditions for the opening of this cluster (benchmarks), specifically relating to public administration reform. The Commission will assess the fulfilment of the benchmarks.
October 2024: Albania opens cluster 1. Plans are to open all the clusters and join the EU by 2030.

Serbia and Cluster 2

Monitoring Progress

- November 2021, Serbia 2021 Report
  "**Progress** was made on legislative alignment on **company law, freedom of movement for workers and the establishment and freedom to provide services**. However, **no progress** was made in the areas of **free movement of capital, financial services, and consumer and health protection**".
- November 2022, Serbia 2022 Report
  "**Progress was achieved in several areas within the cluster**, particularly on legislative alignment on company law; freedom of movement for workers through coordination of social security systems; and legislative alignment on the free movement of goods".
- November 2023, Serbia 2023 Report.
  "**Progress was limited** in most areas within the cluster. **No progress** was registered in the area of **free movement of capital**".

Overall: a good level of preparation is achieved only for Chapters 6 (company law) and 7 (intellectual property law). Work is needed on Chapters 1 to 4 (the four freedoms) and on Chapter 8 (competition), Chapter 9 (financial services), and Chapter 28 (consumer protection)

Main Recommendations from the Commission (2023 Report)

- Adopt action plan to ensure compliance with Articles 34-36 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and a strategy and action plan for implementing the acquis on free movement of goods;
- Enhance cooperation with EU Member States on coordination of social security systems;
- Liberalise capital movements in line with obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA);
- Aligning the existing fiscal State aid schemes with the EU acquis and improving the track record in the area of competition and State aid;
- Continue to align the banking regulation with the revised versions of the Capital Requirements Regulation and the Capital Requirements Directive (CRR/CRD);
- Further aligning with the EU consumer protection and health protection acquis, including on substances of human origin, tobacco and medicines for human and veterinary use.

Further Recommendations

- **Thinking locally**: progress on the chapters does not happen everywhere in the same way. This does not only mean that recommendations need to be tailored based on the Serbian context, but that their implementation needs to account for regional disparities and differences.
  - Example > rail and road transportation: can goods, services and people travel easily from and to all Serbian regions? Is it easier for someone who lives in Belgrade to connect with EU countries than for someone who doesn't?
- **Thinking globally**: Serbia has economic ties with countries outside the EU as well, and these connections should be carefully evaluated when planning accession.
  - Example: complying with EU standards on the circulation of goods implies that some products cannot be imported anymore. What are the geopolitical implications of this? Will Serbia's relationship with foreign countries change negatively after complying with EU guidelines?

Cluster 3: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth

What is Cluster 3 and why is it important?

This cluster encompasses milestones such as digital transition, scientific research, enterprise and industrial policy, as well as social policy topics, including employment and education. The chapters in this cluster also ensure the establishment of practical strategies towards the achievement of these goals, by ensuring the empowerment of custom unions, and fair taxation and monetary policies. Ultimately, the ethos behind competitiveness and inclusive growth is the one of leaving no one behind, because growth does not automatically mean societal progress and wellbeing when it is not fairly distributed.

Summits and decisions related to the cluster's chapters

- April 2024: Agreement on the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans: The amount of funds for 2024-2027 is set at €6 billion (€2 billion in grants and €4 billion in highly concessional loans). These resources will be used for infrastructure investments and connectivity, including transport, energy, green and digital transitions. The rest will be allocated to countries' national budgets.

  (Chapter 10, 19 25, and 26)

  - The Agreement was officially approved by the Commission on October 23, 2023

- October 2024: The European Union, EDFI Management Company and the European Development Finance Institutions have jointly created the EDFI MSME Platform Plus Programme, which will provide critical support for job creation, and economic growth for micro, small, and medium enterprises particularly in the manufacturing, supply chain, and agriculture sectors in regions including the Western Balkans.

  (Chapter 19 and 20)

Other initiatives and meetings: education, digital transition in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Case Study on the Progress of Candidate Countries: Moldova

- After several years of oligarchic rule, in 2020 a new government is formed, pro-EU and reformist. This is an opportunity for the country to effectively transition towards democracy.
- In a 2022 Opinion, the Commission sets key areas that Moldova needs to improve before the pre-accession talks begin. Moldova's situation concerning Cluster 3 is evaluated as follows:
  - "Moldova has achieved **particularly good results in the area of customs**, with new legislation to counter smuggling and import tax evasion, and to increase customs investigations and agreed with the EU a Mutual Recognition of Authorised Economic Operators programmes. The new Customs Code that will enter into force in 2023 is aligned with the Union Customs Code, with a few exceptions. **Moldova's association to Horizon Europe is a successful instrument for integration with the EU's practices in the field of research and innovation**".
- In the Report on Moldova (November 2023), the Commission seems to put emphasis on good progress achieved in this area. The Council also commends Moldova's progress.

Question: is this progress a consequence of the new enlargement enthusiasm? Will the energy and efforts be kept consistent, especially given the upcoming elections?

Serbia and Cluster 3

Monitoring Progress

- November 2021, Serbia 2021 Report
  "**Progress** was achieved in some of the areas under this cluster, particularly in the area of **taxation**, through removing the discrimination in taxation of imported alcohol; **social policy and employment**, through aligning further with the EU acquis; **industrial policy**, through adoption of an action plan for the implementation of the industrial strategy; s**cientific and technological development**, via adoption of a new strategy for 2021-2025; and in the area of **education**, through modernising the academic curricula and rendering the national qualifications framework operational. ".
- November 2022, Serbia 2022 Report
  "Progress was achieved in […] the area of **social policy and employment** through taking steps towards establishing the Youth Guarantee scheme; **economic and monetary policy** through improving the budget process; **enterprise industrial policy** through adoption of an action plan for the strategy on state ownership and management of business entities owned by the Republic of Serbia [...]; **scientific and technological development** through adoption of the new strategy for development of the start-up ecosystem; and in the area of **education**, through taking some steps towards ensuring compliance of the quality assurance system in higher education with the [EU] recommendations [...]".
- November 2023, Serbia 2023 Report"
  "Progress was achieved in all of the areas under this cluster"
  AND: The Commission's assessment remains that Serbia has technically fulfilled the benchmarks to open cluster 3 (Competitiveness and inclusive growth).

A Standstill?

- During a CEP Conference, the idea is that Serbia is ready to open a new cluster: Tanja Miščević, Serbian Minister of European Integration, explains that Serbia is ready to open cluster 3, and that it is working hard on reforms and maintaining dialogue with Priština.

- At the same time, President Vucic said that "I don't believe we are going to be a part of the European Union in 2028" and that "it's not going to happen [EU membership], I don't lie to my people."

Further suggestions

- More **coherence** among the Serbian institutions.
- It is important that **neither Serbia nor the EU waste this opportunity** of hope and renewed enthusiasm that opening a new cluster would bring to Serbian citizens and public opinion.
- An analysis into what are the **factors** (economic, political, social, etc.) **that may hinder cooperation** should be performed. For example, consider whether Serbia's relationships with China and Russia may be a factor.

Sharing Insights from My Country and Background: Presentation on the Meloni Government

Meloni

‘ONE OF THE PEOPLE’

Ludovica Daffini
European Policy Centre Intern
26 September, 2024

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

AGENDA

- How We Got Where We Are
- Who Is Giorgia?
- The 2022 Elections
- Parliamentary Address, Sept. 2022
- The EU and Enlargement
- Meloni in the Bigger Picture
- Q&A on Enlargement

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

HOW WE GOT WHERE WE ARE

- **Anti-communism** = red tread of right-wing parties during the ‘First Republic’ (1946 - 1994)
- The ‘Second Republic’ (1994 onwards): **Berlusconi** as the main right-wing political character in a context of **bipolarism**.
- 2011: bipolarism ends > emergence of new leaders:
  - 5 Star Movement (antipolitical populism)
  - Draghi and Monti (technocracy)
  - Lega, Brothers of Italy (nationalism)

(Castellani, 2022)

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FRATELLI d’ITALIA
CENTRODESTRA NAZIONALE

(Castellani, 2022)

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

WHO IS GIORGIA?

- **Personalized party** = small political entourage + massive presence in rallyes and talk shows as the face of the party + her name in the party's symbol.

(Ventura, 2022)
(Meloni, 2021)

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

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  - Support for **fascist heritage**
  - **Conservative**: 'God, motherland, family' ('Dio, patria, famiglia')

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(Meloni, 2021)

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

THE 2022 ELECTIONS

- 2013 onwards: general **dissatisfaction** of the electorate due to high levels of political instability.
  - High abstention rates (36.1 per cent)
  - Decreased support for mainstream parties
  - Increased support for the opposition
- **Weak** proposals from the **Left**
  - Unlike the Right, the Left cannot form a party coalition

(Donà, 2023)

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Meloni's victory ahead

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PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESS, SEPT. 2022: THE CHALLENGES

Migration crisis

Energy crisis + inflation + public debt

EU relationships

(Meloni, 2022)

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PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESS, SEPT. 2022: THE SOLUTIONS

Migration crisis → naval blockade for irregular migrants + support for refugees

Energy crisis + inflation + public debt

EU relationships

(Meloni, 2022)

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PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESS, SEPT. 2022: THE SOLUTIONS

Migration crisis → naval blockade for irregular migrants + support for refugees

Energy crisis + inflation + public debt → boost growth through supporting families and made in italy + spend wisely the Next Generation EU funds.

EU relationships

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PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESS, SEPT. 2022: THE SOLUTIONS

Migration crisis → naval blockade for irregular migrants + support for refugees

Energy crisis + inflation + public debt → boost growth through supporting families and made in italy + spend wisely the Next Generation EU funds.

EU relationships → Prioritize the bigger issues (energy crisis, migration crisis, terrorism)

(Meloni, 2022)

EUROPEAN POLICY CENTRE

MELONI: THE EU AND ENLARGEMENT

'Obviously, I am not unaware of the curiosity and interest in the position that the Government will take towards the European institutions or, even better, I would say within the European institutions, because that is the place where Italy will make its voice heard, as befits a ***great founding nation****. Not to slow down or sabotage European integration, as I have sometimes heard said, even in recent weeks, but to help direct it towards greater effectiveness in responding to* ***crises and external threats*** *and towards an approach* ***closer to citizens and businesses****.'*

(Meloni, 2022)

- Nationalism
- Populistic rhetoric: 'the outside'
- Populistic rhetoric: 'the people'

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MELONI: THE EU AND ENLARGEMENT

'To be clear, we do not conceive of the European Union as ***an elitist club****, with first-class members and second-class members or, worse, as* ***a joint-stock company managed by a board of directors****, with the sole task of keeping the accounts in order.'*

(Meloni, 2022)

- Populistic rhetoric: 'the greedy élites'
- Populistic rhetoric: 'the technocratic élites'

MELONI: THE EU AND ENLARGEMENT

'For us, the European Union is the common home of the European peoples and, as such, it must be able to face the great ***challenges of our time****, starting with* ***those that the Member States can hardly face alone****. I am thinking of trade agreements of course, but also of the supply of raw materials and energy, migration policies, geopolitical choices, the fight against terrorism, great challenges for which the European Union has not always been ready.'*

= No Euroscepticism?

= Deepening first, enlargement later

(Meloni, 2022)

(Brotman, 2022)

(Cameron, 2023)

MELONI IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

Migration crisis → **Strengthening political consensus within Italy**

Energy crisis + inflation + public debt → **Managing Italy's economy and its weaknesses**

EU relationships → **Forming European alliances.**

(Bastasin, 2024)

MELONI IN THE BIGGER PICTURE

Strengthening political consensus within Italy

- 'Premierato'.
- Decreasing support for the government.

Managing Italy's economy and its weaknesses

- Economic growth.
- Key role of EU funds.

Forming European alliances.

- Success in European Elections
- Sidelining by European leaders

(Bastasin, 2024)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ENLARGEMENT

1. How can Meloni oppose enlargement if she has no prominent role in the EU?
2. 'One of the people': what do the people say?
3. What do *you* think, from a Serbian perspective?

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THANK YOU!

Any feedback?

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