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The transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe

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I. Introduction

In the contemporary globalizing world the meanings of all political, geographical and cultural definitions are incessantly changing, as fast as the speed of the modern informational stream is running. Long created concepts and fictional borders are being preconfigured in a period of several years, not to speak of the changes that happen in the course of one human’s lifetime. Often some assumptions that in the past have long brought negative connotations are now rapidly changing through the flow of information into neutral or even positive notions. This reinvention of the old is particularly applicable to the European history, which has often looked at the past as a source of long forgotten truth and enlightenment. This is also the fate of the modern-day supranational union, which most of the European countries have achieved in the past sixtyish years. The European Union (EU) is perhaps one of the most multicultural and diverse political entities that are present on the Earth. Today the motto of the EU is “United in diversity” which suggests the polymorphic character of the Union. However, that diversity provokes a constant need for change and transformation of the European assumptions and comprehensions, which by their side are following the search for European culture, supplemented by a new powerful identity that could unite all of the EU citizens. The currently ongoing transition of the Balkan region into Southeastern Europe is indicative for the abovementioned tendency.

1. Outline of the main argument

Reconstructing and unifying is the role of the following work as well. It searches for the European concepts and ways of imagination for one particular region located on the Old continent, which has become infamous for its unique and often contradictive features. The work digs deeper into the transition through which the countries on the Balkan Peninsula are currently moving towards their future as the Southeastern part of Europe. The work tests why and by whom the Balkan region has been transformed into a common European place on the one hand and why it has internally reconsidered itself as an area possessing common features, which could serve for nothing but a unity and co-operation on the other hand. In that sense, there are two analytical approaches that this thesis is taking up. First of all, it re-examines the literature on the Balkan cultural characteristics and especially those two separate and contradictive concepts labelled as Balkan metaphor and Balkan historical legacy. Secondly, it deals with the political processes of institutional transition and regional co-operation. In that regard the thesis
tests its main hypothesis about the transition of the assumptions for the Balkans, both internally and externally. The main problem posed by this paper is related to the past problematic apprehension of the Balkans and their subsequent positive reinvention in the present. Throughout the next chapters the work asks the question whether the Balkans are reinvented as the Southeastern part of Europe and why this reinvention was needed and furthermore by whom and for what purpose it was initiated?

The thesis commences with historical introduction, and builds its arguments on the understanding that during their long history of division, the Southeast European countries have always been part of an interdependent system of co-operation and conflicts. Their intertwined heritage has always been characterised by “geographical unity and a unity imposed by history.”¹ Later on, the work continues into the debate about the identities of the Balkan region and explores the possible variants for regional definitions. The next chapters of the main body are attributed to the historical legacy of Southeastern Europe, which is seen as composed by demographic and cultural elements. Finally, the work explores the political transition of the region, which is accompanied by its cultural reinvention. The subsequent Master thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach and tries to mix the identity and historical legacy debates with the current developments that are moving further the modern-day European Union agenda.

2. Justification

The following work represents an attempt to combine several theories that belong to a common academic school and scientific background and to apply them for the analysis of one particular region in Europe. The thesis maintains the interdisciplinary spirit of the Erasmus Mundus Master in “Euroculture – Europe in the wider world”, whilst simultaneously remains in the narrow sight of the regional studies. The Master thesis bases its research on a problem defined within the contemporary European context (20th and 21st century) and even within the context of the very present events that are happening in the meantime. Furthermore, the work deals with one topic, which could be closely related to the academic field of the Euroculture studies. Namely, the paper encompasses areas associated with academic disciplines such as the European culture, history, politics, foreign relations, and the European integration. Apart from the interdisciplinary character of the thesis, this study is a

reflection of the observations and the research which the author has realised during the past several years. The Master work is based on a previously written paper that was presented during the annual Euroculture intensive programme (IP) 2011, conducted under the title “Europe – Space for transcultural existence”, and placed at the Georg-August University of Göttingen, Germany. Moreover, it is an expression of the observations which the author have gathered during his educational experiences both in the region of Southeastern Europe and later as part of the Euroculture Master programme. The availability of several points of view and the close knowledge of the study object have contributed to one master thesis which tries to be both objective and concrete as much as possible.

3. Theoretical framework

The perspective of the work is indebted to the Southeast European Studies (the relatively recent name of the Balkan studies) and follows their modern trends and specificities. It includes elements of the historiographic analysis, culture and identity studies, linguistics and undoubtedly political science (particularly the Europeanization and transition discourse). Since the work is dealing with built up terms and concepts and their analysis, it might be attributed to the social constructivism school and its contributions to the theoretical debate in the international relations. The social constructivism implies the importance of the meaningful action of both agent and observer and requires the profound knowledge of these actors. That is why the following work is focused on problematizing the social context of identities and interests expressed both by actor and acting observer. Furthermore, exactly this school of thought is the main theoretical framework, within which the Euroculture Master at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands is working. That is also the place where the author has initiated this Master thesis research.

The subsequent work is also focused on the studies done by the professor at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Maria Todorova and especially her Balkanism theory of actor-observer relations that exist between the Balkans and the West. It has been acknowledged that few scholars of the Southeast European problematic can ignore Todorova’s studies, precisely because they provide the

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framework of how to imagine and analyse the Balkans. The Balkanism theory analyses the system of images based on the historical perception of the Balkans by the Western world, arguing that the notions Balkan and Balkanism, may not be separated from the history of the region.

This theory argues that the Balkan stigma is rooted in the Western perception for the Balkans since the late 19th century. The Balkanism theory searches the answer of how the West constructed the Balkan image through the Orientalist paradigm of the Self and the Other, and how it found that the Balkans are in fact a peculiar zone which contains features of the West and parallel characteristics of the East. In that sense, the image of the Balkans is presented as an unfinished Self, the darker essence of what the Western world has been before. This theoretical concept clearly falls into the social constructivist theoretical school, since precisely this school of thought asks the questions not what are the regional identities, but rather who constructs them, and most importantly for whom and against whom they have been constructed? Professor Maria Todorova claims that the Balkanness is eroded by modernization, Europeanization and the common set of problems in front of which the countries from Southeastern Europe are facing, especially after the fall of the Berlin wall. The Balkanism theory tests the ways in which the essentialist discourses have framed the Balkans and how they have explained their archetypal violence in the late 19th - beginning of the 20th century, as well as during the 1990s.

The Balkanism theoretical analysis implies that the Europeanness is the dominant reference point in the observer-actor relations of the West and the Balkans and this feature has mobilized the Europeanization process. Thereby, it juxtaposes this tendency with the stigma of being Balkan in order to reconceptualise the dynamic connection between the representations of the region from the outside and the local’s self-understanding in relation to Europe. As professor Dimitar Bechev from the University of Oxford supplements: “(...) this (Balkan) stigma emerges a pivotal locus

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communis. At its core is the sense of (...) peripheral location or outright separateness from Europe and the West."\(^6\)

II. Historical background

1. Balkan myths and identities

Recently, the ongoing process of European integration provoked various identity studies, which included intensively the shared memory in the discourse. Some authors even concluded that on the Balkan Peninsula there is too much history per square meter, which revives protracted hatreds and confronts incompatible ethnic and religious identities. In fact, since the beginning of the 19th century Southeastern Europe have witnessed several twists in the national histories. However, only recently the memory became an object of regional studies, and the past commenced to be re-approached as construct and manipulation of memories. Authors started to ask questions such as what the motives behind are and why people hear the selected messages of a particular history in order to understand all of the sudden, that everything has always been there as a part of their national memory. Historians analyzing the major characteristics of the Southeast European region started to regard it as a place, where particular propensity for such myths is present.

These myths included the “golden” pre-Ottoman period, the violent “Turkish yoke”, the national renaissance and the victimization. Indeed, the Southeast European mythology was not that different, when compared to the myths of the Antiquity or the Dark ages in Western Europe, but on the other hand it had specific characteristics that made its profile unmistakable. In Southeastern Europe many factors came together and in their combination they created one multilayered, complicated situation of specific and hardly solvable problems, constructed on various and often contradictory myths. The Southeast European myths were constructed through continuous transmission of cultural and political channels that kindled the fire only at selected periods of time. Since the end of the 19th century these constructions have been built through the media of mainly journalistic works, popular literature and political speeches, starting at the times of the

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German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and his famous speech in front of the Reichstag (1876), where he claimed that “the Balkans were not worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier” and after that continuously been projected until recent times.\textsuperscript{10}

2. Balkan-Balkanization - a short history of one pejorative discourse.

The notion Balkan started slowly to adopt pejorative meanings, since the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire (19\textsuperscript{th} - early 20\textsuperscript{th} century) and the creation of small, unstable and economically underdeveloped national states on its former European territories. The difficulties of their modernization and the supplementary extremes of the nationalism provoked a situation where the notion Balkans commenced to symbolize aggression, intolerance, barbarism, underdevelopment and uncivilized behaviour.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, since the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the term Balkans began to be increasingly used with a politicized connotation, rather than simply in its inceptive geographical meaning.

Through this interdependence of different factors the classic model of what the world has come to know as “Balkanization” was invented. Its first official expression was made after World War I and the subsequent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, in an article issued by the New York Times on 20\textsuperscript{th} December 1918, where the future “Balkanization of Europe” was predicted.\textsuperscript{12} In 1963 when studying the Balkan cultural heritage the historian John C. Campbell summarized the following definition for that term:

...Balkanization - a group of small, unstable and weak states, each based on the idea of nationality in an area in which nation and state could not coincide; all with conflicting territorial claims and with ethnic minorities that had to be assimilated or repressed, driven into unstable and changing alignments among themselves, seeking support from outside powers...and in turn being used by those powers for the latter’s strategic advantage.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Maria Todorova, Imagining the Balkans (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 193-194.
Peter Sugar, American author and a prominent specialist on the region, made a differentiation between the past of Southeast Europe and its subsequent transition into a *Balkanized* area. In 1977 in one of his books he wrote that:

South-eastern Europe became “Balkanized” under Ottoman rule...Ottoman social organisation and the migratory patterns created by the forces that the Ottomans had set in motion were reasonable for the appearance of South-eastern Europe’s major modern international problem: large areas inhabited by ethnically mixed populations.14

The American historian from Herzegovinian origin Wayne Vuchinich (Vojislav Vučinić) went even further stating that:

The importance and consequences of the Ottoman rule has long been a subject of keen interest to Balkan historians as they sought an explanation why their peoples, which were so advanced in the fourteenth century, had since then fallen far behind the rest of Europe. Nearly all historians (here Vuchinich includes authors working on the regional history - G.Finlay, K. Paparrhegopulus, K. Jirecek, E. Driault, S. Stanojevic, F. Sisic, V. Corovic, N.Iorga, V. Zlatarski and P. Mutafchiev) agree that the Ottoman rule had devastating effects on the conquered populations, and that it was primarily responsible for the social lag of the Balkan peoples.

Vuchinich concluded that the interaction between the different ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire created a new civilizational model and the Ottoman influence in the modern-day Balkans is many-sided and its roots are ramified and deep.15

Continuing in the same discourse, Professor Maria Todorova concluded in her book “Imagining the Balkans” (2009) that:

Balkanization not only had come to denote the parcelization of large and viable political units but also had become a synonym for a reversion to the tribal, the backward, the primitive, the barbarian. (...) That the Balkans have been described as the “other” of Europe does not need special proof. What has been emphasized about the Balkans is that its inhabitants do not care to conform to the standards of behaviour devised as normative by and for the civilized world.16

Therefore, many authors considered *Balkanization* to be natural condition for the *Balkan* states by attributing to the *Balkan* people non-peaceful and un-civilized behaviour. As it was mentioned above, these reflections commenced with dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Assumptions of this sort were part of Western European views on

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the region since the nineteen century. Here important source for the creation of the balkanized images were the so called “Bulgarian Horrors” from 1876. By that time five thousand Bulgarian Christians were killed by loyal to the Ottoman sultan Muslim Slavs and Turks. Later on, the images were reinforced by the murder of the King and Queen of Serbia during coup d’état in 1903 and even further strengthened by the numerous victims of the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the two World Wars, which involved significantly the Balkan states. During the Cold war, the Iron Curtain sliced the peninsula through its half and used to separate the region between the two conflicting Blocs, which by its side fed up again the possibilities for regional discord on the basis of old inherited problems. Finally, after 1989 the negative connotations were not forgotten, but quite on the contrary, they were quickly revitalised again, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the wars which succeeded it during the 1990s. There was no denying that violent acts like these were shocking and the Western accounts of these events often easily portrayed them as “Balkan”, “alien”, “other”, “un-European”, and Oriental, nevertheless that similar events happened in the past on the soil of the Western and Central parts of the Old continent as well.17

3. Three transitions in less than a century

Actually, the Yugoslav wars were preceded by a long history of wartime upheavals that had always fateful post-war consequences. The resulting political and economic reconstructions involved enough systematic change to be deservedly called transitions. In fact, the wars surrounding the dissolution of Yugoslavia were not the first transitions of the region. Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and ex-Yugoslavia found themselves within disputed borders after the First World War, re-established anew their countries after the Second World War and put into question their borders immediately after the Communism collapsed18. Thus three separate decades of prolonged military conflicts happened on the Balkan Peninsula during the 20th century. These events never remained isolated by the surrounding powers. Quite on the contrary, the European great powers of every epoch greatly intervened in each conflict situation. The consequent transitions in the Balkans combined political and economic reconstruction with the changing of borders in completely different model of international relations.

The Balkan countries firstly, went through the Versailles settlement of 1919, which consequences were described as the most controversial and regretful in the European history. Secondly, these states fit into the international relations order that followed the Second World War, which was on its side the most fragmented and far reaching so far. Lastly, it was the change of the international order after the end of the Cold-war, when the United States and its Western European allies claimed victory, while the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states slipped either into oblivion or to political and economic confusion. The bipolar Cold war order was destroyed by the events of 1989–1991 without any military conflicts between the two superpowers.\(^{19}\) Alas this was not the case that happened in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. Whereas the wave of Eastern European revolts and political changes reshaped ex-communist countries as Albania, Bulgaria and Romania, most of the western lands of the peninsula turned into the battlefield of the bloodiest military conflicts that Europe had seen since the Second World War.\(^{20}\) The conflicts in Yugoslavia revived internally conflicting ethnocentric memories from the earlier twentieth century and revitalised externally the bad connotations that the notion Balkans produced.

These statements do not pledge for double standards in the evaluation of the Western and Southeastern European past, but come to say that the common shared memory exists only in the imagination of the observers, not the actors. In fact there was never a common, all-embracing “Balkan memory” and therefore there was never a putative “Balkan identity”. During the last couple of centuries, the only state entity that succeeded to unite collective identities of a specific group was the national state. Supranational identities, like the European identity are still in their development phase, and national identities continue to function in opposition to each other. Previously, the common appreciation of the shared cultural legacy has accumulated recognition of certain characteristics of cultural identity, but that reaction was always in order to cope with the Balkan stigma or with self-victimization. The early 19\(^{th}\) century romantic ideas for the creation of Balkan federation, never gave a productive and comprehensive result. Therefore, it is very important to analyze the motivations and the costs of the calls for


the creation of new positive Southeast European identity, which were heard after the bombings in Kosovo (1999). Whether Balkan or Southeast European, should be asked after explaining who does the mapping, for what purpose it has been done and is that the best suitable practice in the concrete situation?

III. Identities and definitions

1. What are the Balkans – name, metaphor or historical legacy?

Before making any all-embracing conclusions, this thesis firstly strives to answer the quintessential questions of “What are the Balkans?” and “Who are the actors in this whole transitional debate?” These relevant questions have the purpose to concretize the basis of the research. First of all, the notion could be seen as a compound *nomen nudum* [“naked (i.e. bare) name” in Latin], which does not possess a single identity. In fact, in comparison with the rather classified notion of Southeastern Europe, the Balkans have at least three different hypostases. Firstly, as a simple noun, the name Balkan etymologically stands for “mountain” or “mountain range”, and was introduced as a term at the time of the Ottoman conquest in the 14th century AD. “Balkan” is also the name in Bulgarian for the *Stara Planina* (i.e. Old Mountain) mountain range which lies almost entirely on the territory of Bulgaria (from the Black sea coast to its Western border with Serbia). In comparison with the other two meanings this was probably the most unproblematic incarnation of the Balkans.

The second hypostasis of the *Balkans* (hitherto and hereafter in italics) is perhaps the most widely known and is used as a negative metaphor. This identity of the region inspired a whole extensive research done on the metaphorical meanings of the notion *Balkans*. This hypostasis reflects the dark side of the *Balkans* – a peculiar symbol which started to gain pejorative meaning amongst the Western world since the 19th century. Thus the *Balkans* commenced to mean aggression, intolerance, barbarianism, under-development etc. This problematic relation forms the basis of the *Balkanism* theory. The region was burdened with the image of a negative, conflict-ridden place, inhabited by backward, uncivilized, irrational and superstitious dwellers.

The *Balkans* were imagined as positioned between Europe and Asia, Habsburg and Ottoman, Western and Eastern, Capitalist and Communist, Christian and Islam, but in fact have proved to be Europe’s dark internal Self. The relationship between the

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notions “Balkans” and “Europe” is more complex than the Edward Said’s Orient and West dichotomy, because of the “in-betweeness” of the Balkans. According to the Balkanism theory, they are located geographically inside, but are in the same time, politically thought as outside of what Europe is. Notwithstanding, their blurred frontiers the Balkans remain geographically more specific and defined compared to the e.g. Middle East or the broader Orient. Furthermore, the Balkans do not posses that exotic appeal to Western imagination, because they are Europe’s “Older Self”, through whom the Old continent casually reproduces parts of its past that it indisputably wishes to forget and against which it is building its values. Acts like political separation and fragmentation, genocide, ethnic cleansing and intolerance, are those that collectively have formed the bad image of the Balkans. In that regard, the lack of rationality and the tendency for violent acts metaphorically represented the Balkans as thoroughly non-European.

Finally, and most importantly, the Balkans could be shaped in one special analytic category called “historical legacy.” For a long time borders have been preferred in the analysis of cultural identities. That tendency was grounded in the relationship between identity and alterity, which could be mostly distinguished at the frontiers. Recently this relation turned out to be a problematic, not only because borders are changing, but also because they are object to different research criteria. Looking at one region from geographic, political, cultural, ethno-linguistic point of view might lead to different and even contradictive conclusions. Besides, focusing the research on borders always contains the risk to excessively underline the Otherness and to marginalize the commonalities. In the second edition of the book “Imagining the Balkans”, Maria Todorova introduces thoroughly the notion of historical legacy as most adequate for the Balkan countries. She is choosing it instead of borders, space and territory precisely because it can show the dynamism and the flexibility of historical changes. Professor Todorova makes this choice, on the stipulation that the historical

27 Here I would like to thank Professor Maria Todorova from the University of Illinois at Urbana – Champaign for reminding me about this precious theoretical scheme on how to “imagine” the Balkans.
legacy does not necessarily replace the cultural space discourse, but on the contrary it retains features of the spatiality, whilst in the same time places it on the chronological line of history, thus making it more specific. Therefore the notion Balkans as historical legacy is based onto geographical criteria, but simultaneously goes into the historical and cultural interdependences that have shaped this part of Europe.

2. Defining the actors – West, Balkan, Southeastern Europe

The idea of the transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe is built around the framework of two main fulcra. On the one hand it is the internal pivot of the Balkans seen firstly as the stigma of the metaphor and later reconsidered as historical legacy. In that regard the observer is and external evaluative factor, to whom this work refers as “Europe” or the “West”. The reader may notice that the latter two notions are often used interchangeably, whereas they coincide only partly. The reason for incorporating them in this variant is that the whole transition or transformation discourse is inextricably linked with notions that often overlap between each other. As far as the broader concept of the West is concerned, it traces its history down to the 19th century when it became temporalized and politicized. Thus the concept commenced to acquire polemical thrust in the future through the polarized opposition to its antonyms such as “the East”, “the Orient”, and was used as a tool for identities’ formation.

During the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th century, the West meant to a great extend the Great Powers conducting the Concert of Europe. Later on, in a different balance of powers during and after the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, the term Western designated all those political actors that were significantly engaged with the developments on ex-Yugoslav and broader Southeast European territory, namely the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States of America (USA).

The second fulcrum of the concept is the agent - the Balkans which have entered as a term in the Western academic world through the works of the German geographer August Zeune in the distant year of 1808 (comparatively in the same initial point as the

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observer). \textsuperscript{32} That is how the classical geographic borders of the Balkan Peninsula were fixed at the Mediterranean Sea southwards, the Black sea eastwards, the Adriatic Sea westwards, and at the currents of Kupa, Sava and Danube rivers northwards. \textsuperscript{33} Later on, those geographic borders became object of prolonged attacks by different scientists and analysers, who classified the frontiers as irrelevant to the culture and the history of some parts of the outlined region. Each author claimed that the Balkans end at a specific point and everything beyond that very place should not be put under the Balkan heading. That is exactly how the metaphoric meanings of the Balkans were born.

This work considers the understanding that the whole metaphorical Balkan discourse was formed during the dissolution of exactly two big state conglomerates that existed in this European area. First of all, the concept was initiated and formed by the Ottoman Empire, which started to crumble away in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and was completely dissolved after the Balkan and the First World Wars. Secondly, it was the Yugoslav federation which inherited the Ottoman legacy and spread it as a reminiscence of the past around its internal borders, thus making the anachronistic phenomenon of the nationalist-based Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. That was the route in which the construct of Balkanization attained its meaning “to divide a region into smaller regions which are unfriendly or aggressive towards each other.” \textsuperscript{34} The term was coined on the edge of the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, but after that it was successfully employed by scholars, journalists and politicians during the Yugoslav wars, with a meaning of brutal disintegration into ethno-linguistic and religious fractures. Therefore, the Balkans as a metaphor designate all those countries that participated in the Balkan-Balkanization discourse, initiated by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and revived by the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s.

The notions Balkans and Southeastern Europe stay for the same geographical, historical and cultural areal in the Southeastern corner of the Old continent. However, the tendency to artificially change the name of the area from the pejorative “Balkans” to the politically correct “Southeastern Europe” cannot mechanically reconstruct the essence of the notion and the way in which insiders and outsiders think about it. The

\textsuperscript{33} Barbara Jelavich, History of the Balkans: Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Cambridge University Press, 1983), I.
\textsuperscript{34} Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 8th edition, Balkanization (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
only solution to escape from the status quo is to emancipate the denomination, instead of eradicating it and this new emancipation would have a purifying effect for the image of the whole region. The usage of these two terms as unblemished synonyms for the same geographical zone can be connected to the construction of consecutive sub regions of Europe using the previously made territorial designations of the European peninsulas. In that regard Southeastern Europe goes with the same family of European regions as: Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Southern Europe, Northwestern Europe etc., whereas the Balkans represent European historical and territorial denotation such as: Iberian Peninsula, Apennine Peninsula, Scandinavian Peninsula and so on.

3. Problems of the definition

Actually, defining every European cultural and political region appears to be everything, but an easy task. For Southeastern Europe in particular, there is not a generally agreed definition and this very status quo was created due to several obvious reasons. Firstly, the European continent is not symmetrical in its geographical shape, and therefore it is hard to divide it into the four winds. Secondly, there is a big difference between the European physical and political maps and the correlation between peoples and land is never easily done. Thirdly, many authors have defined Southeastern Europe in very distinctive ways and historically specific parts were considered inside or outside Southeastern Europe. Finally, Europe is thought to have not only a North and South, East and West, but also a Centre. These definitions admittedly affect the size of the presumed Southeast European corner.

In 2006 the United Nations (UN) published a working paper titled “A Subdivision of Europe into Larger Regions by Cultural Criteria”. In this document Europe was separated in six major cultural zones. UN’s definition took into account factors, which have left traces in the cultural landscape of each macro-region, and those that have influenced the human attitudes and behaviour, whilst reflecting the different historical, societal, political and economic situations. Thus Europe was divided into

Western, Eastern, Northern, Southern, Central, and ultimately to Southeastern Europe. However, this UN definition excluded ex-Yugoslav countries Slovenia and Croatia from Southeastern Europe and included Moldova and Cyprus. Similarly, the Encyclopaedia Britannica elaborated a map of the *cultural areas* in Europe, where Southeastern Europe was marked as *Balkan cultural area* part of the bigger Mediterranean. Using linguistic and other cultural similarities this definition extended the region over the territories of the states located on the Balkan Peninsula but also added Moldova and Cyprus.

The biggest problem with all the definitions like these is that they do not include the same parts of Europe under the term Southeastern Europe, thereby making it not that concrete. Even looking into the definitions given by the various political organizations working within the region, one may find that there is not any terminological succession about the term Southeastern Europe. On one hand there are countries that are undeniably included in the regional borders (like Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). On the other hand there are countries positioned either outside or inside (such as Cyprus, Moldova, Slovenia) by the definitions of the organizations. Table №3 and №4 (see the appendix of the thesis) are juxtaposing the different understandings of the major organizations for the borders of the region.

This lack of distinctness is the reason why the author of the following work has opted for an inclusive notion of Southeastern Europe. As it was stipulated that the frontiers of this specific region are not preoccupied with geographical definition, but they also look in the history, culture, and the political legacies that are creating the regional image. For the sake of this work, the most suitable proposal for definition will be the geopolitical. The “Norwegian Journal of Peace Research” has defined the geopolitics as the “connections between geographical space and political power”. Thus the focus would move on the political and the cultural definitions of Southeastern Europe, which together go beyond the classical geographic borders of the Balkan

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Peninsula, yet stemming from them. It was already stipulated that the Balkans and Southeastern Europe are two notions that stand for the same region, but simultaneously create very different connotations. Following these lines of thought, the modern term Southeastern Europe should encompass all those European countries, that are located on the Balkan Peninsula, but within their complete political borders spread over the Old continent. Thereby, not only the Balkan Peninsula within its geographical borders is included in what is politically and culturally understood as Southeastern Europe. In other words that definition stands for the following twelve countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and the European part of Turkey.\textsuperscript{40} The rationale behind this definition is not purely the practical purpose of the work, but also the arguments for a shared historical legacy and the common stigma of the Balkanness, which all those countries carried about themselves.

4. Clarifying the main concept

Nowadays, the countries defined as Balkan, i.e. those that participated in the historical Ottoman and Yugoslav spheres, are moving successfully away from their bad image and away from their imagined Balkanness. This might be the final stage of Europeanization of the region. Stepping out of the dichotomy “pejorative-correct” and as a conclusion to the proposal for existence of diverse, multiple identities of the Balkans, it could be said that nowadays the Balkans represent the positive historical legacy, whereas Southeastern Europe looks right into the future regional unity.\textsuperscript{41} This statement does not pledge for eradication of the existing terms, quite on the contrary it opts for a peculiar liberation of the negative connotations. That is the rationale behind the transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe. This process is one peculiar transformation, where the new essence of Southeastern Europe leaves in the past the previously used negative metaphors and simultaneously reinvents the Balkans as a common, shared historical legacy, which could be used for nothing else but unity and co-operation.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{40} This definition is in concordance with the position defended by Professor Maria Todorova in her edited book “Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory” (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2004), 13.


\textsuperscript{42} For pictorial representation, please refer to figure №1 in the appendix of the thesis.
Having in mind the fact that Southeastern Europe does not have pronounced multiple identities, and considering the European integration processes that are present in the region, the newer term designates more accurately the modern essence of the area, whereas the older term remains as incarnation of its historical legacy. Exactly this formula and juxtaposition could be a possible option for the future psychological emancipation of the Balkans and one positive reconstruction of the region. Quite on the contrary to the previous assumptions, looking positively at the common Balkan historical legacy could be a very useful method for achieving unity and cooperation in Europe, rather than maintaining isolation and rebuilt Balkanism. “The Balkans are dead, long live the Balkans” should be the new plea. Thus the Balkans would remain as a history of the shared past, culture and legacy, whereas Southeastern Europe would represent their future clarity and cohesiveness in the broader European family of cultures.

5. The constant need for explanation

After these stipulations many queries could immediately pop up and someone might ask questions such as “Why Slovenia and Croatia are put in the same category with Turkey?”, “Where is the place of Moldova?”, “But where does Cyprus go?” and “What about the other 97% of Anatolian Turkey?” Perhaps that was what the British historian Vesna Goldsworthy had in mind, when she preferred the new politically correct term Southeastern Europe “as deserved replacement of the Balkans because it has become impossible to define a country as a Balkan without having to explain oneself.” The main reason to exclude or include these countries under the headings “Balkan-Southeastern Europe”, is due to their participation in or exclusion from the “Balkan-Balkanization” events and the afterward transition into Southeastern Europe. Following these lines of thought Croatia and Slovenia ought to be included in the regional definition, whereas Moldova and Cyprus are to be thought as close, by separate cases.

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43 Here I must give credit to the article “Yugoslavia is Dead: Long Live the Yugosphere” by Tim Judah from the Research department on South Eastern Europe at the London School of Economics and Political Science, http://www2.lse.ac.uk/europeanInstitute/research/LSEE/Publications.aspx (accessed 1 February 2012).

A. Croatia

Since the breakup of Yugoslavia and the bloody wars that followed and shocked the whole world, most of the countries from the ex-Yugosphere (and not only) started to strive to abandon the sinking ship of the negative “Balkan” tag. Until recent times, this phenomenon was particularly persistent in Southeast European countries such as Croatia and Slovenia, but also amongst certain groups in Bulgaria, Romania and other post-communist states. Some of these countries exploited the Balkanism paradigm and paradoxically claimed that they do not have anything in common with their immediate neighbours. The existence of book titles such as “Croatia: A Crossroads Between Europe and the Balkans” (2002) suggests that Croatia is perhaps not completely part of the “Balkans”. Actually, that statement is far from the truth, due to several obvious facts. Firstly, Croatia is not only majorly located on the Balkan Peninsula, but it has definitely shared the Ottoman legacy with the rest of the region. Secondly, it is exactly the Serbo-Croat language, which was the lingua-franca of the pre-Yugoslav, Yugoslav and ex-Yugoslav space. Since the Enlightenment Croatians shared mutual linguistic tradition with their neighbours in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia and this fact was definitive for their cultural connectedness. Finally and most importantly, Croatia took significant part in the Yugoslav wars, especially in the deportations of Serbian population from the Serbian Krajina area and the parallel conflicts during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter events influenced the decision of the European Commission to include Croatia in the recently coined region “Western Balkans”, alongside with its neighbours from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia. It is Professor Maria Todorova’s opinion that it is very important to include all the heirs of the Yugoslav past in the Balkan category of historical legacies “because without them the aspects of the twentieth-century history of the region would be simply unthinkable.”

B. Slovenia

Despite the fact that it is considered by many as a Central European country, Slovenia can also be included in Southeastern Europe, mainly due to the fact that it was part of the revived Balkan discourse during the 1990s. Firstly, one half of Slovenia’s territory is located on the Balkan Peninsula and as an ex-Yugoslav country it is

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culturally tied with the internal parts of the Balkan Peninsula. It is said that Slovenians look at their language as a benchmark of national identity.\textsuperscript{47} Exactly the linguistic features are the one that immanently connect the Alpine country with its Eastern neighbours. The closer someone gets to the Croatian border the harder it is for him/her to distinguish who is speaking Croatian flavoured Slovene dialect or who is speaking the local Kajkavian (close to Slovene) variant of the Serbo-Croat language. These two South-Slavonic traditions share common history since the Medieval times and the Migration age. This conclusion does not belittle the importance of the pre-Yugoslav Habsburg past of Slovenia, but definitely comes to show that the Alpine republic partakes significant cultural legacy with its eastern neighbours as well.

C. Moldova

Quite on the contrary to the Slovenian example, the modern day Republic of Moldova ought not be thought as part of Southeastern Europe. Firstly, Moldova is not geographically located on the Balkan Peninsula, but in the region of Bessarabia placed between Romania and Ukraine. Moreover, the Republic of Moldova should not be confused with the historical principality of Moldavia, which experienced the Ottoman legacy in the past. The territory of the Moldovan Republic was indeed ruled by the Ottomans (1512-1792), but it missed the creation of the whole Balkan discourse, not only in the academia (since 1808), but also in geopolitical sense. After the Treaty of Jassy (1792), the principality of Moldavia was split into two halves. The western part on the one hand stayed close to the principality of Wallachia and formed with it the single state of Romania in 1859. On the other hand the eastern part remained under the influence of the Russian Empire, which annexed it (1812), until it became part of the USSR (1924) as Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.\textsuperscript{48} Therefore, despite sharing some cultural features such as linguistic proximity with Romania, the contemporary Republic of Moldova stayed out of the Balkan discourse during its highest peaks. That is why the inclusion of Moldova into the Southeast European debate could be considered rather inappropriate.


D. Cyprus

Because of its cultural and historical ties, Cyprus looks like a possible candidate to be part of Southeastern Europe. It is true that Cyprus was an Ottoman possession for 307 years, but after 1878 it did not become a separate national country, but instead was annexed by another Empire - the British. This status quo lasted until 1960, when the decolonisation processes put the rule of Cyprus into the hands of its inhabitants. However, only 14 years after that, the island was separated between the two main ethnic groups (Turks and Greeks) who alienated each other in ethnic-based entities one of which (the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) proclaimed an arguable independence. Even though Cyprus is inhabited by two Southeast European ethnic groups, it is a separate national state that belongs to the Mediterranean Sea. It is an island which is geographically even closer to the Middle East than to Europe. More importantly, Cyprus never shared that stigmatic history of its mainland relatives, who fought the bloody nationalist wars after the dissolutions of the Ottoman Empire. That is how Cyprus remained distant from the geopolitical and more specifically from the metaphorical “Balkans”.

E. The Ottoman Empire, Turkey and Europe

Talking about Turkey, its definition is certainly not simpler. However, the present work does not have the aim to answer the complicated and multilayered question “Is Turkey part of Europe or not?” Europe and Turkey had numerous debates over the modernisation and the Europeanization processes of the latter and those discussions are everything but recent, since their roots could be traced in the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms (1839-1877). Geographically, Turkey belongs only partly to Southeastern Europe (the province of East Thrace takes 3% of the country’s territory) and mostly to Southwestern Asia (the region of Anatolia forms 97% of the country’s territory). However, for the current research it is actually more important to show that even though only 3% of the present territory of Turkey is geographically located in the Old continent, Turkey still carries the stigma of the Balkan metaphor. By irony of fate the Turkish Republic was formed when the Balkanization term was mostly popularised in the Western world. And yet, it is true that Turkey belongs with its European territories to Southeastern Europe, but more importantly Turkey shares the Balkan

historical legacy with its Northwestern European neighbours. However, on the other hand there is a difference between ideal and real, and nowadays the Europeanization as a political process is based not only on cultural values, but also on strict geographical and political data. Proceeding from that assumption, the current German Federal Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble stated:

The EU is, after all, European. Although Australia or Japan could fulfil its accession criteria, no one has proposed them as potential EU members. Similarly, countries such as Turkey and Russia only partly share Europe’s heritage and geography; in other parts, they definitely do not.\(^{50}\)

This statement shows that even though Turkey and parts of the EU share much in terms of their historical legacy, there are voices that are still rather negative about Turkey’s accession into the EU. Despite having a status of candidate for EU membership, at present the Turkish Republic has significant amount of EU legislation chapters either frozen or suspended. That is why the puzzling question of Turkey as a part of Europe will surely remain unanswered in the near future.

And so, defining the Balkans and the main actors in their ongoing transition proved to be an uneasy task. The reasons for this lack of terminological succession are numerous and multilayered. However, this work opts for concreteness and gives one complex definition, which steps mostly onto the historical legacy that the Balkans have created in the course of time. Exactly this feature of the region proves to be determinative for its current transition into Southeastern Europe.

**IV. Historical legacy of Southeastern Europe**

In the contemporary world there is a frequent incompatibility present between cultural and political boundaries. Polities are artificial construct, which could not encompass or constrain the cultural connections, whereas human cultures are specific durable accumulations which are heaped during an infinite amount of time. In that sense, most cultural boundaries are fading into one another, and could not be simply demarcated with border crossings. Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga wrote in 1940 that “Countries belong beyond their boundaries on a map to where their spirit takes them.”

As it was already cited, Professor Todorova employs the term historical legacy in her analysis of Southeastern Europe, instead of the strict borders or the vague space. That is why the following work will attempt to analyse the main characteristics of the historical legacy of the Balkans in their transition into Southeastern Europe.

1. **Cultural basis**

Most of the territory of Southeastern Europe is mountainous with comparatively little arable land and rather restricted mineral deposits and more importantly limited interconnections. These conditions determine the existence of closed and isolated communities and hinder the processes of political consolidations. Of course this reality creates one amazing variety of social types and cultures, often separated only by few kilometres. The area of Southeastern Europe has been always very diverse in terms of its ethnical and religious structures. The long-lasting traditions of the ancient European populations that inhabited the area, such as the Ancient Dacians, Greeks, Thracians, Illyrians and other autochthonous tribes was combined with the later early-Medieval influences of the Migration Age, which brought other Indo-European tribes, such as the South-Slavonic, and later on Asian tribes of Altaic and Uralic origins.

Already at the time of the early Middle Ages the peoples inhabiting Southeastern Europe have been parts of state formations that have led long lasting military conflicts for political supremacy. The dynamic changing borders have led to the broad migration of different ethnical groups in the whole area. This feature and the life in common

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medieval states have enhanced the dialogue and the cultural interaction between the local peoples.

Southeastern Europe is the richest area in Europe in terms of its linguistic varieties. There significant amount of languages from the Indo-European group such as Albanian, Greek, Romance, and Slavonic co-exist with other linguistic groups like those from the Turkic language family. Some of the languages have their relatives in the bigger European linguistic families. For instance, Bulgarian, Macedonian54, Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian form the South-Slavonic group of the Slavonic languages. Romanian plus some smaller Balkan Romance variants form the Eastern Romance language group. On the contrary other examples such as Albanian and Greek have no relatives in the bigger Indo-European linguistic families of Europe, but together with Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Romanian plus some smaller examples, form their separate Balkan linguistic union with specific grammatical and other shared linguistic characteristics of their own.55 During the Ottoman rule, which included vast territories of the region in one multi-ethnical empire, most of these languages were communicating between each other and with the de facto official Ottoman Turkish language, thus even further enriching the linguistic variety.

Southeast Europe is also unique for the whole European continent in terms of its religious structure. It is the place where during the Middle Ages the Christianity was formed as an official religion of the Byzantine Empire and was later spread over the whole European continent and even beyond its frontiers. In that region exactly the Christian universalistic religion suffered in its ambition to establish one monolithic ecclesiastical institution like the Papacy in Rome. Quite on the contrary, several independent Eastern Orthodox churches were formed and began to argue for power with each other and with the Church-mother of Constantinople. This became even more complicated when the Great Schism between the Western and the Eastern Church was


proclaimed in 1054. Thus most of the region was religiously separated. Modern day countries like Croatia and Slovenia and parts of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Romania remained in the dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church, whereas most of Bulgaria, Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and parts of Albania, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina remained in the eparchies of the Orthodox churches. This situation became even further complicated when the Ottoman Turks invaded Europe. They brought a new culture and religion to the area – the Islam. Through the rich Ottoman cultural influence huge amounts of the population of modern day countries like Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Turkey and parts of Bulgaria, Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia adopted the Islam. With the Ottoman conquest after the 14th century two new religious groups were introduced to the region – Sephardic Jews and Muslims – mainly converts from the local populations, but also numerous Turkish colonists. The Ottoman migrations on the other hand introduced new relocations of religious and ethnical groups, particularly in those areas which proved to be conflict zones in the later 20th century. As a summary, these events turned the region into one very heterodox and varicoloured landscape. The religious differences in the region are one more factor that contributes to the cultural distinctiveness of that area.

2. The Ottoman legacy - mechanical and organic influences

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the nearly five centuries long Ottoman rule proved to be the precise factor, which gave the Balkan Peninsula its name and established the longest period of political unity in the region. The immediate conclusion that the Balkans used to be chiefly stereotyped after their Ottoman elements would not be such an exaggeration, since exactly those elements initially formed the framework of the negative stereotypes for the region. Previously, the Ottoman legacy was seen only as religiously and socially alien imposition on the Christian medieval societies, such as the Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, and Romanian modern state’s predecessors. Central to these lines of thought was the understanding that Christianity and agrarian style societies are totally incompatible with Islam and nomadic ones. This perception is described mostly using a mechanical approach, where the Ottoman legacy


57 See table №1 in the appendix for the exact amounts of time of the Ottoman rule in Southeastern Europe.
in various spheres such as language, music, cuisine and architecture is viewed as a synonym for non-Western, Islamic or Oriental influences. On the other hand, an alternative organic approach might be applied to the perception of the Ottoman legacy, especially when it comes to areas such as demography, economics and social structure. The imperial legacy could be seen as a complex symbiosis of Turkish, Islamic, Byzantine and Orthodox traditions.

Above all, both variants for understanding of the Ottoman past are relevant to selected specificities of the regional outlook. These peculiar traditions of social relations served in fact as an overture to the creation of the later regional image. On the basis of the mechanic influence in particular spheres of the past and the organic cultural components attained during the prolonged co-existence, has been established the truly essence of the Southeast European historical legacy.

3. Demographic legacy and minority groups

The fundamental novelty which was introduced on the Balkan Peninsula by the Ottoman conquest was the abolition of the old states’ borders and the enhancement of populations’ movements and interpenetrations. These tendencies introduced the complex palette of diverse populations isolated in peculiar enclaves of the former Ottoman territories. For example, the complex religious and ethnic structure of Kosovo or Bosnia and Herzegovina is only understandable within this Ottoman demographic framework.

Looking deeper into the historical legacy of Southeastern Europe, one may see that the long lasting co-existence in multi-ethnical empires and state conglomerates have left a remarkable demographic legacy. The Ottoman Empire’s Millet system used to govern these proto-nations which later were transmuted into national states. However, the intensive interconnections of the different ethnic groups in the course of several centuries made the creation of national states during the 19th and the beginning of 20th century very hardly achievable task. Ethnic minorities were left practically all over the territory of Southeastern Europe and all the Balkan countries used the methods of emigration, assimilation and in some cases ethnic cleansing to resolve their minority

59 Ibid., 62.
issues. The Ottoman past has definitely contributed to the creation of the demographic arena of ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in former Yugoslavia.

This situation of large ethnic minorities left outside the borders of the imagined community provoked feelings of irredentism. Both after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the later Yugoslav wars inherited multilayered problems with the demographic legacy. However, this demographic legacy is not simply a subject of the dissolution of state conglomerates, yet it is a complex result of the problems of imperial legacies (mainly Ottoman and Habsburg) in a national context. Firstly, specific administrative traditions had shaped the region for a significant period of time. Secondly, the newly formed national countries based their territorial aspirations onto two determinative criteria: historic right and self-determination, which by their side often happened to be contradictory or incompatible. Finally, the strategic interests of the European powers always had a determinative role in the outcome of these events.

The biggest demographic problems in Southeastern Europe started with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. It has been estimated that around one million Muslim and nearly one million Christians changed their homes during the last decades of the 19th century. Later, in the beginning of the 20th century even more drastic exchanges happened after the Balkan wars, the First World War and the succeeding Greco-Turkish war. Back then nearly two and a half million people were relocated from Anatolia to the Balkan Peninsula and vice versa. There were no countries on the Balkan Peninsula to achieve complete national ethnic and religious homogeneity after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. A new Albanian state was established after these wars, but it had to consider its Greek minority. Bulgaria was also created over a multiethnic territory inhabited by large Turkish, Pomak (Bulgarian-Muslim), Gypsies and other smaller minority groups. Greece had numerous South-Slavonic (Bulgarian/Macedonian) speaking population and with the addition of the various Muslim (Albanians, Pomaks, Turks and others) communities, formed itself as a multicultural polity. The Romanian case was not simpler, since large parts of the country remained inhabited by Hungarian, German, Jewish, Gypsy and other minority communities. During its last days the Ottoman Empire, not only expelled parts of its

Greek population from Asia Minor, but also ethnically cleansed large groups of Armenians in the later condemned Armenian genocide.\textsuperscript{62} Moreover, the newly established Kemalist republic of Turkey inherited huge Kurdish minority located in its Southeastern provinces of Asia Minor. However, after 1918 the most complex demographic situation was established in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which encompassed not only its three main ethnic components, but also the doubtfully recognised Macedonian and the Serbo-Croat speaking Bosnian Muslim entities.\textsuperscript{63} As an addition to this diversity the minority groups of Albanians (Kosovar) in the Kosovo and Metohija region, Germans (Volkdeutscher), Hungarians and Romanians in the Vojvodina region and other smaller groups such as Bulgarians, Turks and others, created the most complex puzzle, which served as the fundament of the later Yugoslav crisis.\textsuperscript{64}

4. The Ottoman legacy and the Yugoslav crisis

The \textit{Balkanism} theory postulates that “(...) it is preposterous to look for an Ottoman legacy in the Balkans. The Balkans are the Ottoman legacy.”\textsuperscript{65} This statement comes to say that the pejorative connotations of the terms “\textit{Balkan}” and “\textit{Balkanization}” derived their meanings from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, but also that these notions were very successfully applied to the events that happened on Yugoslav soil, more than eighty years after the abdication of the last sultan in Istanbul.

If one looks from the point of view of the modern analysis, he/she will discover that there was a later important reminiscence derived from the Ottoman dissolution, which have strongly proved to be determinative for the regional image. The contemporary historical legacy of ex-Yugoslavia (1918-1992) or the so-called \textit{Yugosphere}, as it is nowadays known, was spread around the newly coined area of the Western Balkans.\textsuperscript{66} However, there is an important condition next to these lines of thought. There is definitely no simple equation mark between the Ottoman Empire and

\textsuperscript{64} For detailed view of the demographic picture of the region, please refer to Table №2 in the appendix of the paper.
the Yugoslav federation. From the beginning of the 19th century and onwards, ethnic and national groups in the European parts of the Ottoman Empire stood against the centralised control of the Sublime Port and with the frequent help of external European powers formed separate national countries. The First World War put an end to the former Ottoman and Habsburg Empires and on several of their territories was formed the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became Yugoslavia. The imperial centuries made the setting for the development of multinational pluralistic entity. It is true that most of the Yugoslav republics had Ottoman past in their history, but the tragic events known as Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, were just a later reminiscence of what was previously labelled as Balkanization, during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In distinction, the Yugoslav experiment was more like an updated Ottoman model with pluralist and transnational setting, which began as opposition to nationalism, but resolved in a bloodthirsty nationalist conflict.\(^{67}\)

Any legacy could be understood as something received from the past and as a specific historical continuity which presupposes a concrete chronological point after which its transmission commences. That is the case with the Southeast European historical legacy which was treated as continuity after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the later dismemberment of Yugoslavia.\(^{68}\) When placed on the historical timeline the Ottoman political legacy extends from the consolidation of the first autonomous national states on the Balkan Peninsula in the 19th century, and goes through the Balkan wars and the actual end of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. As far as the later Yugoslav reminiscence is concerned, the political legacy commenced with the federative republic of Slovenia fighting for its own independent national state in 1991 and finished with Kosovo proclaiming its independence in 2008.

Yugoslavia was a state entity, which was created after the end of the multinational Habsburg and Ottoman Empires by the times of the First World War and lasted until its final disintegration, which followed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the communist regimes in Europe. The dismembering of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia into independent national states initiated bloody wars that shocked the post-Cold War world. On the edge of the new millennium, the decisions of

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Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and later on Kosovo and Montenegro to abandon the common federation provoked those unpleasant events and revived old hatreds, which were often accompanied with ethno-religious conflicts inherited from the beginning of the 20th century.

The Yugoslav changes in ethnic, religious and political relationships, could be classified as Ottoman legacy, right because they occurred as a consequence of the Ottoman chapter in the history of that very region.69 This clarification is crucial for the understanding of the conflicts that led to civil wars in the 20th century multicultural federation of Southeastern Europe. The historical legacy as continuity was a process that started in the successor states that remained after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and later on of Yugoslavia. Therefore it is very important to include all the heirs of the Yugoslav past in the Southeast European category of historical legacies, because without them the aspects of the twentieth-century history of the region would be unthinkable70.

Here one important remark has to be made. All of the abovementioned clarifications are only acceptable on the condition that they are not meant to simply blame the Ottoman legacy in the demography, religion, and society for the perpetration of the contemporary atrocities that happened in the region just before one decade. It cannot serve as acquittal for the irredentist and cruel nationalist feelings of the past Balkan leaders. Exactly those leaders pursuing their demagogic interests revived the painful memories of the distant or recent past and infected in indecorous way the minds of several million people.71

Therefore, the main characteristics of the historical legacy of the Balkans in their transition into Southeastern Europe proved to be one complicated mosaic of ethnical, linguistic and religious elements mixed up by the history of the region. The Ottoman Empire and the Yugoslav federation formed this peculiar historical legacy as continuity and simultaneously brought (and revived) the pejorative notions of Balkans and

Balkanization. In the course of these formations one important result was achieved. The region formed a specific cultural legacy that continues to exist throughout the lands of Southeastern Europe, even in modern times.
V. Cultural legacy – the popular culture of Southeastern Europe

The Ottoman imprint on Southeastern Europe was direct and this could be seen by looking only at the bigger cities of the region: Istanbul, Sofia, Belgrade, Thessaloniki, Sarajevo, Skopje, all of them have preserved examples of the Ottoman architecture and urban models. However, step by step these places were modernised and the old pre-industrial, imperial look remained only in specific historical districts and places. What was kept to the most from the cultural legacy in Southeastern Europe was something else. The majority of the languages from the region still contain thousands of words borrowed from the Ottoman Turkish language. Furthermore, their cuisines, popular cultures and lifestyles are implicitly connected to the Ottoman past even nowadays.

Only few characteristics of the historical legacies proved to be so persistent and continued to exist after the dissolutions of the past big state conglomerates in Southeastern Europe. The act of abandoning the unity of political, cultural, social and economic spheres left not only the problematic relationships between the different demographic groups, but also bequeathed a significant amount of popular culture commonalities. On the level of everyday culture and life the Ottoman legacy proved to be very persistent.

1. Language

For instance, Ottoman influences are strongly felt in the languages of the ethno-linguistic groups that compose Southeastern Europe. The Ottoman linguistic influence spread around its Southeast European territories through the official Ottoman Turkish language. This dead language contained numerous influences mainly from the Turkic linguistic family, but also from Arabic (especially in the religious sphere), Persian (in the sphere of governmental and judicial terms) and smaller amounts of loanwords from Greek, South-Slavonic and others. The knowledge of that language was a way to advance in the governmental and economic affairs of the theocratic monarchy. The Ottoman Turks promoted the language contacts on the Balkans and also left direct traces in the modern languages of the local people.

The majority of Ottoman loanwords were especially infiltrated into the non-basic vocabulary. A significant amount of specific terms from various spheres entered as loanwords in Albanian, Bulgarian (Macedonian), Greek, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian. Most of those words were nouns, but there were also specific verbs, prepositions, adverbs and other linguistic elements.\(^\text{74}\) More than four centuries the Ottoman Turkish element in Romanian comprises at least one-sixth of its total vocabulary, whereas nowadays it is restricted only to specific terms. With few differences, a comprisable situation exists in the other areas, where Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Serbo-Croatian are spoken. During the Yugoslav times, the inhabitants of the common federation travelled freely within the country and unconsciously transferred Ottoman linguistic elements to areas, where they were rarity (such as the Dalmatian Adriatic coastline of Croatia for instance). Thereby the existence of Ottoman Turkish words in the basic vocabulary of every Southeast European language (without exception) remained as a distinct feature of the regional culture, which continues to last even today.

However in the spirit of the \textit{Balkanism}, most Southeast European nations decided to abandon the Ottoman vocabulary after their liberation and to replace it with new “indigenous” constructs or international loanwords. Without exceptions, all the newly established Southeast European countries tried to purify their languages from Ottoman Turkish loanwords and from time to time had sporadic success in that endeavour.

2. \textit{Cuisine}

The efforts to de-Ottomanize the successor states after the dissolution of the Empire majorly changed not only the languages, but also the architecture of the cities and the way of clothing of the people.\(^\text{75}\) The new national states homogenised their populations through the well known apparatus of the school and the army. However, in distinction to the political continuity and the elite culture, the Ottoman legacy was preserved in the popular culture and everyday life and especially in matters such as cuisine and music.

\(^\text{75}\) Maria Todorova, “\textit{The Ottoman legacy in the Balkans.}” ed. Imperial legacy: the Ottoman imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 59.
Even after the end of the Ottoman rule, the general cuisine of Southeastern Europe remained Ottomanized. Every person from the region, who has spent a long time abroad, knows very well that eating in Macedonian, Romanian, Serbian or other similar restaurant is just like eating at home. Similarly, the existence of e.g. Turkish or Greek shops abroad ensures the availability of products important for every Southeast European. The list includes goods such as the white brine cheese, vine leaves, *ajvar*, *halva*, *kashkaval*, *boza*, savory and many others. The list of common meals can follow even more, concluding that the cuisine is in fact another shared characteristic of Southeastern Europe.

During the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, parts of the ex-Ottoman cultural legacy were successfully transferred to those areas of Yugoslavia, where the Habsburg Empire used to rule. After the dissolution of the federative state, some elites in Croatia and Slovenia expressed their desire to break away from the bad “Balkan” traditions (i.e. internal *Balkanism*) and to return to “Europe” where they belonged. This tendency introduced the pejorative connotations over the names of some dishes. In that regard, Ljubljana’s popular graffiti from 1992 was symptomatic. It said “Burek? Nein Danke.1992”, thus showing the politicised denial of one simple Ottoman pastry (*Börek* in Turkish) transferred to Ljubljana by its Eastern ex-commarades. That is how the pastry *Burek*, became victim of the linguistic politicization of what was presented not simply as a meal, but as a political act. At the end of the day, despite the negative voices expressed twenty years ago, the *Burek* is still advertised as a feature of the gastronomic choices in Ljubljana.

The *Burek* case is interesting, but there are even better examples describing the compound essence of Southeast European case. The intercultural communication theory often employs different food metaphors to describe the complexities of the human societies and their constant interactions. The terms *melting pot*, *salad* or *pizza* type society are well known in that academic discipline. In that regard, the *Gyuvech* meal,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Cristina Bradatan, *Cuisine and cultural identity in the Balkans* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 5.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Marjan Drnovšek, *Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Slovenian Migration* (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, 2007). For picture of the graffiti art, please refer to Image №3 in the appendix.
\end{itemize}
which stands closer as a meaning to the English hodgepodge dish, would serve as a food metaphor for Southeastern Europe. Etymologically the name “Gyuvech” comes from Ottoman Turkish and means “ceramic pot”. The dish contains mixture of ingredients in the pot: meat and around eight different sorts of vegetables. In order to be prepared the pot is covered with ceramic lid and the dish is slowly baked on low fire. Looking through the prism of the intercultural communication theory, here it is peculiar the comparison between the preparation time of the numerous ingredients in the covered utensil on the one hand, and the rich cultural variety which was slowly created by the fire of the regional history on the other. It is absolutely not coincidental that the Bulgarian historian Christo Matanov placed a full Gyuvetch pot as an image on the cover page of one of his recent books on the history of Southeastern Europe. Nowadays, the Gyuvech dish is called гювеч (Gyuvech) in Bulgaria, ɟyveč (Gyuvech) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, ɟүвеç (Gyuvech) in Turkey, дяuveč (Jyuvech) in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, д Jazeera (Juvech) in Slovenia, ɟיוש (Giyvech) in Albania and Kosovo, ɟhивеч (Jiyvechi) in Romania and γιουβέτσι (Giou vetsi) in Greece. Different spellings reflect the respective linguistic traditions, but the dish might be found everywhere in Southeastern Europe.

The cuisine of the European Southeast is definitely influenced and mapped by its historical legacies. Of course not every meal is absolutely the same in each part of the region and local variants and influences always exist. Nevertheless, the long lasting cultural symbiosis mixed different elements (ingredients) distinctive for every community and its own culture and put them in the same multiethnic and multi-religious “sauce” thus creating cultural taste of its own.

3. Music

Popular music and culture are very important in the Southeast European case because they afford the connections between the inhabitants of a particular cultural ecumene (from the Ancient Greek οίκουμένη i.e. inhabited area). The sounds from Southeastern Europe acquire their power because they restlessly redefine the cultural legacy of the region. Musicians move across political, religious and linguistic borders and passing from country to country they inspire new variants, covers and genres. The

musical space is probably the most open space which is easily transferred by the movement of the sound and the media upon which it is produced and rebroadcasted. Popular music is the language of communication and translation; it is a vernacular as well as a lingua franca for the region, which simultaneously hears the echo of its historical legacy, while looking towards the European future. In Southeastern Europe there was a remarkable confluence of style in instrumental music, song and dance of local ethno-pop artists. This mixture served as a basis for the creation of specific cultural ecumene where the local inhabitants are linked by hundreds of years. This space evidenced international sharing, interexchange, collaboration and dialogue across linguistic, religious and spatial boundaries in Southeastern Europe.

In 2003 the Bulgarian film director Adela Peeva produced a cinematographic search for the origins of a “typical” Greek-Macedonian-Turkish-Serbian-Bulgarian song. In her movie “Whose that song?” she travelled from Sofia, Bulgaria to Istanbul, Turkey; Lesbos, Greece; Korçë, Albania; Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Skopje, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Vranje, Serbia and back to Strandzha, Bulgaria. Peeva was searching for a single song that was claimed to be authentic and originally owned by each one of these nations. That is how the director showed the many influences of local music and the existence of prolonged transborder cultural interpenetrations. Apart from that she also revealed the essentialist conclusions and sometimes even hatred-based assumptions, which the nationalism has the power to inspire, even for the sake of the ownership of one folklore song.

As within the local cuisine, the Southeast European music was firstly regarded as “Balkan” and “not European” by some states in the region during the blurry 1990s. This tendency commenced within the local music after the atrocities of the Yugoslav wars. Again the impetus of the Balkanism was paradoxically internal, and political leaders like those of Croatia for example, essentialized the Balkan heritage as contradictory to Croatia’s new “European” way. Some of them tried to incite change in

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the attitudes and situations perceived as stereotypically “Balkan” even in the sphere of music. However, the popular ethno music from Southeastern Europe started to use new modern technologies, principles and media and succeeded to form its commercial appeal. Thus it initiated a reinterpretation of the “Balkans” as a specific aesthetic subject and home style of its citizens. Following this very direction local music productions foreboded an increasing recognition of the Southeast European music as an exclusive representation of one of the European musical traditions. That is how television channels such as “Balkanika” began broadcasting over the territories of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey and organised regional incentives such as the “Balkan music awards”.

Perhaps this positive example is going to be the future fate of the whole Southeast European cultural legacy. This rich cultural variety has the rare opportunity to be reinvented as something good, profitable, and exclusively owned by the locals, whereas also being part of the bigger cultural tradition in the European family. That is how the Balkanism stereotypes will be cleared and the region will receive its deserved emancipation. The European Union enlargement schemes give those important solutions needed for the future integration of the region, whereas the ongoing regional co-operation in the cultural sphere is yet another catalyster of this already started process.

VI. Political transition and Europeanization

1. Regional co-operation

Nowadays the promotion of European integration in the region of Southeastern Europe persists in almost every official report, speech or media reportage about the region. The European Union seeks to enhance joint transborder projects concerning democratisation, reconciliation and economic development, all under the broader rubric of the regional co-operation. Not without the help of the Western external factors, the turbulent processes of integration have been initiated amongst the already culturally close nations in Southeastern Europe. Some authors even talk about the still not existing but yet emerging transnational civil society in the region.86 The process of co-operation involves various partners such as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, business associations, and many other private actors, who all seek common objectives for mutual development. That is the reason why those processes are analysed as typical for the regionalism phenomenon. The notion regionalism stands for “spontaneous growth of societal integration through a bottom-up process of social and economic interaction, and the emergence of a common regional awareness.”87

Following the testament of the Jean Monnet’s ideas, Southeastern Europe reinvents particular possibilities to co-operate in areas such as energy, telecommunications and transport which could serve as motors for economic development. After the Yugoslav wars, the Southeast European regionalism especially seeks to create positive connections between the countries and also it strives to ensure security amongst those states that are not part of the EU or NATO. Thus the process of transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe goes on two levels. Externally the ongoing European integration is slowly but steadily changing the image and the political and economic state of the previously isolated region, whereas internally the region reinvents itself in those areas which are serving as connections amongst the nations.

In principle, most of the regionalisation processes initiate the creation of some sense of commonness amongst their participants. In the search for its own identity the Southeast European region started to develop both with and without external help co-operational initiatives. As an outcome of the regionalism new transnational, geographically delineated communities emerged and attempted to turn the collection of states into regional entity. This process was significantly facilitated by the pre-existing structures of material connectivity and shared culture. That is precisely how the identity discourse was mixed with the regional co-operation debate. Identity constructions came as an outset of the political change, but also they reshaped the forming regionalism. On that topic Professor Dimitar Bechev from the University of Oxford wittely concludes that: “(...) (1) material incentives deriving from inside South East Europe or presented by external players and (2) identity patterns or politics (...)(that) manifest in self-images or constructions from outside (...) (are) the ideational glue that animates, sustains and binds the regional unit.”

The majority of the regional initiatives in Southeastern Europe came externally from Western side and pushed for reconciliation after the Yugoslav wars, economic stabilization and European integration. These external impulses defined to a greater extend the regionalism and the building of regional institutions. Of course, they stimulated the local actors to realise the interdependences of such a close in many aspects region and provoked them to regret the parochialism of the irrational and violent disintegration which the Yugoslav wars caused to the whole region. The collective self interest was magnified and the rational pursuit for welfare and development captured the regional co-operation discourse. Thereby, this process became an opportunity to transform and reinvent the old conflict-famous and not-European Balkans into an equal part of Europe and the West. These facts led some authors to the conclusion that the transformation in Southeastern Europe includes three main factors: external push, interdependence and identity. That is how the political aspect of the transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe has begun and still takes place so far. Common identity considerations are continuously improving the regional co-operation and transforming it into a benchmark for Europeanization of the region.

89 Ibid., 14.
2. Development of the integration

It is important to note that during the Yugoslav wars regional co-operation has started as a scheme majorly driven by security concerns about the regional future. The Western international actors have encouraged the integration resting on the assumption that the unpleasant events in Yugoslavia could be part of a larger puzzle in Southeastern Europe. The security in the area was seen as defined by shared ties of friendship between certain groups or nations, but also by common history of violence and confrontation. Southeastern Europe was already unstable during the late Cold war times, due to several major lines of potential inherited conflicts: (1) the question of the Muslim minorities between Turkey–Bulgaria–Greece; (2) the problems with Macedonia and its separate name, identity and language between Bulgaria–Greece–Yugoslavia; (3) the Albanian crossborder minorities problem mainly on the territory of Yugoslavia, and (4) the Hungarian minorities and their prosecution in Romania.\(^90\) As a consequence of the earlier demographic legacies, in the late 1980s there were not any Southeast European countries without ethnic minority problems or tensions. Major political transpositions happened in many states right after the fall of the Berlin Wall and these tendencies threatened to kindle the old conflicts that were swept under the carpet of the Cold War status quo. When the war in Yugoslavia commenced, the alarm lamp shed the need for a clear action from the Western world (the European Community, NATO and the USA) since there was a theoretical opportunity for domino-effect scenario in the whole region. Luckily, the conflict was constrained in the borders of Yugoslavia, but that need for action set the parameters of the future co-operation and subsequent Europeanization of the region. The understood significance of the Southeast European interdependences was reflected in the Dayton Accords (the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed on 15 December 1995) which pledged for “establishing a regional balance in and around (emphasis added) the former Yugoslavia.”\(^91\)

The factor that brought peace to the first Yugoslav war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and initiated the first regional schemes was definitively the NATO, which was then mainly led by the United States of America. On the basis of common points of understanding with the EU, the United States National Security Council initiated in


1996 an economic and environmental co-operative framework called Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). This organization involved mainly the private sector of the region and later was conceptualized not as a duplicate but as a complement to the EU’s emerging approach towards Southeastern Europe.\footnote{Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), “Final points of Common EU-U.S. Understanding,” Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Website, http://www.secinet.info/images/stories/files/final_points.pdf (accessed 29 August 2011).} At the same time NATO was mostly an external factor in the region (with the exception of Turkey and Greece) and due to that fact it started the “Partnership for Peace” programme, which was extended over the post-communist European states. Almost immediately Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia joined the programme in 1994, followed by Macedonia (1995) and the delayed incorporation of Croatia (2000), and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia in 2006.\footnote{Dimitar Bechev, Constructing South East Europe. The Politics of Balkan regional cooperation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 175.} That is how the initial impetus for the regional cooperation was given.

3. The European engagement

After the destructive Yugoslav wars the greatest concern for the European leaders was the regional stability. This factor included the recognition of the small states that emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia, within their newly established borders and with guarantees for the protection of the minority rights.\footnote{John R. Lampe, Balkans into Southeastern Europe: A Century of War and Transition (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 289-290.} By the side of the EU, the first step for the transition of Southeastern Europe was made in 1996 with the new EU Regional Approach - a commitment to support the reconciliation process, economic rehabilitation and cooperation between the countries in former Yugoslavia in the context of a broad approach to the region's future.\footnote{Council of the European Union, “Preparation for the European Council Meeting in Turin and the Intergovernmental Conference,” Council of the European Union Website, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/028a0001.htm (accessed 11 May 2011).} The regional approach excluded the present day Member States Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, which intensified their cooperation through Europe agreements with the EU. The Regional Approach accomplished three main goals: it described the borders of the future Western Balkans (ex-Yugoslavia excluding Slovenia; and Albania); it included the EU conditionality and finally it made the regional co-operation a unique feature of the Southeast European
integration (this feature was not present in the talks with the Visegrád four or the Baltic states).  

In the middle of the 1990s there was a belief that everything which was connected with the bloody image of war and ethnic tensions is already in the past. Unfortunately these forecasts proved to be false, since the new Kosovo crisis (1998-9) seriously threatened the stability, which was established by the Dayton Accords and introduced to the region a new international protectorate established under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244. As an effect of these developments the EU initiated in 1999 the Stability Pact for South East Europe (SP). This institution was intended to support the regionalism and to oppose instability in Southeastern Europe, but not to offer EU membership as a final goal in front of the region. The Pact functioned mainly as an intermediary between local donors and the beneficiaries in the person of the EU and several international financial institutions.

As it was stated, the Stability Pact for South East Europe was rather limited organization. The 1999 EU Helsinki Summit introduced the brand new decision to promote Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey as candidate countries for EU membership. This development demanded a brand new formula and the Regional Approach was replaced with the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) which extended its agreements (SAA) based on the earlier Europe Agreements, towards the Western Balkans. That was exactly the starting point of the concrete Europeanization process of the region. The SAA formulated the requirements for membership as well as the basis of the conditionality policy. That is how the SAP improved the previous used notion of regional integration and included it in the EU Enlargement policy. Moreover, the SAP was aimed exactly at the region of the Western Balkans, thereby reaffirming the EU’s will to bring the region closer to itself. The SAP was to become the general

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99 Ibid., 56.
framework for EU negotiations with the Southeast European countries, all the way until their eventual accession in the EU.\textsuperscript{100}

The new millennium inaugurated new developments in the regional transition. At the Zagreb Summit (2000), the Western Balkan and the EU leaders were gathered to discuss the deepening of the integration and the after war allocation of funds that can foster the “progress of the region towards democracy, rule of law, regional reconciliation and cooperation on the one hand and the prospect of possible accession to the EU on the other hand.”\textsuperscript{101} The tradition of the EU progress reports about the development of the regional integration was started on 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 2002 and continues until present time (last report issued on 12\textsuperscript{th} October 2011). The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe was thus marginalised as a supplement to the SAP. In 2008 the SP was transformed into the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and focused itself on the promotion and enhancement of regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe, whilst simultaneously continued to support the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of its member countries.\textsuperscript{102}

Four years after the Kosovo war’s bombings, the regional integration was even further strengthened with the new Thessaloniki Summit during the summer of 2003. That forum upgraded the SAP into EU Enlargement framework for the integration of the Western Balkans, following the same steps that were taken by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which back then were about to join the EU in its 6\textsuperscript{th} historical enlargement.

4. South-East European Cooperation Process

Since many of these co-operation schemes came as an injection from the external Western actors, the local countries in the region decided to move together for a common “regionally owned” cooperative institution. In 1996 a similar initiative called South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) was launched in Bulgaria, with the


rotating presidency of all of the Southeast European countries. Croatia and Slovenia initially stood out of the scheme, because it looked as a Balkan or pro-Yugoslav affair for them, but at the end of the day they decided to join the initiative in 2005 and 2010 respectively. The main aims of this organization were to enhance the multilateral cooperation in the fields of: regional stability, economic development, humanitarian, social and cultural issues and justice.\footnote{South-East European Cooperation Process, “About SEECP,” South-East European Cooperation Process Website, http://rscpcsee.org/en/pages/read/about-see cp (accessed 29 August 2011).} This forum was internationally recognized as the authentic voice of the region and still preserves its aim to be complementary to Western-driven initiatives such as the SECI, SP (RCC) and SAP. Whereas NATO and the EU supported directly integration and co-operation, the SEECP symbolized the realised transition of the region from the violent Balkan “powder keg” into an area ruled by European standards and rules.\footnote{Dimitar Bechev, Constructing South East Europe. The Politics of Balkan regional cooperation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 150.} The SEECP made Southeastern Europe an inseparable part of the European Union and left a concrete trait on the complicated and multi-layered process of transformation of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe.

All these regional initiatives were brought mainly by the side of the Western actors in order to push the region for co-operation, stabilization and reconciliation. Furthermore, Southeastern Europe was clearly introduced as an independent whole, and as a specific region with characteristics of its own. It is important to mark that these institutions (SECI, SP, SAP, SEECP) clearly regarded the region as Southeastern Europe and still continue to use predominately this term officially in their names and documents.\footnote{For detailed information about the usage of the term, please refer to Table №3 and №4 in the appendix.} For instance, at the opening conference of the SEECP the region was addressed “the Balkans”, but from 1997 onwards the title Southeastern Europe replaced the older notion, since “it was considered a term laden with numerous negative connotations. Southeastern Europe, by contrast appeared more neutral and inclusive, and therefore generally acceptable.”\footnote{Interview with Dr Dinko Dinkov as cited in Dimitar Bechev, Constructing South East Europe. The Politics of Balkan regional cooperation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 134.} The Croatian ex-Foreign Minister confessed that: “Croatia no longer agree(d) to play a passive role on the international scene and Southeastern Europe (wa)s a region it want(ed) to be more present in than before. (...) The very name SEECP (where Balkans was replaced by Southeastern Europe – emphasis added) was (seen) as an open invitation to Croatia and its government to (...) leave behind all prejudices and uncertainties which encumbered Croatia not long
This symptomatic change in the terms and the conceptions was also distinguishable by the actions of the US European Military Command. It launched in 1999 the “Balkantimes.com” - a major news website, with the goal to offer accurate, balanced and forward-looking coverage of the developments in Southeast Europe with translation in ten of the regional languages. Following the trends this website changed its name in 2001 to “Southeast European Times.com” reflecting the growing of the usage and the overall change in the concepts that the new term Southeastern Europe have brought.

5. The process of Europeanization

It was the European Union that played the role of a reference point in the Balkanness construction discourse. The shared problems of the region in terms of need for better statehood and governance, economic development and modernization created the image of the future Southeastern Europe as a whole. The historical responsibility for the promotion of democracy, rule of law and especially the protection of minority and human rights in Southeastern Europe led the EU to its fundamental decision to Europeanise the Balkans. The EU defined its standards for Europeanization in the terms of norms and conditions for membership. Through that framework the EU inaugurated its gradual Enlargement policy towards Southeastern Europe.

Nowadays, the term Europeanization describes on the one hand the desire of the Southeast European countries to join the European Union and on the other hand the powers of the supranational union to influence the internal national institutions and various spheres of the policies of the countries. The requirements that stay in front of every candidate are estimated at more than 80 000 pages of legislation or the so called community acquisitions (acquis communautaire). The EU monitors the progress of each candidate country through the annual reports that are issued for every single case (for Southeastern Europe they started from 2002 onwards). This whole strategy of the EU is often named as policy of conditionality. It is seen as the EU’s external push for

political and market economy changes which is intended to speed up the reforms and help the development of those countries that are in transition. The literature on the transformation of the ex-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe labels this whole process under the heading transition to democracy and market economy and searches for the institutionalization of liberal order and democratic government, which are the main conditions for EU membership.

Likewise, the EU has formulated its political values in the so called Copenhagen criteria. Generally speaking, the core political values of the European Union include the democratic political system, the close observance of the rule of law including the protection of human and minority rights plus the existence of functioning market economy. Each country that wants to start the process of Europeanization firstly has to meet these basic conditions established in the Danish capital in 1993. In that regard, the Indiana University’s Professor in EU Politics John McCormick describes that feature of the Union as the “most effective force in the world for promotion of democracy and capitalism”. Thereby, all these forces are not only fundamental for the EU, but for the entire Western world. The Europeanization process is supplemented by various organizations from the Western community, such as the NATO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and others. The Copenhagen criteria prepare the political ground for the accession and the transfer of the acquis communautaire. The process starts with the establishment of institutional links with the EU and signing of association and stabilization agreements. At a second stage the accession negotiations are opened with candidate status countries, which start to synchronize their legislation with the EU law.

That is how the Enlargement policy of the EU and the Europeanization processes are going together in Southeastern Europe. Compliance with the basic democratic rules of the EU forms the central precondition for entering the accession negotiations, which by their side are mainly a transfer of rule over specific sectors. Therefore, the Enlargement is the main driving force of EU rule export in the candidate

countries. If it was not the Europeanization, the integration could be impeded by limited and slow procedures. That is exactly the reason why the EU insists to include politically the Western Balkans and Turkey into that scheme of negotiations.

6. Realised will for the continuation of the Enlargement policy

The leaders in Brussels started to believe that it would be in Europe’s best interests to bring the region into the European Union instead to ghettoize it. A new perspective for transition was opened for the states, an option to integrate into the European Union as it Southeastern part. To heal economic devastation and political isolation, EU developed a long-term strategy for the economic development of Southeastern Europe. The regional investments by the side of the Union are considerable both in terms of money and of manpower. The amounts of the resources that have been invested in the region during the war period 1991-1999 were estimated to more than 7,953 milliard Euros for 8 years (see table №5). Later on, the EU has allocated around 4.5 milliard Euros for the period 2000-2006. Today the EU investments are mainly concentrated in the areas of transition assistance and institution building, cross-border co-operation, regional development, improvement of human resources and rural developments (see table №6). All of the aforesaid testifies to the strong will of the EU Members States to integrate this area and make it both economically and politically coherent with the whole European Community.

This realised will was very visible two years ago when the EU liberalised its border regimes with the Western Balkan states. The Yugoslav wars in the 1990s led the EU Member States to the decision to introduce stricter visa regimes to the ex-Yugoslavia countries and Albania. However, in 2010 changes of this status quo were finally made, when the EU Member States facilitated their visa entrance regimes firstly in January 2010 for Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro and secondly for the citizens

of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2010. Nowadays, taking into consideration Kosovo’s half-way recognition by the EU Member States (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain refuse to recognise the new state), solely that country remained isolated by visa-regimes. However these acts of liberalisation reaffirmed one more time that the common willingness for the future integration of the region is present. This position continues to be defended nowadays. On the 15 April 2011 the ex-president of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek gathered together politicians from the EU and the Western Balkans on a Joint Parliamentary Meeting. All the participants agreed again that the future of the Southeast European countries lies within the EU.

Thereby, nowadays the countries from Southeast Europe form the bigger part of the future enlargement schedule of the EU. The Union regards as candidate states Iceland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey, where only Iceland is alien to the region. This is supplemented by the fact that Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (recognised under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244) are all expected to start the respective procedures for their candidatures and are regarded by Brussels as potential candidates. Having Greece as a Member State from the region since 1981 and with the accession to EU of Slovenia in 2004 and of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007 the Union nowadays includes four full members from Southeastern Europe. Recently, it became clear that the newest EU Member State (i.e. acceding country) will be Croatia which is expected to join the Union in the summer of 2013.

That is how the turbulent processes of integration have initiated deeper contacts amongst the already culturally close nations in Southeastern Europe. The political

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integration undoubtedly has brought better cohesiveness of the region and opportunities for its cultural reinvention. Thus the states in Southeastern Europe slowly began to look at each other as partners, who share a lot in terms of their cultural heritage. They commenced to look at this richness as something upon which they could build their partnerships. That was the main impetus for the following cultural reinvention.
VII. Cultural reinvention

The postcolonial theory describes as a “contact zone” an area where “ethnic groups, cultures and languages meet, clash, and grapple with each other.” With its predetermined faith of contact zone, Southeastern Europe is undoubtedly one extraordinary region in Europe. As it was already shown, this is one area where the result of a long-lasting historical synthesis has resulted in the remarkable diversity of ethno-cultural elements. Whereas for the theorists of culture, anthropologists, linguists and other scientists this area is the perfect laboratory for academic research on these characteristic elements, for the people of the region this rich variety is more problematic. The overdone cultural fragmentariness could easily lead to disintegration and conflicts. This provokes the necessity of strong unifying factor that is to connect the ideas and the aims of the people. Only thus would they commence to look at each other as integral parts of a greater community. “United in diversity”, with this motto today, the European Union and its integration initiatives provide these important solutions for the development and the preservation of the cultural heterogeneity of the region of Southeastern Europe.

The European Union has become the main force that brings the region together. However, this transition is impossible without the reconstruction of the positive image of the “Other” and reconceptualising the whole region of Southeastern Europe as a positive historical legacy which all the countries share together. Since the very first regional summit of heads of state and government of Southeastern Europe (held on 3-4 November 1997 in Agia Pelagia, Greece), the regional leaders declared that:

(...the) European orientation of our countries is an integral part of their political, economic and social development. (...) Europe cannot be complete without our countries and our peoples representing civilisations and historical traditions which are crucial to the establishment of a contemporary European identity. European and Euro-Atlantic integration is essential in promoting the aforementioned objectives.

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The diversity in terms of multiple historical layers and influences can be resolved into two possible directions. Either it can be seen as problematic and antagonistic to everyone’s own identity or it can be used in a mutual co-operative way in order to strengthen the regional co-operation and for sake of the regional reinforcement as a whole. The territory of Southeastern Europe appeared to be insufficient for the past nationalistic aims of its inhabitants. After the 19th century a growing number of nation-states were created on the Western European model. During the 20th century, military conflicts did not miss Southeastern Europe which became a battlefield during the Balkan wars and the two World wars. In the last decades of the past century the region experienced several wars and armed conflicts during the fall of Yugoslavia.

The deep roots of most of the contemporary Balkan problems are often sought in the too big role of history as a creative factor for the cultural perceptions of the Southeast European nations. The usage of history for achievement of political and national goals accompanied with the inclination of the Southeast European political elites to work often with historical arguments magnifies the meaning of the historical knowledge in the region. This raises to a new level the necessity of broad cultural co-operation between the states and the peoples of the region. The historically made negative stereotypes lead only to isolation and economic underdevelopment. The Jean Monnet legacy of achieving peace through restraining the “national ego” and through intensified co-operation with new supranational institutions remains a vague idea as long as the “other” is not honestly seen as a friend with whom much is shared and much could be achieved in the future.

The problems of the preservation of the cultural variety cannot be understood one by one in a strict national sense, but only in a bigger common regional and continental context. In the diverse Southeastern Europe only the comprehensive knowledge of the “neighbour” can lead the states to an intensive dialogue and broader co-operation. And exactly through the mutual understanding of what is shared and owned by everyone, the diversity can be truly preserved. The European integration gives such solutions, because that process is unthinkable without the creation of one

positive image of the other. That includes the external as well as the internal reinvention, which goes above any historical layers of nation-based pejorative thinking.\textsuperscript{127} The reconciliation through co-operation has been extended over Southeastern Europe as the European way of dealing with the previous conflicts. Following the example of Western Europe after the Second World War, all those elements that united and continue to unite the Southeast European states should be found. The Balkans were about to recreate the European history from the 1950s and transform the conflict-ridden region into an area of peace, prosperity and development.\textsuperscript{128} The new comprehensive look to the common and the specific of the shared history and culture of the region is in the best interest of all Southeast European countries and would be a key factor for the peaceful preservation of the rich cultural diversity present in the region.

1. Cultural co-operation in Southeastern Europe

As it was shown in the previous paragraphs, the political transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe appeared to be a successful developing process. However, alongside with it another initiative happened to move forward Southeastern Europe’s reinvention of the Balkans, as they commenced to be recognised as its forgotten historical legacy (see figure №1). In this process huge role has played the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which stimulated the internal reconsidering. Two years after the last war in Europe, UNESCO became increasingly active in its efforts to contribute to the stability, peace and development in Southeastern Europe, especially in the fields of cultural dialogue and regional co-operation. These efforts were started by the general conference of UNESCO at its 31\textsuperscript{st} session during the autumn of 2001. Back then UNESCO wanted to enhance intergovernmental co-operation in the region as being crucial for the post-Kosovo war reconstruction of educational, scientific, cultural and communication structures.

Thus UNESCO launched in April 2002, the annual Summits of the Heads of States of South-East European countries. The first forum was hosted by UNESCO secretariat in Paris and was intended to preserve and promote the region’s cultural assets as a


\textsuperscript{128} Dimitar Bechev, \textit{Constructing South East Europe. The Politics of Balkan regional cooperation} (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 78.
shared benefit, through the adoption of significant declarations and action plans on annual basis. Building on the progress of almost a decade, this unique framework of regional co-operation helps to place the historical legacy at the heart of the regional debate and to concretize political commitments at the highest governmental levels. In 2003, the process was brought to the region of Southeastern Europe and the next step was taken by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which organized the “Ohrid Regional Forum on the Dialogue among Civilisations”. This summit had the aim to encourage cultural dialogue, tolerance and peace in order to advance the economic development and regional cooperation amongst the peoples and countries of Southeast Europe. The next year (2004) the initiative continued in Tirana, Albania with focus on Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Dialogue. The forum sought to examine how religion and multi-ethnicity can contribute to the stability and progress in Southeast European.

A major breakthrough in this regional co-operation scheme was the next annual regional forum (2005) organized by UNESCO in the Bulgarian sea town of Varna. This conference brought the leaders of Southeastern Europe and put the focus on the historical legacy, which has been transferred by the long lasting “cultural corridors” all around Southeastern Europe and the Anatolian part of Turkey. The opening statement postulated that:

South East Europe has a millennia-old history and culture. Being the crossroads of civilizations and religions throughout the centuries, the region has been acting as a natural link between the East and the West. This accounts for the wealth of its historical legacy and cultural heritage. The region boasts remarkable cultural treasures with unique identity. Fifty four amongst them are considered part of the UNESCO world heritage. Its cultural integrity is unique, pointing back to common historical roots, intrinsic links and mutual influences. The cultural and historical heritage that has survived highlights distinct cultural corridors, dating back hundreds and thousands of years. These are the axes of age-old cultural and economic links in the region that have been preserved until this day. They include both the tangible and intangible cultural and historical heritage of the countries and peoples living in this part of Europe. Today, they are among the strongest bonds between our nations as

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well as being the living memory of the local civilizations. These cultural corridors recognize no borders.\textsuperscript{132}

The forum reflected the willingness to re-approach the common past and on that basis to reintegrate Southeastern Europe. The summit also started a new important initiative called “Cultural corridors of South East Europe” which so far has realised various cultural projects on territory of the whole region. As a follow up of the Varna meeting, the next fora of the leaders in Southeastern Europe kept the same spirit of co-operation. In 2006 the summit was held in Opatija, Croatia and acknowledged the fundamental role that the culture could play for the enhanced cooperation within the region in order to promote a common Southeast European heritage.\textsuperscript{133} In 2007 it was moved to Bucharest and Sibiu, Romania under the tile “A Bridge between Cultural Heritage and the Culture of the Future”, where it acknowledged that “the countries of South-East Europe represent a common space for dialogue, exchange and mutual agreement” and that “cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world and is a mainspring for dialogue and sustainable development”\textsuperscript{134}. The next destinations of the forum were: Athens, Greece in 2008 (Intercultural Encounters on Maritime, River and Lake Routes of South-East Europe), Cetinje, Montenegro in 2009 (Management of Heritage Diversity and its Promotion for Tourism) and Istanbul, Turkey in 2010 (Summit Forum of the Heads of State of South East European Countries on Cultural Corridors). The positive cultural co-operation continued in the last September (2011), when the summit was realised in Viminacium, Serbia under the tile “Contemporary Art and Reconciliation in South-East Europe”. That is how the forum moved from one place to another reaffirming the will of the Southeast European countries to reinvent their rich legacy and to reconsider it as something positive and useful. The next fora in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2012) and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2013) will have the historical responsibility to continue this constructive discourse.

VIII. Conclusion

1. The last transition and change in the concepts

Nowadays, the region of Balkans goes through its last transition towards a common part of the European family. The previously used pejorative connotations applied to the Balkans are now reconsidered and numerous high-profile political platforms speak on behalf of the region more frequently as the Southeastern part of Europe. The expectation for de-balkanization continues to legitimize the regional political schemes, whilst the countries of Southeastern Europe are advancing on their way towards the EU, NATO and a new positive international recognition. The EU forms a key part in this process and its involvement shapes the ways in which the transition is constructed and defined. Simultaneously, through the policies of conditionality and the external impetus for regional co-operation, the region itself commenced to reinvent itself as a something positive and started to look at the “neighbour” as a friend with whom much is shared and with whom much could be developed. That is how the two levelled process of the transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe commenced and still takes place in contemporary Europe. Thus the Balkan metaphor was replaced by the Southeast European historical legacy (see again figure №1).

After years of wars and violence, the biggest promise for Southeastern Europe in the new twenty first century, appeared to be the integration not only within its own borders, but within Europe as a whole. The new transition goals included more intensive connections within the region of Southeastern Europe and more productive connections with broader Europe. That is how the last reinvention and the subsequent transition commenced in the 1990s. The international community, including the United Nations and NATO and the most actively involved western political actors - the European Union and the United States, played important role in all these events. The region required external help for its future peaceful and normal development. Both the wars and their consequences bound Europeans and Americans much closer to Southeastern Europe. The capacity of this area to enter the twenty first century on even terms with the rest of Europe was actually the biggest transition goal that was sought by each side.135 What was very specific in the Southeast European case was that it shared historical legacy,

which was marked as requirement to demonstrate a common compliance with the EU norms through the mechanisms of the regional co-operation. For the Western Balkans in particular that means the containment of ethnic based conflicts, co-operation with the specially created International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and lastly membership in the various regional integration schemes.

During the last year (2011) a positive development was the finalization of the negotiations with Croatia on its way towards being a full Member State of the EU. Furthermore, Serbia delivered the last war criminal fugitives Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić sought by the ICTY and recently received a candidate for EU membership status. These events confirmed the credibility of the Enlargement policy of the EU. However, on the other hand the accession negotiations with Turkey have not moved forwards for more than a year. Even the series of discussions about the official name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have not brought progress and the international dispute with Greece continues. In Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina there is persistent political stalemate and their recognition as candidate states for EU membership remains in the future. Furthermore, Kosovo is probably the most problematic country in the area nowadays. Not only it is not recognised by several EU Member States, but as it was already mentioned, it is the only country in Southeastern Europe which is still isolated by visa regimes with the EU countries.136 Kosovo is the place where the interethnic tensions are mostly felt today and where most of the reconciliation work still has to be done.

2. Remnants of the Balkanism

That is how the symbolic value of the Eurpeanness remapped the political geography of Southeastern Europe and continues to do so even today.137 Nowadays, Europe refers to the region as Southeastern Europe. It successfully constructs these countries into a regional community through its normative requirements. After the 1990s this label dominates over the old Balkans, which used to be associated with negative connotations. Looking at the external Western influences, if the nationalism brought chaos to this diverse area in the 19th century, it is the Europeanization that

nowadays brings opportunities for reintegration as part of a bigger union. The Europe of the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s is a way different from the sovereign national states that were established on the Old continent during the 19th and early 20th centuries. From the point of view, the Enlargement strategy offered by the NATO and the EU is seen by the Southeast European countries as a bringer of a new positive image and simultaneously as an opportunity to reinvent their common historical legacy and cultural ties.

On the 3rd June 2000 the U.S. president Bill Clinton announced in Aachen, Germany that: “(...)the essential task for the Europeans was (is) to bring the Balkan region into the global mainstream. That is the only way to make peace last in that bitterly divided region (...) 'Our goal must be to de-Balkanize the Balkans.' This expectation was largely preserved until present days, because in the modern interconnected and globalizing world ethnic tensions and barriers in the heart of Europe are simply unthinkable. The pledge for de-balkanization continues to legitimize the regional schemes of various internal and external factors, including the EU, the NATO and the USA. However, this whole process of transition of the concepts is definitively started, but far from complete.

At the end of the day, the following research tries to answer some important questions such as to which end the transition has been brought and are its results plausible or not? As it was shown in the previous paragraphs the paper searches for an answer to the query whether the Balkans are nowadays being reinvented? Well the last question will remain half-way answered. On the one hand this Master thesis has proved that there are serious signals coming from modern day Southeastern Europe, that it is passing the transition whilst reintegrating itself within the European family. Furthermore, this process is supplemented by the new tendency of internal reinvention of the Balkan historical legacy. However, on the other hand there are still signs of the Balkanism discourse that appear in journalistic works and politicians’ speeches. Every rule has its exception and in 2004 the European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten addressed the German Bundestag with his speech on the Western Balkans:

As Yugoslavia broke into bits, Europe was largely impotent because it was not united. Some Member States wanted to keep Yugoslavia together at all costs, some wanted to manage its break-up, and others still felt we should stay out of

the whole mess. It was Bismarck who said that the Balkans "was not worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier" (speech to Reichstag, 5 December 1876). I understand what he was trying to say, but obviously our views of what it is to be European have, to say the least, developed a great deal since his day. The people of the Western Balkans are our fellow Europeans. We cannot wash our hands of them... 200,000 or more fellow Europeans died in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone. As Europeans we cannot avoid a heavy share of responsibility for what happened.\textsuperscript{139}

Even though the speech expresses the real political decisions of the EU about the future of the Western Balkans, it also shows the problematic sides of the hiding \textit{Balkanism}. The fact that the then European Commissioner for External Relations “understood” what Bismarck was trying to say makes the reinvention problematic.\textsuperscript{140} In 2007 the British ex-Prime minister Gordon Brown spoke about the \textit{Balkanization} of Britain, confirming that some of the bad connotations are still externally present.\textsuperscript{141} Therefore, the processes of transition have already commenced but considering the public opinion in Western Europe and the still smouldering points of potential conflicts (e.g. Northern Kosovo) the future transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe will take more time to be completed; more than its supporters would have liked to.

\section*{3. Emancipation of the terms}

Recently, the regional identities are being object of intensive study, because nowadays they are not regarded as a reminiscence of provincial mentality, but quite on the contrary they are seen as places, where local democracy and resistance to the centralised states are thriving as concepts. Actually, today the regions are being looked as possible supranational formations in concordance with the interdependent globalizing modern world. This tendency can be seen in the project of the European Union, which has adopted the name of the bigger geographical region Europe. Exactly the European integration and the study of the rudimental European identity gave the impetus to the research of the regionalism and the regions. There are many definitions of “region” and “regionalism” according to specific scientific criteria. Rune Johansson, professor of Ethnicity Studies at the University of Linköping, stipulates that \textit{region} is:

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{140} Maria Todorova, “Historical Legacies Between Europe and the Near East” (paper presented at the Carl Heinrich Becker Lecture of the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Berlin, Germany, 2007), 68.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
(...) a territory or an area in some way demarcated or at least spatially defined...A region is generally understood to be marked by some internal similarities, cohesion or affinity which differentiate it from the outside world (...and it) can vary in form and be linked to political as well as cultural or economic aspects.142

On the other hand the professor of political science from the University of Oslo, Iver Neumann writes that:

(...) regions are invented by political actors as a political programme, they are not simply waiting to be discovered. But when they are invented, stories about how ‘natural’ (or essential – emphasis added) it is that just these regions and no others exist are invariable told – history is shorn of all alternative stories, which could have been told and the story of a particular region is allowed to reign supreme.143

In that regard Southeastern Europe might be seen as a possible future supranational region, being part of a broader supranational community – the European Union. However, it is very important to note that the region should not be viewed simply as a territorial sub-region of Europe, because the different academic approaches define it in very distinctive ways. Complex notions such as region, nation, and race are in fact socially constructed systems. As it was stipulated, the Balkans might be seen as a simple name, pejorative metaphor and positive historical legacy. On the other hand Europe as a concept could be regarded as a history of different meanings, commencing from a name, proceeding to a place, and ending as an idea. Elaborating further, Europe was a mythological Ancient Greek name (Εὐρώπη) for a Phoenician goddess. The ancient myths say that she has been carried on the back of a bull (incarnation of Zeus) from the modern day territories of Turkey to the Greek islands – both parts of two Southeast European countries. After that Europe was used by the Ancient Greeks as a designation of the Greek mainland territories (not maritime islands), which meant by an irony of fate the Balkan Peninsula. Throughout the next centuries the notion spread northward and westward its geographical meaning to encompass the European continent.144 On that basis the idea or ideal for Europe was created as the cradle of the Western value system encompassing important European cultural achievements such as

the democracy, the Christian religious ethics, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, the Industrial revolution and so on. In that sense Europe as a term, plays different and often incommensurable roles, starting from a geographical zone and going to economic and political entity, which creates intellectual ideas that by their side feed the ground for a common European ideal. Nowadays, Europe is simultaneously a political, geographical and cultural term, that presupposes a degree of unity or significant commonalities among the peoples and places it encompasses. These characteristics of the notion Europe make it very applicable to the European region that the following Master thesis have analysed.

4. The Balkans as a bridge

In comparison with the Orient, which was frequently regarded as something incompatible and reciprocal to the Western world, the Balkans could be seen as a bridge between the West and the East. The bridge metaphor was very popular in that particular regional discourse. Perhaps the reason for that were the geographic and symbolic specificities of the Bosporus strait which bridges Europe with Asia and splits in half the biggest Turkish city of Istanbul. Furthermore, the Yugoslav novelist Ivo Andrić won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1961 for his book “The Bridge over Drina”, which used the Balkan bridge metaphor to depict the old Ottoman bridge, connecting and uniting different cultures in the city of Višegrad, modern Bosnia and Herzegovina.\textsuperscript{146} The bridge built by the prominent Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan in 1577, symbolized the cultural exchange between the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean world, between Islam and Christianity, throughout the course of history.\textsuperscript{147} Because of its cultural importance, this magnetic bridge was proclaimed as UNESCO World Heritage site in 2007, making it the second World Heritage site in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The other one was unsurprisingly a third important Balkan bridge, which happened to be quite cited internationally, during the Yugoslav wars.\textsuperscript{148} That was the Old Bridge (\textit{Stari Most}) in Mostar, the biggest city of the Herzegovina region. The


bridge has been completed in the middle of 16\textsuperscript{th} century, and later on during the Yugoslav wars was ruined (1993), thereby symbolizing the destruction and disunion in the region. Not-surprisingly exactly that structure was later rebuilt (2004) to reaffirm reconciliation, and to became UNESCO World Heritage site in 2005.

In contrast to that good practice, a fourth prominent Balkan bridge still remains as a symbolic barrier which disunites the local people. That is the bridge over the Ibar river in Mitrovica, Northern Kosovo. That structure currently separates the predominately Serbian populated northern parts, and the Albanian majority in the centre. It stays right in the middle of the still smouldering conflict in Kosovo, which continues to kindle confrontations even in the beginning of 2012.\textsuperscript{149} Despite all the regional co-operation schemes and the fact that the European Parliament has called for, Kosovo is still not recognised by all EU Member States.\textsuperscript{150} An \textit{Economist} article titled “Entering the Yugosphere” made a good conclusion giving a very relevant input to the developments on this topic:

The trick over the next few years will be to consolidate what people have in common, keep their governments focused on that, and try to bring the region’s politics and business more closely aligned both throughout the Yugosphere and, ideally, with the rest of Europe, too. The European Union was founded to cement peace on the continent and in the Yugosphere that job is not yet finished.\textsuperscript{151}

As long as the common rule and the economy remained strong and the local people were not burdened by the ideas of nationalism or self-determination, life was going in its normal routine. What disrupted everything of that micro-world was the arrival of nationalism. In fact it was the reverberation of the French Revolution and the Spring of Nations that created the image of the idealized national country, which constantly strives to unite all individuals of a single \textit{imagined community} into an ethnically homogeneous national state. In the Old continent there has been a process of consolidation of homogeneous ethnic communities since the late medieval times. The creation of the modern nations has been a dynamic process, which has started in


Western Europe and slowly was spread northward, southward, eastward and finally towards the Balkan Peninsula, which happened to be its youngest variant. That is how the newest European nation state Kosovo has proclaimed its independence in February 2008.\footnote{Maria Todorova, \textit{Balkani - Balkanizam} (Sofia: Universitetsko izdatelstvo „Sv. Kliment Ohridski”, 2004), 304. Translation from Bulgarian: Maria Todorova, \textit{Balkans – Balkanism} (Sofia: University Publishing House “St. Kliment Ohridski”, 2004), 304.}

Notwithstanding that the Balkans have received their negative image as something not completely European, something which often goes against the norms of the European civilization, they actually revealed the darker essence of the European continent. It is very important to note that the Balkan nationalism really represents the youngest variant of the European examples. This fact cannot acquit the violence and ethnic cleansing in the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century with its simple juxtaposition to the dynastical, religious and ethnic “cleansings” that happened in the course of the pre-industrial times in Western Europe. It is true that the smaller nations have more limited options for choice in the hierarchical structure of the contemporary world of interconnected global economy, but this statement does not have to purge them if they have done atrocities in the contemporary interdependent world. In fact much of this discourse is connected to those constructed stereotypes that represent “the West”, “the Balkans”, “Europe” etc. They help us realize the present situation through some basic landmarks, but also hide from us the distinctiveness of each part of the construction. In that regard Professor Maria Todorova appeals for the trivialization and normalization of Southeastern Europe, using the same model, as the one that was previously applied for the German history, regarded only as continuity of violence and militarism and negatively portrayed through the \textit{Sonderweg} theory.\footnote{Maria Todorova, “Learning Memory, Remembering Identity,” in \textit{Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory ed.} Maria Todorova (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers, 2004), 17.} Of course no one shall delude him/herself that the majority of journalists would easily step out of their essentialist usage of the term \textit{“Balkans”} as a violent place of bad memories, but at least the trivialisation will be a step forward. Yet reality shows that the reactions of some contemporary journalists and politicians are far from the goal of the essential purification.\footnote{Daily Mail Online, “Furious Greeks lampoon German ‘overlords’ as Nazis with picture of Merkel dressed as an SS guard,” \textit{Daily Mail}, 28th October 2011, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2054406/Furious-Greeks-lampoon-German-overlords-Nazis-picture-Merkel-dressed-SS-guard.html (accessed 26 January 2012).} Even today there are voices which define Germany using the essentialist rhetoric, not to speak for the still integrating and yet recently kindled \textit{Balkans}.\footnote{Daily Mail Online, “Furious Greeks lampoon German ‘overlords’ as Nazis with picture of Merkel dressed as an SS guard,” \textit{Daily Mail}, 28th October 2011, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2054406/Furious-Greeks-lampoon-German-overlords-Nazis-picture-Merkel-dressed-SS-guard.html (accessed 26 January 2012).}
Nevertheless, something else in the transition discourse is much more important. Following the social constructivist tradition, the key questions in the discourse have to be not simply how to reconstruct the memories but how do we construct the past in general? In order to achieve these tasks Southeastern Europe has to “inevitably start from its perception of the past.”¹⁵⁵ Perhaps future generations will start to recapture the reality of past ages and will stop to read the present into the past. Future Turks could stop viewing the Ottoman Empire as a Turkish state, Serbs might cease to cite the Battle of Kosovo field, when confronting topics in their modern history, and Greeks could quit referring to Alexander the Great, when talking about the name of their northern neighbours etc. Constructions of approaching the past might transform, just as nowadays a Frenchman or a British cannot see his/hers present political identities as Gaelic, Saxon, Norman etc.¹⁵⁶ Southeastern Europe has started this process of transition, but only the future will show how long will it take in order to complete it. When that is clearly present, the transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe will finish since more people, both from within and from outside of the region, would have started to think how they can reinvent the past through the revaluation of its everyday construction. Only through the positive image of the “Other” and the common Balkan past, the integration will be possible and more importantly truly complete.

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Southeast European Times. “About this site.” 


The transition of the Balkans into Southeastern Europe is a compound two levelled process. On the one hand, externally the metaphorical *pejorative Balkans* are being reconsidered as the Southeastern part of Europe, whilst on the other hand the Balkans are being internally reinvented as the *positive* historical legacy of the region.
Table 1. European countries (regions) previously ruled by the Ottoman Empire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (Region)</th>
<th>Period of Ottoman rule</th>
<th>Total duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>1468-1912</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Bosnia</td>
<td>1463-1878</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Herzegovina</td>
<td>1482-1878</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1396-1878</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1526-1699</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1571-1878</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1453-1830</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1541-1699</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>1389-1912</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>1371-1913</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>1499-1878</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wallachia</td>
<td>1476-1829</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Moldavia</td>
<td>1504-1829</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>1389-1817</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adrianople</td>
<td>1361-1923</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Constantinople</td>
<td>1453-1923</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above data is approximate and the borders of the Medieval and early-Modern countries (regions) were object of constant change. Therefore the dates of the Ottoman conquest do not follow exactly the contemporary state borders. Some of the countries (regions) had different types of rule within the Ottoman Empire; from autonomous territory through vassalage and complete Ottoman governmental control.

* Adrianople (Edirne) was the first European capital of the Ottomans; it was Ottoman possession after 1361. Constantinople (Istanbul) was the capital of the Byzantine Empire and later of the Ottomans; it was Ottoman possession after 1453.

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Table 2 Largest and state recognised ethnic minority groups in Southeastern Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (region)</th>
<th>Largest ethnic minorities in Southeastern Europe (in alphabetical order)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Greek Macedonian Montenegrin Romani Walachian/Aromanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Romani Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Bosniak (48%) Croatian (14%) Romani (1%) Serbian (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Albanian Bosniak Czech Hungarian Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Albanian/Arvanite Bulgarian/Macedonian Turkish Walachian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>Ashkalia Bosniak Croatian Egyptian Gorani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>Albanian Romani Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>Albanian Bosniak Croatian Muslims Serbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>German Hungarian Romani Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Albanian Bosniak Croatian Hungarian Montenegrin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>Hungarian Italian Romani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey (European Part)</td>
<td>Armenian Jewish Rum Christian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

158 There are not dominant minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All peoples could be considered minorities, as all face marginalization in areas where their ethnicity is not dominant.
159 The following table was created using data from the European Commission’s Euromosaic study to promote and safeguard regional or minority languages and cultures (for the EU Member States), and from the website directory of Minority Rights Group International NGO (for the potential and candidate countries).
### Table 3: Countries in Southeast Europe according to the definitions of different organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>EU (Enlargement DG)</th>
<th>SPSEE (RCC)</th>
<th>SECl³</th>
<th>SEECP¹</th>
<th>SEE Times⁵</th>
<th>UN(political borders)⁶</th>
<th>Encyclopaedia Britannica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>EU (yes)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>EU (no)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>EU (yes)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>EU (yes)</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>EU (yes)</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. European Union Enlargement Directorate General. Member States and countries from the region considered either as candidates or as potential candidates for membership. Cyprus is regarded in a different way by that DG.
2. Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (today Regional Cooperation Council). The table shows the so called "countries of the region", but the organization also includes: all the other European Union Member States and the European Commission; other countries - Canada, Japan, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, USA; various international organizations, financial institutions and regional initiatives.
3. Southeast European Cooperative Initiative. Members from the region.
6. United Nations’ definition of Southeastern Europe made by the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (StAGN), using the political borders criterion.
7. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Map showing the distribution of various culture areas, each inhabited by groups exhibiting linguistic and other cultural similarity in Europe.
Table №4 Frequency of the usage of the term “Southeastern Europe” for the countries in the region (According to the abovementioned organizations in table №3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Frequency of usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Moldova*</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>4/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>3/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Cyprus*</td>
<td>2/7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cyprus and Moldova are considered out of this work’s proposal for definition for Southeastern Europe. Nevertheless, they are part of the definitions of several regional organizations.

Table №5 1991-99 EU Assistance to South-Eastern Europe (Allocations in Million Euros)\(^{160}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recipient Country</th>
<th>EU Total investments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>15.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>2569.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1519.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (includes Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo)</td>
<td>1184.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>642.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional co-operation investments</td>
<td>462.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7953.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>141,227,000</td>
<td>146,000,000</td>
<td>151,200,000</td>
<td>153,584,594</td>
<td>156,528,286</td>
<td>159,670,852</td>
<td>162,912,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FYR of) Macedonia</td>
<td>58,500,000</td>
<td>70,200,000</td>
<td>81,782,001</td>
<td>91,684,594</td>
<td>98,028,286</td>
<td>105,070,852</td>
<td>117,212,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>31,400,000</td>
<td>32,600,000</td>
<td>34,500,000</td>
<td>33,521,513</td>
<td>34,153,943</td>
<td>34,785,022</td>
<td>35,414,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>61,000,000</td>
<td>73,820,000</td>
<td>81,182,921</td>
<td>94,173,173</td>
<td>94,428,286</td>
<td>96,270,852</td>
<td>98,112,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>62,100,000</td>
<td>74,800,000</td>
<td>89,107,746</td>
<td>105,384,594</td>
<td>107,428,286</td>
<td>109,470,852</td>
<td>111,812,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>189,700,000</td>
<td>190,900,000</td>
<td>194,800,000</td>
<td>197,958,432</td>
<td>201,879,600</td>
<td>205,899,192</td>
<td>214,731,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>68,300,000</td>
<td>184,700,000</td>
<td>106,100,000</td>
<td>67,500,000</td>
<td>68,700,000</td>
<td>70,000,000</td>
<td>73,700,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,109,427,000</td>
<td>1,311,720,006</td>
<td>1,305,072,668</td>
<td>1,397,306,900</td>
<td>1,353,046,687</td>
<td>1,692,667,622</td>
<td>1,755,395,497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEES GERMAN RUIN FOR GENERATIONS

Rathenau, Head of Great Industry, Predicts the “Balkanization of Europe.”

"Then comes the question of indemnities. If the indemnities are high, the interest and repayments will take our savings and we shall have nothing with which to expand our industries. Black ruin will face us, and there will be a great tide of emigration probably to South America and the Far East and certainly to Russia. It will be most dreadful, and the result will be the Balkanization of Europe."

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Image №2 The *Gyuetch* meal on the cover of Professor Christo Matanov’s book titled “Balkan horizons. History. Societies, Personalities, Vol 1.”


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