



BASIC INSTINCT

THE CASE FOR MORE NATO IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

- Executive Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations -

STUDY OF THE CENTER FOR EURO-ATLANTIC STUDIES FROM SERBIA
JUNE 2017

This assessment report was made possible with partial funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NED.



QUOTES THAT INSPIRED CEAS TEAM



We need more NATO, more EU, and more NATO and EU.

Rose Eilene Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General of NATO, at Lennart Meri conference in Tallinn, Riga, on a panel Less NATO More EU, May 2017



The way to deter a crisis is through speed of recognition, speed of political decision and speed of assembly. Unity of NATO and unity of the EU are absolutely necessary for deterrence. There is no room for miscalculation.

Lt. Gen. Benjamin Hodges, commander of U.S. Army Europe, at Lennart Meri conference in Tallinn, Riga, May 2017

QUOTES THAT INSPIRED CEAS TEAM



Russia is simply using every aspect of an ethnic tension of political destabilization of any kind of conflict to its own advantage, which means to the disadvantage of the West and of liberal democracy. That is the most potent foreign influence in the Balkans, which we need to counter in some way.

Roland Freudenstein, Policy Director, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, in an interview for European Western Balkans, June 2017



We were often asked by individuals what does the membership in NATO brings to each one of us, what kind of direct benefits would bring them. We responded – to you personally nothing, this is more for the society as a whole and a state, ideas and alliances. Everything else is propaganda, and we do not do propaganda.

Milica Kovačević, Info Center on Euro-Atlantic integration and director, Center for democratic transition, at Conference - The reasons for the stagnation of NATO integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina- Regional Context and the Future, in Sarajevo, April 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Study **Basic Instinct – The Case for More NATO in The Western Balkans** is a result of a year long research conducted under the CEAS project *Continued fulfillment of IPAP Commitments – Stepping closer to NATO*, supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) from the USA.

The Study particularly addresses four underlying issues common to all countries of the Western Balkans: incomplete transitional justice processes; incomplete security sector reforms; constitutionally or otherwise embedded solutions that propel an illiberal politicization of ethnicities; and internationally led or sponsored processes that may serve short-term goals, but are implemented in a way that undermines the separation of powers, strengthening of independent institutions and decision-making processes in already poorly governed countries of the Region.

The Study argues that those issues could in the end, if not properly addressed, bring the process of the democratization of the Region and its deeper integration into Euro-Atlantic structures to a halt. Furthermore, all these issues create a fertile ground for non-democratic and hostile hybrid and conventional obstructive actions conducted by state or non-state actors.

The Study's main conclusion is that NATO should be more relevant than ever when it comes to ensuring strategic stability in Europe and the Western Balkans, which should be fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Bearing in mind the new strategic environment, full integration into these structures should be a basic instinct response of all truly liberal and democratic forces in the Region.

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The following is stated in the **Conclusions and Recommendations** section of the Study: Since all the governments in the Region, elected through a series of not too irregular, if not entirely fair election processes, and most of their legitimate oppositions have pledged commitment to their countries' integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, with most of them expressing the will to become fully fledged EU and NATO members, NATO and its member states can, with full legitimacy, address all the above-mentioned underlying challenges, and provide incentives and capacities

for the reforms that would overcome them. By admitting Montenegro as the 29th member state, NATO has demonstrated that it is ready to move on in a changed political environment in the Western Balkans faster and bolder than any other global or regional actor. The fact that the newly elected Macedonian government is already looking for ways to reactivate its NATO membership and its upcoming meeting with the NATO leaders confirm that NATO can and should be the leading actor in a sustained and comprehensive process of stabilization and democratization in the Region..... Societies of the Region are less resilient

than EU and NATO member states to newly emerging global threats and hostile hybrid operations whose scope has been increasing in the Region, and on the other hand regional cooperation is still insufficient in many relevant areas, primarily in defense and security, therefore NATO should be more relevant than ever when it comes to ensuring strategic stability in Europe and the Western Balkans, which should be fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Bearing in mind the new strategic environment, full integration into these structures should be a basic instinct response of all truly liberal and democratic forces in the Region.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The **Study Basic Instinct – The Case for More NATO in The Western Balkans** is a result of a year long research conducted under the CEAS project *Continued fulfillment of IPAP¹ Commitments – Stepping closer to NATO* supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) from the USA.

During the preparation of this Study, the CEAS team conducted a broad review of the literature² dealing with: NATO, NATO - EU relations, NATO - USA relations and Euro-Atlantic integration and cooperation processes of the countries of the Western Balkans³.

The CEAS team held a series of on and off the record discussions with representatives of think-tanks and civil society organizations, independent policy analysts, experts, diplomats, governmental officials and journalists who are dealing with NATO and the Western Balkans related issues. These sessions helped the CEAS team get a broader understanding of different approaches to the topics addressed in this Study.

During the reporting period members of the CEAS team have participated in several high level conferences and expert forums⁴, where some of the issues in relation to the Study were discussed and analyzed with world leading experts and officials.

Besides that, during the same period, the CEAS organized two high level events dealing with NATO in general and NATO--Serbia in particular. The first was its fourth Belgrade NATO Week⁵ held in November 2016, that covered issues like NATO - EU relationship after the Warsaw NATO Summit, the Warsaw Summit key decisions and their implications for the region of Western Balkans, inclusion of the Western Balkans in East Europe, the USA elections outcomes and their impact on future of Trans- Atlantic partnership, Trans -Atlantic partners' relations with Russia, Serbia-NATO relations. The second one was a

1 Individual Partnership Action Plan between Serbia and NATO, adopted in January 2015

2 CEAS has compiled the literature that it finds most compelling and relevant on its website www.ceas-serbia.org in the section IN FOCUS

3 The Western Balkans region includes the following countries: Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania-so called WB6. For the purpose of this Study separate case studies have been commissioned for all countries except Albania

4 **Georgia Defence and Security Conference** - Tbilisi, Georgia held in May 2016; **WROCŁAW Global Forum 2016** – held in July 2016 in Wroclaw, Poland; **Warsaw Summit Experts' Forum**—NATO in Defense of Peace: 2016 and Beyond - on the margins of the NATO Summit held in July 2016, in Warsaw, Poland; **STRATCOM Summit 2016**: Counter-Disinformation Policies: Strategic Communications Lessons for the Alliance, held in October 2016 in Prague; **Political Capital's conference entitled 'Russian influence in the CEE region'**, held in November 2016 in Hungary, Budapest; **Conference on the subject of "Authoritarian Influence in Vulnerable Democracies"**, organized by the International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy, January, 2017; **Eleventh annual Lennart Meri Conference (LMC) 'Darkest Just Before the Dawn?'** held on May 2017 in Tallinn, Estonia; **STRATCOM Summit 2017**: How to Defend Allied Democracies against Hostile Influence & Disinformation Operations, held in May 2017 in Prague; **Beacon Project's civil society round table: "Countering Disinformation Through Closer Cooperation, Coordination and Research: A Social Network Response"**, held in May 2017 in Bratislava, Slovakia; **GLOBSEC 2017 Bratislava Forum**, held in May 2017 in Bratislava, Slovakia and **Workshop on "Shaping the Future in Serbia after the Presidential Elections 2017"**, held in June 2017 in Berlin, organized by Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft (Southeast Europe Association) and supported by the German Federal Foreign Office

5 The fourth Belgrade NATO Week held in November/December 2016. Speech by the CEAS Director Ms. Jelena Milić at the opening of the Fourth Belgrade NATO Week, available at: <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/news/ceas-news/5733-speech-by-director-of-ceas-jelena-milic-at-the-opening-of-the-fourth-belgrade-nato-week> . Speech by the USA Ambassador Kyle Scott at the opening of the Fourth Belgrade NATO Week, available at: <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/external/5723-ambassador-kyle-scott-speech-at-the-opening-belgrade-nato-week> . Reports on the Fourth Belgrade NATO Week available at: <http://www.naslovi.net/2016-11-30/blic/milic-nato-nikog-ne-primorava-da-bude-clan/19303633>; <http://www.naslovi.net/2016-11-29/b92/jasno-da-ne-postoji-tajni-plan-za-uvlacenje-srb-u-nato/19302573>; http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2016&mm=11&dd=28&nav_id=99808; <https://inserbia.info/today/2016/11/belgrade-nato-week-to-begin-monday>

round table with NATO official and Serbian government representatives⁶, held in June 2017, during which the implementation of Serbia-NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan implementation was addressed in more detail. Key findings from these events have been thoroughly examined in the process of writing of the Study's Conclusions and Recommendations section.

The key writer of the Study and Editor in Chief has been Ms. Jelena Milić⁷, the Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies.

The CEAS invited regional experts: Mr. Vesko Garčević⁸ and Ms Tamara Nikčević⁹ from Montenegro; Mr. Emir Suljagić¹⁰ from Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr. Astrit Istrefi¹¹ from Kosovo and Mr. Dane Teleski¹² from Macedonia to put together case studies of their respective countries, that focused on security sector reforms' issues, current state of affairs of Euro-Atlantic integration processes of their countries and key challenges to them. Mr. Martin Hala¹³ from the Czech Republic was invited to put together a case study on an increasing Chinese role in the Central and South Europe. Their contributions are integral parts of the Study's sections related to respective countries and topics. The CEAS finds their work very compelling and hopes to continue cooperation with all of the commissioned authors.

The Study quotes key features from: the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Economic and Security Committee draft report: ***Economic Transition in the Western Balkans: An Assessment*** put together by Richard Benyon¹⁴; series of papers published so far within the

6 NATO respects the neutrality of Serbia but is ready for greater cooperation, 15th June 2017, Published by European Western Balkans. Available at: <https://europeanwesternbalkans.rs/nato-postuje-neutralnost-srbije-ali-spreman-na-vecu-saradnju/>

7 CV of Ms. Jelena Milić, Director of Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies is available at CEAS website: <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/about-ceas/ceas-team>

8 Vesko Garčević – member of CEAS advisory board, professor of the practice of International Relations at Frederick Pardee School of Global Studies and Former Ambassador of Montenegro in Brussels (NATO) and Vienna (OSCE), as well as former National coordinator for NATO within the Cabinet of Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro

9 Tamara Nikčević – a Yugoslavian journalist who, for the past twenty years, has worked at Television Montenegro, Belgrade weeklies NIN and Vreme, Sarajevo magazine Dani, Newsweek, Pobjeda, Nova ekonomija. She is also the author of the book 'Barren islands of Jovo Kapičić', published in 2009 in Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, B&H and sold in more than 40,000 copies

10 Ph.D. Emir Suljagić – member of CEAS advisory board, President of Political Council of Civic Alliance Party from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the director of Emerging Democracies Center NGO from B&H, former Head of the Cabinet of the Mayor of Sarajevo, Minister of Education and Science of the Sarajevo Canton, and Deputy Minister of Defense for Policy and Planning in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

11 Astrit Istrefi – presently the Executive Director of the Balkan Forum, Mr Istrefi has gathered around 20 years of experience in focusing on conflict prevention, peace building and development related issues in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, leading strategic development and management/oversight of complex programs, budgets, and teams in the Western Balkans, Central Asia, Caucasus, Afghanistan, the UK and the USA. His extensive experience includes working with Care International, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Forum for Civic Initiatives (FIQ) in Pristina; International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kabul and Washington DC; and Saferworld in London.

12 Dane Teleski - an expert in post-conflict democratization, transformation of rebel groups, political parties, ethnic politics, regional cooperation, EU integration and Southeast Europe. In 2014, he received a Civil Society Scholar Award from Open Society Institute in New York. He was a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz (October 2015 – June 2016), and a Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Studies of South East Europe at the University of Rijeka (March – July, 2016). He was a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Fribourg in fall 2016.

13 Martin Hala – (Ph.D.) is a sinologist currently based in Prague. Educated in Prague, Shanghai, Berkley, and Harvard, he has taught at universities in Prague and Bratislava, and conducted research in China, Taiwan, and the U.S. He has worked for several media-assistance organizations in Europe and Asia, and from 2014-2015 he served as the Asia Pacific regional manager at the Open Society Foundations. Presently, he is the Director of the new nonprofit organization AcaMedia.

14 NATO Parliamentary Assembly Economics and Security Committee (ESC) Draft Report [074 ESCTD 17 E] by Richard Benyon (United Kingdom) – An Assessment of the Economic Transition in the Western Balkans. April 2017. Available at: <http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=4517>

GLOBSEC project: **NATO Adaptation Initiative**¹⁵ led by General (Retd) John R. Allen and the report published by Estonia based International center for Defense and **Security A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation / How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity**¹⁶, written by Kirsti Raik and Pauli Jarvenpaa.

The CEAS finds all of them very relevant and humbly hopes that the study **Basic Instinct – The Case for More NATO in the Western Balkans** can serve as a complementary document for those who will probably further operationalize policies recommended in them that are related to the Western Balkans.

In the introductory section of the Study the CEAS quotes: Rose Gottemoeller, Deputy Secretary General of NATO; Lieutenant General Frederick Benjamin Hodges, commander of U.S. Army Europe; Roland Freudenstein, Policy Director, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies the official think tank of the European People's Party, and Milica Kovačević, coordinator, Info Center on Euro-Atlantic Integration and director, Center for Democratic Transition from Montenegro. The CEAS sincerely hopes that their messages will be heard and analyzed by policy makers in NATO, USA and the EU, member states and the Western Balkans, as they are the key targeted audience of the Study.

15 GLOBSEC NATO Adaptation Initiative. Authored by the Initiative's Steering Committee members: General John Allen, General Wolf Langheld, Professor Dr Julian Lindley-French, Admiral Giampaolo di Paola, Ambassador Tomáš Valášek and other acclaimed authorities from the field of global security and strategy. May 2017. Available at: <http://www.globsec.org/globsec2017/globsec-nato-adaptation-initiative>

16 A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation / How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity. ICDS. May 2017. Available at: <https://www.icds.ee/publications/article/a-new-era-of-eu-nato-cooperation-how-to-make-the-best-of-a-marriage-of-necessity>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NATO and its member states are currently facing substantial changes in the global security environment, with a revisionist Russia probably being one of the toughest, and severe internal challenges like Brexit, which significantly affects NATO too. It is impossible to grasp all the possible consequences of such changing circumstances, but President Trump's endorsement of NATO's Article 5, the increasing consensus as to the need for a new trans-Atlantic bargain, the newly agreed NATO-EU areas of cooperation, and the implementation of the decisions taken at the Wales and Warsaw summits, are confirmations of NATO's capacity to permanently adapt, and, more importantly, it is a confirmation of its enduring relevance.

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Despite announcements of a more structured EU defense policy, the big issue remains whether there is the real political will to carry it out. It seems that difficulties in harmonizing each nation's capability planning and development will remain a major challenge for both the EU and NATO. It would be good if all further developments in this direction contribute to greater complementarity between NATO and the EU. Every move on the side of the EU that could be seen as a "zero-sum game" in relation to NATO would play into the hands of Russia and anti-NATO elements in the US. It would also weaken the need

for Europeans to press for closer and more explicit US involvement in NATO.

Additionally, especially bearing in mind the arguments and trends leading to a "multi-speed" EU that add up to concerns about the Region's EU perspective, owing to internal member states' issues and the complicated decision-making process in the EU, and also bearing in mind concerns about the "outsourcing" of the EU-integration processes of some countries in the Region to certain EU member states (the Berlin and 'Berlin Plus' processes and assistance mechanisms), the above-mentioned potential setbacks in future EU-NATO relations could impede the more coordinated and much needed NATO and EU political involvement in the Region. It would also create an opportunity for the exercise of influence by non-democratic or even hostile foreign states and non-state actors in the Region.

The good news for the Western Balkans is that both the EU and NATO have mentioned the Region in their recent strategic documents, with both organizations expressing a commitment to a continuation of open door policies. It is also very good news for the Western Balkans that the member states of the EU and NATO, as well as the EU and NATO organizations

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themselves, are adjusting to the new strategic environment by agreeing on more collective efforts and joint cooperation in defense and security, on the basis of the December 2016 NATO foreign ministerial conference, where the Allies agreed to move forward with more intensive cooperation on 42 proposals with the EU, which are now being implemented.

Several prominent think-tanks and international organizations and bodies have recently made compelling cases for more USA and EU engagement in the Region, addressing such vital issues as the dangers of the West opting for political stability over democracy in the Region, weak regional governance, poor economic convergence capacities, high levels of youth unemployment, rampant corruption and the unhealthy situation regarding the freedom of the media.

But several rarely, if at all mentioned, underlying issues, such as incomplete transitional justice processes, incomplete security sector reforms, constitutionally or otherwise embedded solutions that propel an illiberal politicization of ethnicities, and internationally led or sponsored processes that serve short-term goals but undermine the separation of powers, strengthening of independent institutions and decision-making processes within them, could in the end, if not properly addressed, bring the process of the democratization of the Region and its deeper integration into Euro-Atlantic structures to a halt. Furthermore, all these issues create a fertile ground for non-democratic and hostile hybrid and conventional obstructive actions conducted by state or non-state actors.

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Since all the governments in the Region, elected through a series of not too irregular, if not entirely fair election processes, and most of their legitimate oppositions have pledged commitment to their countries' integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, with most of them expressing the will to become fully fledged EU and NATO members, NATO and its member states can, with full legitimacy, address all the above-mentioned underlying challenges, and provide incentives and capacities for the reforms that would overcome them.

By admitting Montenegro as the 29th member state, NATO has demonstrated that it is ready to move on in a changed political environment in the Western Balkans faster and bolder than any other global or regional actor. The fact that the newly elected Macedonian government is already looking for ways to reactivate its NATO membership and its upcoming meeting with the NATO leaders confirms that NATO can and should be the leading actor in a sustained and comprehensive process of stabilization and democratization of the Region.

With everything above mentioned in mind, as well as with the facts that the societies of the Region are less resilient than EU and NATO member states to newly emerging global threats and hostile hybrid operations whose scope has been increasing in the Region, and that regional cooperation is still insufficient in many relevant areas, primarily in defense and security, NATO can become more relevant than ever when it comes to ensuring strategic stability in Europe and the Western Balkans, which should be fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Bearing in mind the new strategic environment, full integration into these structures should be a basic instinct response of all truly liberal and democratic forces in the Region.

To that end, and having in mind the key findings of this Report, the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies recommends NATO, or the EU, or their member states depending on their respective capacities with regard to their further involvement in the Western Balkans, to:

- Demonstrate more confidence in and appreciation of the common values of the liberal order and practices in general, and apply them in resolving outstanding Western Balkan issues in particular;
- Harmonize better policies toward the Region in general, as well as towards individual states of the Region, in order to minimize the gap caused by the UK process of leaving the EU, that has already slowed down the decision-making processes of the EU, including those related to the Western Balkans. The prolonged process of decision-making can discourage Euro-Atlantic structures in the Region and be exploited by Russia and other actors for their agendas, which do not necessarily have to be those of the stabilization and democratization of the Region and its full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures;
- Continue to assume more political leadership in the Region, following Montenegro's accession to NATO and the new Macedonian government's willingness to speed up its NATO membership process;
- Try to strike a better balance between legitimate short-term and tactical priorities in addressing the emerging challenges and threats posed by Russia and other state and non-state actors, and the increased migration and refugee flows in the Region and subsequent threats of terrorism, with the common long-term goals of the democratization of the Region;

The good news for the Western Balkans is that both the EU and NATO have mentioned the Region in their recent strategic documents, with both organizations expressing a commitment to a continuation of open door policies. It is also very good news for the Western Balkans that the member states of the EU and NATO, as well as the EU and NATO organizations themselves, are adjusting to the new strategic environment by agreeing on more collective efforts and joint cooperation in defense and security, on the basis of the December 2016 NATO foreign ministerial conference, where the Allies agreed to move forward with more intensive cooperation on 42 proposals with the EU, which are now being implemented.

- Encourage Scandinavian and Baltic states to pay more attention to the Region's affairs and, if possible, enhance their diplomatic presence where needed, in order to let the Region's actors understand more clearly their positions and experiences regarding the current Moscow policies, as well as to quell growing concerns that the Region has been 'outsourced' to certain EU member states (those gathered around the Berlin Process), which have the upper hand with regard to the Region's Euro-Atlantic prospects. Estonia's forthcoming EU presidency is a good moment to start with this.
- Analyze thoroughly all the moral, political and security implications of the alarming state of affairs regarding the transitional justice processes in the Region, as presented recently by Serge Brammertz, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and by regional groups/organizations monitoring trials before the domestic courts: the denial of crimes, the revisionism of history and glorification of war crimes, the wrong directions being taken with respect to regional judicial cooperation in war crimes, and the stalemate in war crimes trials before the domestic courts in the Region;
- Prioritize and facilitate support for the comprehensive implementation of transitional justice mechanisms, considering them both as a security norm and a tool for security sector reforms in the post-conflict Region, which is still heavily burdened with unresolved war crimes;
- Finally prioritize security sector reforms and the building of a robust structure of democratic oversight in all countries of the Region, having in mind the legacy of war crimes and all the security threats emanating from these circumstances, beginning with the fertile ground for recruitment of "home grown little green men" by hostile external, but also internal state or non-state actors;
- Address more vigorously the lack of a common narrative about the new status of Kosovo among EU and NATO member states, and analyze the setbacks caused by the failure of four NATO member states to recognize Kosovo, as well as the Russian fake narratives about the causes, circumstances and consequences of the NATO air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, which are gaining significant momentum and are being amplified by many in Serbia and B&H, by even the so-called pro-EU political elites in Serbia and B&H;
- Analyze more carefully the dangers of the stalemate in visa liberalization and EU integration processes in Kosovo, caused by issues that probably can be resolved after Kosovo has advanced in the areas mentioned. The current situation is feeding the corrupt elites and encouraging their controversial governing. Removing some issues from the conditionality list would stop the current downward spiral in Kosovo internal affairs;
- Support the non-biased work of the newly constituted Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office, that have a specific mandate and jurisdiction over certain crimes against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under Kosovo law which allegedly occurred between January 1st 1998 and December 31st 2000;
- Consider all the setbacks that the current constitutional arrangement relating to the "seats reserved for the political representation of ethnicities" in the Kosovo Parliament is responsible for, along with the increasing corruption, the expanding role of the Serbian government in decision-making process in the Kosovo Parliament, and the deprivation of the citizens of Kosovo, especially members of ethnic minorities, of a chance

to vote for more comprehensive political options that can help them address multiple local and global challenges;

- Consider the side-effects of the erosion of the hard-won level of democratic practice, and of the setting-up of independent institutions and excessively involved decision-making processes in Serbia caused by the “Brussels Agreement” between Pristina and Belgrade, and quickly seek other approaches that would overcome the current stalemate;
- Provide incentives for a final resolution of the Macedonia-Greece name dispute, more in line with historical facts than self-fulfilling narratives, as well with the obligation that the Albanians in Macedonia should have an equal say on this issue, which has been used as an excuse by those Macedonian and Albanian political elites inclined more towards ethno-entrepreneurship than towards Macedonia’s Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Help Macedonia to get back on track as quickly as possible and complete its NATO membership process;
- Support public and expert debate that can remove current disputes related to Macedonian Constitution and other relevant documents’ stipulations related to the procedure of joining NATO;
- Address in a comprehensive manner, with a proposed roadmap, all the obstacles emanating from the Dayton Peace Accord’s constitutional arrangements in Bosnia and Herzegovina which have put to a halt any meaningful and democratic decision-making process, opening a door for the emergence of extreme Croat nationalism and other non-democratic or even hostile external factors influencing B&H affairs;

The Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies recommends NATO, or the EU, or their member states depending on their respective capacities with regard to their further involvement in the Western Balkans, among other, to harmonize better policies toward the Region in general, as well as towards individual states of the Region, in order to minimize the gap caused by the UK process of leaving the EU, that has already slowed down the decision-making processes of the EU, including those related to the Western Balkans. The prolonged process of decision-making can discourage Euro-Atlantic structures in the Region and be exploited by Russia and other actors for their agendas, which do not necessarily have to be those of the stabilization and democratization of the Region and its full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

- Consistently remind the Alliance for Changes bloc from Republika Srpska entity of B&H, about its commitments stated in the coalition agreement from 2014 related to meeting obligations stipulated in Bosnia and Herzegovina Membership Action Plan (MEP) to NATO, which was the foundation for the composition of the ruling majority on the state level Parliament and Government- Council of Ministers;
- Consider revision of so called Tallinn conditions related to the registry of military property, because it is impossible to implement them as they are currently stipulated;
- Follow in depth the trials relating to the attempted coup d'état in Montenegro, and support moves to counter the continuing Russian hostile operations in this country;
- Take care not to tap into fake narratives coming from Russia or other stakeholders pursuing their own agendas, such as tales of “the traditionally good relations between Serbia and Russia throughout histo-

ry", or "the hundreds of extremely radicalized Muslims operating in various parts of the Region";

- Pay greater attention to the number of foreign fighters going from the Region to East Ukraine, and support efforts to disable their sponsors and centers of operations;
- Avoid, in the absence of other measures, excessive appeasement of current political leaderships prone to nationalism, revisionism, corruption, autocracy and current Kremlin policies and goals, the pursuit of their own interests and goals by undercutting and undermining true trans-Atlantic regional forces and a Euro-Atlantic perspective of the Region;
- Help countries of the region to asses in due time the possible obstacles in meeting the criteria for a deeper integration of the countries of the Region into Euro-Atlantic structures, possibly caused by dealings with China;
- Be more active themselves in countering disinformation and hostile propaganda and help countries of the Region become more included in these efforts.

IN DEALING WITH SERBIA:

Acknowledging Serbia's legitimate current position of military neutrality, acknowledging that 79 UN members have not recognized Kosovo as an independent state, among them five EU and four NATO member states; understanding the need to prioritize cooperation in addressing the increased refugee and migration flows and subsequent terrorist threats in recent years, at the expense of previously agreed areas of cooperation as well as warmly welcoming recent commitments by both sides for a continuation of the implementation of the current Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) between Serbia and NATO and the adoption of a new plan in due course, the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies recommends NATO, or the EU, or their member states depending on their respective capacities with regard to dealing with Serbia, to:

- Use the forthcoming Estonian EU presidency to introduce to the wider Serbian public the current security challenges that the Baltic states, rarely seen as policy factors in Serbia, are facing;
- Advocate and assist in achieving of an internal consensus among EU member states for opening, sooner rather than later, of Chapter 31 - on Foreign, Security and Defense Policies - in the Serbia-EU negotiation process;
- Insist on Serbia's fulfillment of all of its obligations with regard to criminal prosecutions of perpetrators of war crimes and the implementation of its National Strategy and Action Plan for War Crimes Prosecution, and insist on Serbia's clear break with the legacy of those who participated in atrocities during the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, since lack of progress in these fields has become a security issue too;

Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies recommends NATO, or the EU, or their member states depending on their respective capacities with regard to dealing with Serbia, among other, to set the record straight, as much as consensus among member states permits, with regard to the geopolitical circumstances and causes that led to the NATO air campaign against the FRY and its human toll and other consequences, in order to prevail over the further drop in public support for NATO caused by externally and internally perpetuated fake narratives significantly enhanced in the last few years, and perpetuated by Serbian officials and politicians in power, but also by those in the opposition, academic community and mainstream Serbian and Russian media.

- Assume the roles of key stakeholders who would support and coordinate the still missing comprehensive security sector reform, bearing in mind that prolonged non-involvement can become, if it hasn't already, a security threat, given the implications of the new geopolitical context in the Region;
- Provide incentives for public and expert's debates about forthcoming changes of the Serbian Constitution and consider supporting creation of an electoral system in Serbia that would reduce the effects of the de facto parallel political system of national councils of national minorities. It is the source of corruption and ethno-entrepreneurship and other non-democratic and illiberal practices that severely impede chances for the emergence of liberal globalist Euro-Atlantic forces in Serbia;

- Provide incentives for a debate about provisions in the new Constitution that would not only enable continuation of the EU integration but also leave room for articulation of the aspirations of those who argue that Serbia should be more integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures;
- Assume the roles of facilitators in the forthcoming process of adoption of the new National Security Strategy, which should not be reduced simply to the expectations related to Serbian EU integration process, hopefully soon to be presented in the report on the screening process related to Chapter 31. This process should enable comprehensive reflection of the new strategic environment, resulting in better understanding of threats and challenges and the need for strategic partnerships and membership in alliances;
- Enable more public events in Serbia that would address and analyze the trend of greater structural cooperation between NATO and the EU, with special focus on the 42 already agreed concrete proposals for implementation;
- Go behind the false perception of the unequal balance between the activities that Serbia conducts with NATO and its member states on the one hand and Russia and Belorussia on the other, and address the type and purpose of these activities and exercises;
- Be more open in explaining current relations between Russia and NATO and its member states and how the increasing Serbian cooperation and military exercises, that include countering terrorism with Russia on the borders with NATO member states and military involvement in suppressing civilian unrests, should be perceived in terms of Serbian democratization and its position as a “factor of stability” in the region, and of its rating as a reliable partner in countering terrorism and other threats and challenges;
- Set the record straight, as much as consensus among member states permits, with regard to the geopolitical circumstances and causes that led to the NATO air campaign against the FRY and its human toll and other consequences, in order to prevail over the further drop in public support for NATO caused by externally and internally perpetuated fake narratives significantly enhanced in the last few years, and perpetuated by Serbian officials and politicians in power, but also by those in the opposition, academic community and mainstream Serbian and Russian media;
- Acknowledge and confront the Serbian leadership about their “open door” policy towards increasing non-democratic Russian soft power influence in Serbia;
- Use as much as possible the positive experiences of Montenegro with regard to public perception of NATO, bearing in mind the unique and shared elements in the historical experience of Serbia and Montenegro with NATO, the war crimes burden, the public’s perceptions, the state’s decisions on issues related to the new status of Kosovo, and the new geopolitical context in which Montenegro’s NATO membership and accession to the EU and Serbia’s EU integration process and implementation of the IPAP are unfolding;
- Engage more relevant stakeholders in Serbia to talk in open formats about Serbia-NATO co-operation in countering terrorism, Serbia’s participation in UN- and EU-led missions and their cooperation with NATO, the management of migration and refugee flows, the implementation of trust funds programs and other Serbia-NATO related issues;
- Present, with more detail and more frequently, assessments of the current state of affairs in Serbia-NATO relations, especially with regard to the public diplomacy commitments that the Serbian government has assumed by adopting the IPAP;

- Support open format debates where relevant Serbian stakeholders will talk about the benefits for Serbia deriving from the implementation of the current IPAP, which, among other things, stipulates support to the Serbian EU integration process, regional cooperation, cooperation with international organizations, improvements in the area of human rights, the rule of law, emerging security challenges, economic reforms and enhanced democratic control of armed forces and all other issues related to defense and military issues;
- Present with more detail the position on the implementation of other segments of the IPAP, and provide arguments or positions as to why they have not been implemented more efficiently, going behind and beyond the ‘ticking the boxes’ approach assumed by Serbian officials in charge of the implementation of the current IPAP;
- Consider the allocation of more funds and political commitments in order to strengthen the capacities of the Office of the Council for National Security and Protection of Classified Information and other bodies in charge of Classified Information in Ministries;
- Consider the allocation of more funds and political commitment in order to strengthen the capacities of those structures in charge of crisis management emergency planning;
- Support the adoption of a new Law on crisis management and reducing the risk from natural and other disasters, taking into consideration that the draft of this Law was created in 2015;
- Consider the allocation of more funds and political commitment in order to strengthen the capacities of structures in charge of cyber security, implementation of the current legislation in this area and the possible amendment or adoption of new legislation;
- Consider the requests, as expressed by high-level Serbian officials, for more financial assistance in dealing with the consequences of the NATO bombing, short of any official reparations.

ABOUT CEAS

The Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS) is an independent socio-liberal think-tank organization founded in 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia.

The motto which the CEAS follows in its work is “Progress, Determination, Influence”.

CEAS stands for:

- Adoption of the principle of the precedence of individual over collective rights, with respect for the rights which individuals can only achieve through collective action;
- Strengthening of the secular state principle and promotion of a faithless understanding of the world;
- Development and preservation of a more open, freer, more prosperous and more cooperative international order founded on smart globalization.

CEAS advocacy and research work is mostly focused on:

- Contemporary Serbian, regional and trans-Atlantic foreign and security policies;
- Full Serbian membership in the EU and NATO;
- Comprehensive Serbian security system reform and robust democratic oversight of the system;
- Connection between security sector reform and transitional justice in the post-conflict societies like Western Balkans;
- Russian and other non-democratic influences on the stabilization and democratization of the Western Balkans;
- Promotion of Responsibility to Protect the international humanitarian and security doctrine;
- Overcoming of the democratic deficits of multiculturalism.

Among CEAS's most popular reports are: “Eyes wide shut – Strengthening of Russian Soft Power in Serbia– goals, instruments and effects” (2016), “The Missing Link: Security sector reform, ‘military neutrality’ and EU-integration in Serbia” (2014), “Guide through information security in the Republic of Serbia” (2016), “Keeping up with the private security sector – II” (2015), “Keeping up with the private security sector” (2013), “X Factor Serbia” (2013), “CEAS analysis - The Law on Classified Information” (2015), “CEAS analysis - Security Vetting in Serbia” (2015), “CEAS analysis - Protection of Whistleblowers in Serbia” (2015), “Extreme Makeover” (2014), “10x in favor NATO” (2014), “CEAS analysis of the Law on Amendments of the Law on the Security Intelligence Agency” (2014), “Putin’s Orchestra” (2014), “Putinization” (2014), etc.

CEAS is the only member from the Region of South-Eastern Europe to have full membership in ICRtoP- the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect. The coalition brings together non-governmental organizations from all over the world to collectively strengthen the normative consensus for the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (RtoP).

CEAS is a member of the Coalition for RECOM – a coalition comprising more than 1,800 organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia, advocating for the founding of the Regional Commission for establishing facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2001.

CEAS has a wide media, institutional and social outreach, and has been quoted in leading prominent liberal media such as The New York Times, Washington Post, Politico, Spiegel etc. In December 2016 Politico put CEAS Director Jelena Milić on its annual POLITICO 28 list of people “who are shaping, shaking and stirring Europe”.

CEAS programs have been so far supported by: Open Society Fund (OSF); Think Tank Fund, Budapest; National Endowment for Democracy, USA; Rockefeller Brothers Fund, USA; European Commission; Balkan Trust for Democracy – GMF, Serbia; NATO Public Diplomacy Division; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Serbia; Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade; Visegrad Fund, Slovakia; Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Serbia; Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Serbia; USA Embassy in Serbia.

For more information about CEAS, its team and activities please visit the web site www.ceas-serbia.org . More information about pending and completed projects can be found directly at <https://www.ceas-serbia.org/en/projects> .

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June 2017

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