

I. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO

- ❖ **TEAM:** Emir Ahmethodžić, Amina Aličić, Merjem Brković, Medisa Fočić
Vezirka Salčin
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Foreign & Security Policy

INTERVIEWED PERSONS:

Edita Velić (Chairman of the Bosnian-Podrinje Cantonal Assembly)

Šemsudin Mehmedović (MP of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Mirsad Žuga (Deputy of the Minister of Finance in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Mirsad Hadžikadić (2018 Presidential candidate, Founder of the party Platform for Progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina)

NATIONAL POSITION:

When taking into account the election system in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are already various issues with the current law that is causing issues with the electoral rights of the population, both in passive and active elections. The issue with passive election is evident in various ECHR cases, such as cases of Irma Baralija vs Bosnia and Herzegovina (regarding elections in Mostar)¹, as well as cases Sejdić & Finci vs Bosnia and Herzegovina and Zornić vs Bosnia and Herzegovina (regarding issues of minorities in the electoral policy). This didn't change much however, as the decisions are yet to be implemented to this day, both due to the difficulties of implementing this decision in the confounds of the Dayton Agreement, and due to the general disinterest of the politicians to rock the boat. For increasing of the protection of the human rights it is important to find effective balance between the constitutional principles of human rights in general and the rights of the constituent peoples, as one of the most visible causes of the human rights setback in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The rule of law is a fundamental part of the EU integration process. The entire civil society has the full support of the European Union in demanding that the authorities take responsibility for the implementation of the rule of law in B&H. Weak rule of law is main reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina is behind its neighbors as for example Croatia that is already a member of EU. We can see the efforts of civil society to

¹ Lakić Mladen, Balkan Insight, <<https://balkaninsight.com/2018/12/10/lawsuit-awaits-bosnia-over-mostar-elections-deadlock-12-07-2018/>>

influence the right to speak and the rule of law through current cases of „searching justice“ by Davor Dragičević and Muriz Memić for the „murders“ of their sons. Sofie From-Emmesberger, chair of the European Union's Political and Security Committee, said that 2019 will be crucial for BiH from the point of view of European integration, and the European Commission's opinion on whether BiH should be given the status of a candidate for membership in the Union will greatly depend on how new authorities in BiH will be formed.

One of the biggest problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the signing of the Dayton Agreement represents the creation of a common defensive - security system, and therefore the adoption of and the establishment of a common security policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The problem is that B&H still does not have a complete system of national security, which stems from the reflection of the state structure and the security sector. The Act on Security Policy is the basis for both prevention and repression of the modern security challenges of any democratic state. These features can be seen as a clear indicator that the study of it, is a long-standing development and it requires its adoption with political compromises, which is highly unacceptable. EU integration would help B&H to eliminate such issues through harmonization of laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The EU and its institutions should put pressure on Bosnian politicians to implement crucial decisions – After the war Bosnia and Herzegovina has been put in a difficult position with three sides staking claims to the territories they feel rightfully belongs to them. In an attempt to create an environment where all three will depend on each other and won't be able to make crucial decisions without the other, which would ideally force them to cooperate, the reality is that the three sides block each other from bringing any crucial decisions. This often leads the politicians to become passive and upon any disagreements wait on the decision of the European institutions and the OHR. While it is understandable that efforts are being made to make Bosnia and Herzegovina embrace its own sovereignty, it would be beneficial for both Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina if their institutions would put pressure on the politicians of B&H to bring urgent matters to a close. The Rapporteur for B&H in the European Parliament had stated on multiple occasions that Bosnian politicians must start working with the EU² and that they had so far blatantly ignored any warning that Brussels would

² N1 Sarajevo, *EP Rapporteur for Bosnia to politicians: Start working together with the EU* (January, 2019). Available: <http://ba.n1info.com/English/NEWS/a308753/EP-Rapporteur-for-Bosnia-urges-Bosnia-s-politicians-to-start-working-together-with-the-EU.html>

send to them³. So, we understand that Europe is aware of the problem of unmotivated and disinterested politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but instead of issuing concerns we believe that genuine pressure in the form of any sanctions would light the fire to force them to cooperate. This would also be used in attempt to prevent any sabotaging by politicians that have an interest in a stagnating B&H.

2. The EU should work through it's Member States to bring Bosnia and Herzegovina closer – It will be in the interest of the EU for B&H to join both the EU and NATO in order to keep the country stabilized, to avoid any further conflicts and to stop the growing influence of Russia on the Balkans, EU and B&H share the same position. For over a decade, Russia's presence has expanded in Bosnia, and particularly in the RS through foreign investments and financing paramilitary groups in RS.⁴ There has also been a growing link between the leader of the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dragan Čović and Moscow.⁵

The best way for B&H to achieve full integration is through the help of already existing EU Member States that would help out in the process and be the bridge between B&H and the EU. While Croatia had promised to help B&H on its path toward the EU, in practice they are making the path harder than it already is. While it is understood that Croatia will interfere when they believe that the interests of the Croat population are being violated, Croatian politicians also have a history of supporting sides that have secessionary tendencies. The President of Croatia Grabar-Kitarović, along with the Croatian government, had expressed their displeasure after the sentencing of six Croat generals for war crimes and joint criminal enterprise in 2017 by the ICTY.⁶ Croatian President Grabar-Kitarović had also made claims that Bosnia and Herzegovina had over 10,000 potential terrorists with radical intentions towards Croatia. While terrorism is an issue that Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing like other European countries, it has been stated on multiple occasions that the Croatian President made an overestimation. Terrorist expert Vlado Azinović said that her claim was absurd⁷, and PM of the B&H House of Representatives Šemsudin Mehmedović said that the claim was aimed to create a negative picture of the Bosniak population and the State of Bosnia and

³ Initiative for Monitoring the European Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Preda: BiH Politicians Ignore Warnings from Brussels* (December, 2018). Available: <http://eu-monitoring.ba/en/preda-bih-politicians-ignore-warnings-from-brussels/>

⁴ Reuf Bajrović, Richard Kraemer & Emir Suljagić, *Bosnia on the Chopping Block: The Potential for Violence and Steps to Prevent it*. Foreign Policy Research Institute (March, 2018).

⁵ OSCE BiH, *Reliable Sources Saying Russia's Next Move Might Be Bosnia And Herzegovina* (March, 2018). Available: <https://www.oscebih.org/2018/03/reliable-sources-saying-russias-next-move>

⁶ Masenjka Bačić, Euronews <https://www.euronews.com/2017/12/01/war-criminal-in-the-hague-but-still-a-war-hero-in-croatia> No

⁷ Anđelković Marina, European Western Balkans, <https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2017/11/13/bosnia-herzegovina-really-terrorist-haven/>

Herzegovina as a whole in front of Europe. Recently the media had reported claims made by Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dragan Mektić that the Croatian government have been recruiting members of the Muslim Salafi branch to smuggle weapons into Bosnia and Herzegovina, effectively arming them in an attempt to make Bosnia and Herzegovina seem like a security threat, and to prove their own allegations of B&H being a terrorist nest as true ones. The Prosecution made clear that they will be investigating these allegations and the process is in motion.⁸ These negative relations will surely not help Bosnia and Herzegovina on the path to the EU, which is why the EU should impose a more positive attitude towards the Croatia and make sure that they seek equality for Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina while at the same time advocating for a united Bosnia and Herzegovina with all three ethnic groups striving for European intergation together.

3. In fight against organised serious cross-border crime, a close cooperation between BiH security agencies and INTERPOL, EUROPOL and EUROJUST is necessary.⁹ EU institutions should establish closer cooperation with the Diplomatic and Consular Offices or the Service for Foreigners' Affairs in BiH so the migration crisis could be handled better. EU should help for strategic reasons the establishment of CERT in BiH and mechanisms for monitoring and combating the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Council of Minister and Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo together with the OHR should develop the strategy for further upgrade of legislative capacities and compliance with new international instruments, especially those of the UN Security Council and the Council of Europe, that will imply the implementation of systems analysis and substantive and procedural norms of the criminal legislation in BiH referring to the cross borders crimes.

⁸ Reuters, Bosnia to investigate alleged arming of Islamists by Croatia (March, 2019). Available <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bosnia-croatia-investigation/bosnia-to-investigate-alleged-arming-of-islamists-by-croatia-idUSKCN1QV1WN>

⁹ Note: In order to combat such challenges, in 2015 the Council of Ministers of BiH made a Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2015-2020 as a part of accession to the EU and NATO, which can serve as stepping stone for EU and NATO integration.

II. ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MOLDOVA

- ❖ **TEAM:** Popovici Alexandra, Lesnic Diana, Cazacu Meri, Auzeac Tatiana, Simco Liliana
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Recommendations on the European Union's Migration Policy

Migration is a complex phenomenon that is relevant to all countries nowadays. It affects greatly the EU and the countries around it. When speaking about the national position on the problem of migration, all three official representatives interviewed on this topic agreed that it is a tenacious problem for the development of the Republic of Moldova. Those three experts, who kindly agreed to help us are:

Mihai Popusoi – vice-president of the ACUM political party.

Poalelungi Olga – director of Bureau for Migration and Asylum.

Apostolova Reghina – deputy of parliament from the political party “SOR”.

According to Mihai Popusoi, the vice president of the ACUM political party, “migration is probably the greatest problem that the Republic of Moldova has to deal with”. He mentioned that our conditions of living cannot compete with European ones, that’s why we can observe the active brain drain process leaves its mark in the economic development, medical care, education and other spheres of living.

The director of the Migration and Asylum Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Mrs Olga Poalelungi, highlighted the problem of migration with the following statistics: “annually we lose the population of two villages or approximately 2.5% of the total population of the Republic of Moldova which amounts to about 65 people daily”. It is a considerable number and we should take into account that the majority of those who leave are active workforce, and this fact has a positive result too which comes in the form of remittances.

Our third expert, Apostolova Reghina, member of parliament from the political party “SOR”, mentioned that now we are facing a big obstacle in economic and social development process. Our government cannot interdict people to emigrate, but the only thing it can do to improve the situation is to motivate population to come back. Mrs Apostolova put our minds to the fact that the situation in which our country is now is getting worse day by day and namely: depopulation of the country, aging population, increasing demographic pressure and as a result - demographic insecurity.

While our country is facing problem of emigration of population, EU is in a Migration Crisis too. This term was given to a period beginning in 2013 when rising number of people

arrived in the EU from across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through Southern Europe. After analysing the interviews of our experts, we made a conclusion that there are three pull factors in EU which attract huge masses of immigrants and in majority of cases those people cross EU border illegally. So, the issues in EU migration policy, for which the recommendations will be listed below, are:

- The absence of a centralized, harmonized digital system of migrants, which would keep track of their duration of stay and their status in the EU society.
- The attractiveness of European social payments, because of what some people cross the EU border just in order to the status of refugee and to benefit from all the subsidies which European authorities do provide.
- We consider a problem that must be solved the situation when governments of countries where immigrants come from don't try to improve their connection with their diasporas in the EU. We suppose that constant reminder of what they really are and where they do come from would help to motivate people to come back home and as a result the problem of overpopulation in some European regions will be solved.

1. RECOMMENDATION TO EUROPEAN UNION POLICY: IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Background: In 2015, the EU saw over one million people reach its shores in search of safety and security. Many of these people will stay in the Union and contribute to the diversity of European society. Today 28 Member States offer social and health support for migrants, which varies from one region to another. Thus for example France offers allowance of 343.50 euros a month while awaiting result of asylum process; obligatory payment for food from this allowance; and health insurance for free while application being reviewed. Slovakia: pocket money of 40 euro cents/day; the right to work or claim unemployment benefit; one cash grant of around 300 euros. On base of that Moldova team decided to research how participative and forward-looking migration and asylum programs and policies can enhance the social inclusion prospects of migrants.

Aim: Ensuring sustainable social inclusion of migrants into European Union diverse society and to ensure migrants with health and social programs for sustainable development of future generations. The given recommendation aims to tackle 2 key dimensions of social and economic integration of migrants in the EU, namely: social programs and welfare and health support.

Funds: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF); European Social Fund (ESF); EU Program for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI); Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD); European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); Creative Europe; Rights, Equality and Citizenship; EU Health Program.

Description: First of all, the consolidation of social inclusion policies on national levels has to be done. According to the research performed by the European commission, the majority of social programs do not offer an instant work permit. Approximately all member states require for migrants to wait 10-12 months in order to issue an official work permit. During that time migrants are prohibited to undertake any activity for profit and forced to remain at camps or pension houses provided by government.

Therefore, our first recommendation would be to provide migrants with some basic work at community centers for minimum wages or benefits funded and supervised by government or local authorities while they wait for a work permit. The main benefits from this measure are:

- 1) The process of social inclusion would proceed /flow faster as migrants would interact with locals, receive knowledge transfer of professional skills needed for future work and cultural experience.
- 2) It would boost personal and economic confidence of migrant. People would be treated on equitable and democratic basis with local ones. Moreover, migrants would experience economic freedom as they have a possibility to earn pocket money. Our team considers this aspect important due to the fact that some social packages offer limited amount of compensation per day or per month prescribed for meals or rent. Therefore, people are limited in their actions as consumers and this fact generally drive migrants to underpaid and dirty jobs and on illegal basis. Thus successful social inclusion depends on services that acknowledge and address the individual needs of each migrant.
- 3) The burden on tax payers would be reduced. In general welfare compensation are supported by taxes that pay nationals. Therefore, there might appear intolerance, xenophobia and racism, fueling hate crime and discrimination against migrants or refugees and their descendants that raise concerns in many Member States. In order to prevent such situations, the government would be promoting equitable participation of migrants and their descendants in the society.

Secondly the team recommends consolidating and implementing universal health policy regarding migrants' healthcare on national levels. Today European Union does have a solid legal base for healthcare regulations, policies, laws and conventions, but while written information about migrants' right to healthcare and available services does exist all across Europe, none of the Member States have clear government policies and defined practices on this issue.

The set of measures suggested by the team are the following:

- 1) To grant a public access to practical information and subsequent translation regarding medical services in each Member State. There is little information on how to access these services and linguistic barriers cause a serious misunderstanding too.
- 2) To ensure sustainable and dynamic network of cost-free intercultural mediators, interpreters, translation. All medical documentation is available in national language only and this can be a burden to most of migrants. By implementing such a measure, migrants would be more informed on how to access and receive required medical services, would receive clarity in diagnosis and prescriptions, and would understand the mechanism of healthcare system in the given Member State. Additionally, the given measure would considerably reduce the burden of local care providers as doctors are obliged to inform patients about diagnosis, treatment and patients' rights.
- 3) To provide local care providers with webinars and trainings on multicultural medical ethics, medical terminology translation and way of treatment for special cultural groups. Medical staff is obliged to respect patients' ways of treatment according to cultural differences and to address the needs of each migrant.
- 4) To consolidate data base of hospitals, clinics, border control in order to measure immigrant health and healthcare inclusion. Upon arrival migrants are younger and healthy but in time this "healthy immigrant effect" fades away. This is mainly due to poor living conditions, underpaid and illegal jobs, social outcast in zones and camps where healthcare services are neglected. The data base would allow the possibility to measure and evaluate the impact of services and policies on the health outcomes of migrants.

To conclude the overall recommendation to social and economic policy the team would like to stress that migrants constitute a large share of European population and they contribute to the future generation development. Therefore, the team's recommended measures tackle directly 2 major vulnerable areas in migrants' wellbeing which contribute to sustainable development of future generations. The work experience gained by collaborating with local authorities, communities and government cultivates

a climate of mutual understanding, trust and cooperation. With respect to economic aspects of social and health programs further research on the overall cost-effectiveness is needed to be carried out with fundamental notion that financing for migrant health and social programs are not a burden, there are an investment.

2. RECOMMENDATION TO EUROPEAN UNION POLICY: CREATION OF A HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Overview

Using publicly available information, insights from interviews with Political leaders, University lectures and a survey of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), we evaluate a set of measures for the creation a long-term solution for Brain Gain for Europe by the creation a Digital Harmonized System for Migrant Workers.

Background: A pressing issue today is the challenge of the massive refugee streams that are entering Europe's borders and are concentrated mostly in the poorer Southern member states. It is important to highlight that even though irregular migration has increased, more non-EU citizens arrive in the EU for non-asylum reasons than for asylum reasons. Using legal immigration channels, third-country nationals arrive to work, study or reunite with their families. The aim of the recommendation is to improve the previously proposed on 4th May, 2016 in Brussels reform by the European Commission for distribution of the refugees across the EU, though many of the member states and to resist this move on grounds of national sovereignty. Proposal was as outlined in the Commission's Communications of 6 April 2016.

Eventually, this reform is intended to form the medium term response to future migratory challenges, but with improvement made on the basics of our research the solutions comes for long terms. The proposal will transform the existing European Asylum Support Office into a fully-fledged European Union Agency for Asylum with an enhanced mandate and considerably expanded tasks to address any structural weaknesses that arise in the application of the EU's asylum system.

Aim: Nowadays stereotype thinking creates a ground for discrimination. According with the Survey published by the European Commission only in 2015 discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin continues to be regarded as the most widespread form of discrimination in the EU (64%). Many Europeans perceive that discrimination exists in recruitment practices.

Movement of the high skilled specialist, fresh graduated students and talented youth, which are seeking for the better future in Europe, is a crucial problem of the third

countries. Brain drain from third countries does not always mean Brain Gain for European Union, because of discrimination these people cannot find a job in accordance with their intellectual potential. Because many non-European high education institutions received European accreditation and they are working in accordance with high-established standards, graduated students deserve to be treated equally. The globalization of business has created a sophisticated, complex, and competitive environment. In order to be successful, companies need to continually create new products and services. The best way to ensure the development of new ideas is through a diverse and inclusive workforce. Majority of those who leave the motherland have excellent capabilities and powerful life background, which effects their determination and courage. Qualified labor force will increase productivity, competitiveness of the European Regions, which faces with necessity in specialists.

Funds: The Asylum and Migration Fund (AMF, the current AMIF); The Integrated Border Management Fund (IBMF); The European Union Agency for Asylum (currently EASO).

Description: The creation of a Digital platform will simplify the process of collaboration, Potential migrants will follow the online registration process, after the verification process of their personal data (education certificated, letters of recommendation, work experience, volunteer background etc.), the system will show them, in priority order, the regions for migration. The application process is similar with the university admission, only in this case, the purpose is allocation of specialists.

First Key Action of the European project Erasmus Plus for Mobility of Individuals in the field of youth and European Solidarity Corps promotes equal opportunities for all students by making them global citizens. We suggest elaborating a database that will goes ahead of already implementing projects of the European Union. We see this system as a continuation of such projects as EU4INNO, ESN. Good results of such projects as EU4INNO and European Ambassadors, non-EU citizens shows their competitiveness and interest through European model. System will prolong the process of active collaboration between EU member states and active and talented workers, in case they see their future in Europe. Implementation of the system will insure the transparent competition in the entire domain of the activity. Native European citizens will benefit from the knowledge transfer and qualitative services provided by the international specialists.

To conclude the overall recommendation of the Creation of a Harmonized Migrants System will turn the “migrants as a problem” into “migrants as a solution” for Europe. The role of the system is the establishment of a database of skilled migrants and their

allocation through EU regions by its necessity. In such way, people will use their talents, skills and excellent mental capabilities in their best way. Europe in its turn will increase its productivity, quality through knowledge exchange and will reduce process of over population in some regions. Refugees and migrants are mostly oriented through metropolises, preferentially because of the simplified job access. In case they will have possibility to work on EU space according to their capabilities and professional skills will reduce unemployment and the level of crime.

3. RECOMMENDATION TO EUROPEAN UNION POLICY: PRESERVATION OF THE EU CORE VALUES: “UNITY IN DIVERSITY”

It is remarkable that the people of Europe are not defined by race, nor by language or customs, but by desires and breadth of will (...)

Paul Valéry

Background: The role of culture in the social progress and in the transmission of values cannot be denied. The European Union faces the problem of integrating its members into a cohesive social whole. The past couple of years, abundant flows of refugees and migrants from outside the borders of the EU have aggravated the problem because now not only citizens of member states of the EU have to be integrated. Specialists consider that the challenges EU has to deal with are not easy to surpass since *diversity cannot be suppressed and unity cannot be dispersed*. By trying to integrate people, the EU begins to assimilate them starting a process that we named “europenization”, which contradicts the “diversity” in “unity in diversity”. This is especially relevant for people from countries with less strict customs and those from countries in close proximity of the EU which strive to become “Europeans”.

In many cases migrants to the EU lose touch with their home country and do not consider going back, which we have seen many times on the example of the Republic of Moldova. Another problem in this context is the fact that if migrants do not become “assimilated” or integrated, they are most probably discriminated against at least on one occasion, which at its turn contradicts the “unity” in “unity in diversity”. Despite that, migrants choose to stay because of better living standards or a more peaceful and politically stable environment while their frustration grows, leading to social disorder and an increase in crime levels either committed by migrants or against them.

Article 151 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which incorporates Article 128 of the Treaty of Maastricht, states: “The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the

same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore”. Compare this with part of the preamble to UNESCO’s Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: the General Conference of UNESCO is “Conscious that cultural diversity forms a common heritage of humanity and should be cherished and preserved for the benefit of all”.

Aim: Migration is a very complex and multidimensional phenomenon, it has some negative implications and some positive ones. It is clear that regulating and controlling the flows of migrants is extremely difficult, if not impossible, thus it would be reasonable to ameliorate the negative implications and try to stabilize the crisis in other ways. It is not so much a question of how to stop migrants from coming to the EU, it is a question of how to create an environment where they can flourish alongside the EU citizens and contribute to the overall development of the EU. This policy recommendation aims to provide some suggestions on how to improve the already existing policies and projects that target the protection and preservation of cultural diversity within the European Union.

Funds: Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF); European Social Fund (ESF); European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); Creative Europe; Rights, Equality and Citizenship; European Cultural Foundation (ECF); European Youth Foundation; Creative Europe; Joint Programming Initiative - Cultural Heritage and Global Change (JPI-CH); Annual Grant Work Programme DG Education and Culture; etc.

Description: The European Union of today is very different from the one it was in 1951 or 1993, at its foundation, today it is more burgeoning and culturally diverse than ever. Christine Lagarde said “The European project has always been a factory for new ideas—a place for people to reconcile different national interests toward a common future with shared objectives, driven by goodwill and perseverance”, which we believe is the main driver of the EU’s success. Undeniably due to the increasing migration flows towards the EU, the cultural diversity of the block is increasing as we speak. The migrants coming to the EU are a great asset to the integration block, they provide labor force and take on jobs that EU citizens hesitate to.

This policy recommendation is intended to integrate non- EU migrants, preserving their cultural peculiarities, by extending the applicability of art.5 of the European Cultural Convention (19th of December 1954), which states “...each contracting party shall regard the objects of European cultural value placed under its control as integral parts of the common cultural heritage of Europe, shall take appropriate measures to

safeguard them and shall ensure reasonable access thereto”, beyond the EU member states and over the countries citizens of which reside within the borders of the EU. In this same context we want to mention art.6 of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, *fostering intercultural dialogue*, which stresses the actions to be taken to encourage intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, based on universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, and of preventing conflicts.

It is very important that the EU maintains relations with the home-countries of its residents. Diaspora has to be encouraged and provided the opportunity to keep strong ties with the home-country. We suggest that the EU concludes bilateral or multilateral agreements, with these countries, which would have their main focus on the task of jointly creating funds, events and projects that would encourage the promotion and education of the public on the topic of the culture and customs of countries whose citizens are residing in the EU. These projects would also facilitate the creation of stronger physical and emotional link of migrants with their home-country and allow them to feel accepted, included and respected for their origins, which would in turn provide for a stronger, more peaceful and more tolerant European society. The principle here is very similar to the “more to more” principle of the EU, meaning that if migrants and refugees will feel that their interests and rights are protected, they will put more effort into serving the EU and its interests.

Another suggestion that we have is based on the example of New Zealand, where children of Romanians and Moldovans which migrated there can go to a Romanian school and study in Romanian. This project is funded by the government of New Zealand and it allows children of migrants to learn and remember their mother tongue, their traditions and their country. We suggest that together with the countries of origin of migrants and refugees the EU Parliament, or the governments of the EU member states separately, create a project within which children of migrants can be taught their mother tongue and the traditions of their motherland either at school or at specially created spaces, thus preserving their cultural identity and supporting “unity in diversity”.

III. UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO

- ❖ **TEAM:** Mia Zeković, Marko Milikić, Slaven Minić, Goran Đikanović, Lazar Šoć
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Future of the EU and question of Montenegro becoming a future part of the Union

INTERVIEWED PERSONS:

Andrija Popović – President of the Liberal Party of Montenegro and part of the Parliament of Montenegro

Draginja Vuksanović – Member of the Parliament of Montenegro for the Social Democratic Party;

Adrijan Vuksanović – Member of the Parliament of Montenegro for the Croatian Civic Initiative and co-founder of the Montenegrin Pan – European Union

NATIONAL POSITION:

Montenegro, as an independent country, since the day of achieving its independence had the goal to make country stronger and competitive in the region, but also to make the atmosphere in the country more appealing to youth in order to stop the phenomenon of human capital flight. In those processes Montenegro sees entry in the European Union as the only possible way of achieving everything mentioned.

Looking back on the history of processes that Montenegro has started in 2007, we consider position of the country in this moment very positive and prosperous. Considering all of the chapters opened and screened, we may say that our country is the leader in the region when it comes to integration process.

However, Montenegro still has a lot of problems when it comes to the question about corruption, crime and possibilities for youth to achieve prosperity and find job in our country. We have to admit that level of Human capital flight is big and citizens are aware of it. Political situation is not solved in an appropriate way and it has to be done before we finish our process of becoming a member of the EU.

One of the biggest challenges on Montenegro's path towards the EU is certainly the regulation of media freedoms. The reports of, per stance, the European Commission and the US State Department continue to underline that we need to do a lot more in this field. Attacks on investigative journalists, position of the public broadcaster, funding are some burning issues which are yet to be solved. Aside all of the negative aspects

of our present, this struggle may give us great amount of experience in order to be competitive with other countries when we finally join the alliance.

We are proud to say that two most difficult chapters are opened (23 and 24) and two of the chapters are provisionally closed (25 and 26). Facing the fact that Montenegro is on a good way of completing the negotiation process soon, as rated by Mr. Juncker, we may conclude that Montenegro is well committed to its European future. Changes that our country is going through are noticeable and we are every day a step closer to the standards of the countries in the alliance. Reforms are something that Montenegro really needed in order to make life in the country more dignified for its citizens.

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. RECOMMENDATION: *Enlargement of the EU*

The late stages of the 2010s decade are certainly an adequate time to ask ourselves whether the EU is prepared to have another wave of accession. Populism, Brexit, external threats (mostly Russian influence) are quite certainly great threats which are yet to be overcome. However, the EU needs to make sure that it is ready for new member states. The euro-zone needs to grow and develop, the common market and the visa regimes should be supported by additional quality legislation, and the decision making process should be more transparent. EU supporters, both those in the member states and those outside of them, want to see a cohesive, united, solidary, strong and just Union supporting all the quality measures of its member states and acting against those which threaten the European Union. If it wants to keep growing, or even be able to keep growing, the EU needs to, once again, prove to Europe that it is a better option than everything that the populists so often propose. The EU should also continue to enhance and further strengthen its partnerships, but making sure to never undermine its own best for the sake of political points and power.

2. RECOMMENDATION: *Question of simplifying the criteria for joining the European Union and process of developing the education system*

The EU should not derogate its criteria for the sake of faster progress of the candidate states. However, it should financially and institutionally support them in the process of fulfilling the criteria. The EU must not let itself lose the power of successful integration process by removing the tasks it is founded on. Additionally, the monitoring of the accession process should be more universal and thorough. The people of the WB6 are often labeling the process as "The EU praising, and nothing really happening". We strongly believe that the integration process is helping our country modernise and

develop, but that view should be universally accepted by our general public, and currently it is certainly not. The EU should also push the states to enhance transparency regarding their relations with the EU.

The European Union needs to put education as its foremost priority in the years to come. Populism and extremism of any kind are mostly the result of low-quality education, combined with various external effects. Since time immemorial, through the ages of nazism and fascism, up to the modern populism, those who didn't have a lot of education, or had a low quality education, were mostly prone to accepting questionable messages addressed by the populist and extremists. The EU should invest in exchange programmes, national education systems, and continue to develop a universal education framework which could work for every member, candidate and potential candidate states. For instance, the Bologna system needs to be redefined and redesigned, the education systems should be more adjusted to the labour market across the EU.

3. RECOMMENDATION: The adoption of the EU legislation and Internet regulation

Croatia is often cited as an example of a country which became an EU member but is "doing bad" and facing large waves of emigration. However, we tend to overlook an extremely important aspect, which is the national jurisdiction of every country, including Croatia. Montenegro, if it is to become a member state, cannot possibly turn into a powerful and wealthy state after a short period of time. The EU needs to keep pushing every state, especially its member states, to adopt legislation which corresponds with the one of the EU. Sometimes it seems as though the screening process did not happen. Furthermore, the implementation of the legislation, especially in candidate and potential candidate states, is on a very low level. That is a field on which the EU needs to work as hard as possible. As a supranational organization it cannot let its members undermine it by not implementing its policies adequately.

Regulation of the internet should also be prioritised by the EU legislators. Furthermore, a particular field which we want to emphasize in this area is the issue of fake news, anti-EU propaganda and social media misuse. All of these have been a great danger to the European democracy, which is still not dealt with in the way it should be. Strong partnerships, transatlantic cooperation, coordination with social media giants (such as Facebook) should be a top priority. While respecting the rights to privacy and freedom of expression, the EU should strictly limit the effects of propaganda and fake news.

IV. UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

- ❖ **TEAM:** Jovana Lomigora, Sofija Popović, Neda Trifunović, Marko Todorović, Nikola Tucakov
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Minority rights

INTERVIEWED PERSONS:

Maja Videnović, MP

Muamer Bačevac, MP

Vladimir Ateljević, member of Republic of Serbia negotiation team

NATIONAL POSITION:

Since the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, the Charter for Fundamental Rights has become a legally binding document for all member states of the European Union. Also, minority rights have for the first time been introduced into the EU's primary law (Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union). Rights of minorities could be considered a key component of the European project as a whole, and as a natural extension of the values the EU seeks to promote and develop both on the internal level and on the international stage. Although the EU has so far given considerable support to minority rights as a part of its wider commitment to furthering human rights, legislation on this particular topic has been slow to arrive. There is considerable room for activity – both in the European Parliament or European Commission – that could greatly benefit the cause of minority rights. Since the topic of minority rights is quite vague, for this opportunity we decided to focus our attention mostly on the topic of national minorities. We noticed that there is no settled and formally binding definition of „minorities“ under EU law or a specific, minority-related charter. We assume that the differences in definition would arise, taking into account different concepts of nationhood across Europe. Nevertheless, we believe that certain common standards must necessarily be agreed upon in order to prevent discrimination and social exclusion of minority groups which would open the way for violation of human rights. Another weakness that we noted in the system of national minority protection is lack of its systemic monitoring, both inside the Union Member States and outside, towards candidate states that are in the process of EU accession. As for the monitoring of Member States we welcome initiatives such as the one of Germany and Belgium to set up a „non-partisan“ mechanism to monitor MS's rule of law and democracy and we believe that this process should include monitoring of minority rights. As for the relations of Union toward its

candidate countries, we believe that there is a need for more proactive and supportive tracking of minority protection.

With these shortcomings in mind, we have decided to articulate a series of policy recommendations that could address the topic in a clearer, more focused fashion. These recommendations are the product of consultation with members of our country's legislative and executive bodies and careful deliberation between members of the team. These recommendations are also an expression of our full commitment to the effort of furthering minority rights as an invaluable goal of the European Union and the international community. While we are fully aware of the complexities of the EU's competences in this field, its legislative process, as well as the necessary drafting and consensus-building process. We nonetheless believe that these policy suggestions may serve as the first step in significant advancement of rights of minorities within the European Union, both for current and future member states.

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. RECOMMENDATION: We propose to establish more systematic monitoring of minority rights in the European Parliament. In order to achieve this goal, recommendation is to establish a separate committee for minority rights. Alternative suggestion would be to establish meetings on a regular basis in the already existing Human Rights committee devoted to minority rights issues. Member States should send regular reports about the state of minority rights to the committee. Also, this committee would secure larger visibility of minority issues in the European Parliament, and indirectly in other EU institutions. The goal of this proposal is to put emphasis on the issue of minority rights as a separate topic. This highlighting would provide the much needed specific approach to minority issues, because we believe that minorities do need some particular rights, having in mind their distinct status.

2. RECOMMENDATION: We propose to establish minimal standards in the field of minority rights and/or to establish recommendations on best practices of Member States in the field of protection of minority rights. These minimal standards should address some minimal principles in regard to the attainment of minority rights such as representation, economic safety, cultural and linguistic autonomy, etc. These standards would then act as benchmarks according to which the status of minority rights would be assessed. As for best practices, we believe that they would be useful from two points of view. Firstly, they would provide insights about the manners in which Member States did succeed in protecting minority rights. Second, by

providing positive examples, they would be incentive for other states to establish such good practices. Also, they would prove that it is possible to achieve the protection of minority rights in practice.

3. RECOMMENDATION 3: We propose to establish Funding Programme for Minority Rights. Having in mind that some minority rights are of programmatic character and that they need systemic and economic changes, we believe that financial support is beneficial and required. We find that it would be useful to establish a programme that would offer grants for various projects related to minority right issues. Beneficiaries of the grants could be Member States, candidate countries as well as civil society organizations.

V. UNIVERSITY OF NOVI SAD

- ❖ **TEAM:** Anja Lalović, Marijana Đurić, Đorđe Ivanović, Radomir Grčić, Gojko Dimić

- ❖ **TOPIC:** EU investment, domestic violence:
 1. Financial encouragement of students who live in small communities for raising the sociopolitical awareness in their communities
 2. Promotion of various solutions for protecting women and preventing domestic violence from EU countries, in order to find the ideal solution for Serbia.
 3. Control of investment of EU money for projects concerning ecology.

INTERVIEWED PERSONS:

Dinko Gruhonjić, journalist and docent at the Department of Journalism at Faculty of Philosophy

Vanja Macanović, Autonomous female center

Zvezdan Kalmar, Center for ecology and sustainable development (CEKOR)

NATIONAL POSITION:

After we thoroughly thought about what challenges our country faces, we have chosen these three topics to be the focus of our EU policy brief.

First one was about financial encouragement of the EU to the students of Serbia who live in small communities so they can adequately raise the sociopolitical awareness there. As we are getting closer to the EU membership, it is essential that more and more people know what that membership actually means. The level of knowledge and awareness about the EU and what it can do has been, and still is low in Serbia, especially in rural areas and small communities which make the most of the population.

As one of our interlocutors, Dinko Gruhonjić claims that small communities are in a way isolated since a great number of them doesn't have local media, they have hardly any activities organized and most of all they are struggling with day-to-day life, so the last thing on their minds is the EU.

He adds that financing students through a EU project would be a great idea because it is good for both the students and the local community they come from. It engages students in new social processes and pushes them to take initiative. Since, as he believes, no one ever really tried to explain EU processes and the path to membership

to the citizens of Serbia, this would be useful for them to get the basic facts and avoid being manipulated on the topic.

Secondly, we recognized violence against women as one key problem that surrounds us. We talked to Vanja Macanović from the Autonomous female center about this issue. She noted that support services for women should be financed from the state budget and specialized services entrusted or implemented in close cooperation with the appropriate women's civil society organizations. She also added: "State policy needs to establish unique systems for recording data on all forms of violence against women. That includes data on the type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, as well as other relevant data, which enables the phenomenon to be more closely perceived. This includes publicly available statistical data and sufficient number of periodically conducted surveys on a representative sample of all forms of violence against women."

We believe that above noted measures, combined with successful examples from some of the EU countries that have struggled with this problem it would help our country overcome it.

Last but not least the problem of ecology. One of the toughest bridges to cross in Serbia's EU integration is the chapter concerning the protection of the environment. Awareness about the issue is low, there are a lot of wild landfills, and rivers get heavily polluted. Some parts of the country have very unhealthy air quality according to online real-time map *World's air pollution*.

Zvezdan Kalmar, from Center for ecology and sustainable development (CEKOR) says that the basic problem we are facing is our own misunderstanding of the issue. As he puts it, we don't understand that setting high goals in the area of environment protection is going to stimulate the economical growth of the country and secure new investments. According to him, when regulations in this field are implemented, the problem is visible in reduced surveillance and reduced administrative capacity. Also, jurisdictions and fines are too small and there is a commonly known problem of slow legal processes. As he sees it, when the system is right, every citizen is separating waste, and if not he/she is paying a fine, in addition to education about this topic in schools. In time this becomes the standard.

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. RECOMMENDATION: Financial motivation of students to raise sociopolitical conscientiousness in local communities they come from

Local communities and small cities in Serbia (settlements around 20 000 citizens) are isolated in most cases from events that enable public exchange of opinions and dialogues about important social-political and environmental questions in their settlements. EU, in such constellation of things, is one of the last priorities in people's minds. This is important because EU is facing the rise of the right wing and authorities in Serbia, which many see as similar to those in Hungary, are getting their strongest support from places such as these.

What EU could do is to secure certain kinds of scholarships for those students who study social-political sciences within their universities to motivate them to organize political debates and similar events that would help those who were isolated to think outside the box. That would include: breaking the myths about EU itself and introduce various ways of solving existing problems, whether they are cultural, political or environmental.

It is important for students, as people who will inherit the country and who will one day lead it to make important political decisions themselves, to be activated in this way. They would improve their organizational skills and get used to taking certain actions to make their society a better place to live in, which should be the main characteristic of every politician and those who seek to contribute to their communities. Scholarships would play important role in this since many students in Serbia aren't motivated enough to such actions due to lack of time which is caused by working while studying or not having enough faith that these kind of actions could contribute. Scholarships would enable students to, instead of working as waiters for instance, get involved in something that they study and make those with less faith believe that their actions could make a difference. That can change their mind when someone else believes in them by financing them.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Promoting models of protecting and preventing violence against women

Since 2012, the Republic of Serbia has the status of a candidate country for accession to the European Union. After resigning, the former prime minister was elected president of the state. The new government took office in June 2017. A legal and institutional framework for respecting fundamental rights has been introduced. Although Serbia has achieved a certain level of preparedness, no progress has been made in terms of freedom of expression, which is all the more worrying. Continued efforts are still needed to improve the position of persons belonging to the most discriminated groups. The Draft Law on gender equality prefers gender-neutral definitions of violence, excludes the definition of 'violence against women' and diminishes the attained level

of rights related to sexual and reproductive rights and women's health. Often there is absence of systematic tracking and reporting about enforcing any of the measures. Female civil organisations collect, research, analyze and also write legible reports on this topic (last one is written in January, 2019 by *Autonomous female center*). State policy which forbids gender discrimination is not promoted nor applied enough in education process of young people, neither woman in general.

To develop stronger society awareness about this problem, as well to encourage woman to report domestic violence, it is essential to ensure that all support services for women victims of all forms of violence meet the appropriate standards, contribute to the effective protection and recovery of victims.

3. RECOMMENDATION: Control of investment of EU money for projects concerning ecology.

Currently, concern about the ecology is one of the things that gets least attention in Serbia. Elected officials don't care much about the environment because their voters don't recognize it as an important matter. What adds up to the problem is that a lot of them don't have the awareness themselves. Having in mind what we said, politicians would choose their battles with funds coming their way thus creating a habit of repurposing the funds intended for preserving the environment.

Ecology is not the battle often fought in developing countries. In Serbia, eco-taxes and eco-fines are not directly infused into the Green fond, but rather the amount of money going into it is decided by the Parliament. Even the money that was intended for ecological improvement is not "money well spent". Journalists found that some local governments are buying buses or street lamps with the money they get from the state government, or other sources intended for eco-improvement. There are two things that can be done in order to better this field.

Since a lot of money intended for protecting the environment ends up used on rather small scale fix-ups or even in the pockets of individuals, we think that EU should propose a solution on how to control these funds better, especially since Serbia has to keep up to environmental EU standards - and this is one of the hardest chapters for our country. In addition, EU can fund projects that educate people on the importance of healthy environment and problems that could be solved with the repurposed money.

By improving the control of this money (either by creating stricter inspection or supervision board), we can secure that our environment gets the attention needed and secure that it stays healthy in the future.

VI. MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKA BYSTRICA

- ❖ **TEAM:** Filip Sopóci, Igor Sobol, Marek Majerčík, Petra Bošková, Alena Bednáriková.
- ❖ **TOPIC:** Euroscepticism and its impact on the unity of the EU – the example of the Visegrad states

INTERVIEWED PERSONS:

Igor Choma (MP of coalition party SMER-SD, member of National Parliament Committee for Public administration and Regional Development)

Martin Klus (MP of opposition party SaS, vice-chairman of National Parliament Committee for European Affairs, also member of National Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee)

Imrich Babic (Head of Strategic Communication, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)

NATIONAL POSITION:

This attitude is based on positions and expert opinions of political elite and representative of Ministry of Foreign and European affairs in our country - Slovak Republic. MP from government party SMER-SD sees wave of euroscepticism on the rise in V4 states (community of countries in central Europe like Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland), but it is nothing new for such a huge and complicated organisation to administer like EU. Each of these countries has its typical forms of euroscepticism connected with different problems and needs of each state and its society. He is confident that these countries don't have to be afraid of the scenario similar to the Brexit one in near future. However, V4 countries should be careful about trends of euroscepticism because nobody expected Brexit and so it suddenly came almost out of nowhere. Question of the day can be either push these V4 states to the same integration or introduce and apply multi-speed Europe. MP of government party strongly support the opinion that Slovak Republic should be in the core of the EU. Being on its edge can cause that our country won't be full part of decision-making, even about matters directly related to us.

The attitude of an opposition party member, Martin Klus, is based on his political background, such as vice-chairman of National Parliament Committee for European Affairs and also member of National Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, claims that there are two groups of people in Slovakia in relation to the EU. Those who are trying

to get out of the organization, using the form of petition, or, eventually, to dismiss the elections to the European Parliament. The question of Euroscepticism and the V4 itself in individual governments shows that they do not share opinions. The opposition MP believes that the young generation is poorly aware of what is happening in the EU, where communication is a problem, resulting in low participation of young people in elections. The most recent elections have shown their attitude and the need for reform, particularly in the economic and migration fields. It is important to mention the expression of the invitation of migrants by Chancellor Angela Merkel, which has triggered a wave of criticism and the need for reform to introduce a level playing field for migrants. With regard to migration and V4, we see an increase in Euroscepticism. Although migrants did not stay in the V4 countries, their short-term presence in the country already gave room for the development of the populist policy of Orbán and Kačinský.

As an expert from Slovakia said, more than half of citizens attended on the referendum about entering the EU 94% of population said YES on the question about entering the EU! Based on this fact populists are wrong when they say that people don't want to be in the EU. From 2004 on the other hand intensive campaign about informing about EU is missing and that is a huge mistake. This info was missing in every crucial event in every milestones that has been done in Brussels. Importance of dialogue between state and citizens about what the EU is currently doing and what are preparing for us was and is marginalized. Because of that populists are on the rise all across the Europe. We need to think about UK for a little and compare it with situation in Slovakia and other V4 states. They are open state towards whole world. We are landlocked countries and we don't have any other option to survive in this area than cooperate with neighbouring states and being the part of the EU. We need EU without this project our economy would be in ruins because not like UK because we don't have sea to trade with countries from other side of the ocean, but we don't hear this argument and that's why populism is on the rise.

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

We, as a team Banská Bystrica would like to offer our recommendations based not just on the positions and opinions mentioned in the 3 interviews. We are next generation that needs to consider future of the EU, too. Future of the organisation which will directly or indirectly affect our lives and lives of our families. That is one of the main reasons we would like to share also our remarks, opinions and proposals in the next lines.

1. RECOMMENDATION:

Education si future. In our opinion, EU is still very unknown organisation for ordinary people. A lot of people in our country criticize it, but their criticism is based mainly on the anger. Maybe that anger has roots in ignorance of this project. People don't know exactly when, why and what decisions about future are made while they're living their lives. It may sounds cliché, but EU really needs to be closer to the people. If EU will not here principally for its residents, the number of discontents and problems inside this organisation will rise. To connect it with our topic, one of these problems is euroscepticism. Which can be good for realising the weaknesses of EU. However, nowadays euroscepticism with the rising support of the rightward partites/movements in our country can transform into negligible efforts to weaken Slovakia's postion in EU or even tendencies to leave it in extreme cases. After all these troubles, we can get to the point were majority of the people will definitely lost faith in EU just from the inability to prevent this by the educating that never gives up.. Of course, there is a lot of people which realize huge benefits of it (travelling across whole Europe, common projects like Erazmus which allow us to explore new cultures in different coutries in Europe and so on, living and working almost wherever we want and so on). But I still can't see enough action from political elites in our country (there are some honor exceptions of these elites to be fair). There is still much space how to promote EU and mainly objectively educate people. In this point we would like to send a message to EU parliament: We realize that there is so much work about operating EU in all ways. But keep or mind or just do not forget on the people of EU and their opinions that are most important for the future od it. They need to be in contact with EU every day if it is possible which means promotion and education all over again and everywhere...

2. RECOMMENDATION:

Skepticism towards the EU in Slovakia has been increasing, which may be associated with populism established in the framework of the neighbouring countries – Hungary and Poland as a response to the migration crisis. In our opinion, the way to prevent the enlargement of skepticism in the country the use of so-called "soft –power“, which would explain the functioning of the European Union, not just the young, but equally numerous post-productive population. It is precisely this target group do not believe the efforts members od european parliament and does not see any realistic possibility of hearing their representatives on the basis of their low number in the parliament. The ideal means would be to continually inform through the media, that would solve the EU, only in the case of the various cases, whether controversial laws. Equally importantly is to increase position od union from the economic point of view, when the

departure of the states of the V4, not to mention specifically about Slovakia would mean the same economic and political suicide. We believe that it is important to point out the consistency of the objectives of the organisation and to confirm the equivalence of the partner of the individual states, in particular in the field of security, which should be the means of confidence of the individual states against each other. As opposition member of slovak parliament proposes, remember the importance of the integrity of the union, the one-time but costly solution - i.e. closing the borders of the individual states, not only for individuals but also for capital and products. This act would then have to pick up the importance of cooperation in the future .

3. RECOMMENDATION:

Euroscepticism is a very dangerous enemy for welfare of European countries. However, nothing is impossible and this situation in the EU is not an exclusion. We should realize, that till the moment while populism exists, people are going to be fooled. This is what euro scepticism about - to fool people, to promise them cloud-castles. There are some points in order to solute this problem: More debates. More conversations on TV. Let both sides talk to each other in front of the whole nation. This activity can help people to realize the non-sense of eurosceptics ideas. One bright example - Macron against Le Penn in 2017, when Le Penn was totally destroyed by Macrons arguments; Discuss. More things you discuss between both sides - more optimal solutions we can find; Migration crisis is the most favorite topic for eurosceptics. This problem should be solved where it appears. The EU should pay more attention at the transit countries in the North Africa, in order to prevent migration on the European continent. In the end we would like to add, that nowadays situation should be taken like a regular crisis, which will be solved for sure. We should remember 2 things: First of all, after every night comes morning; Secondly, problems are created to solve them.

- ❖ **TOPIC:** EU as a leader and owner of positive vision for development, EU legitimacy and EP elections

EU POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. RECOMMENDATION:

The great issue is to address the developmental goals for the future. Last couple of years, the EU was due to the objective reason, dealing mostly with internal issues which started with the dealing with aftermaths of financial crisis, followed by surge of far-right and alternative political scene and eventually it is nowadays pre-occupied by the first time ever process of one member of the EU leaving the union. It is understandable that these problem are somehow connected, yet EU should keep the focus on the positive message as well.

As the EU was found on the principle of creating something new and moving forward, it should keep its main mission in this fashion and aspire to get the countries on board of this idea. This does not mean that there is no common strategy in existence, however, its adoption by European leaders usually lies on shoulder of few bigger countries, such as France or Germany

Especially with the current situation around Brexit, and the slow downscaling of the presence of United States of American on the European theater, it is even more important that the EU will be able to be seen as a leading institution operation and unifying the “old continent” and to remind the people living in it that it is not only able to deal with crises, but can be once again serving in providing vision of unification and progress for the Europe.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

The great question and everlasting issue regarding of EU is the question of its legitimacy and the pursuit of European identity. The election to the European Parliament still in many countries, including and especially in Slovakia, are suffering by low popularity. This is especially dangerous as many countries nowadays, in the light of recent internal political development, have to deal with the surge of anti-European and nationalistic political parties and their, if not growing, then maintaining support.

The fact that the EP elections are usually the least attended in the country, again this is especially true, in Slovakia, the risk of smaller and easily to mobilize electorate of the anti-system or anti-European parties from all over Europe might have easier access to the EP.

There is no doubt, that even Eurosceptical or Eurocritical voices should be heard in European parliament, the project as such however should have some soft ways of protecting itself. A larger information campaign about the importance of European elections, though there are some aspiration to do that nowadays, should be a cornerstone of these efforts and should better explain the importance of the EP elections for all the population.

A mobilization activity of this nature should be on shoulders of EU, as in many countries it would be unreasonable to expect, that the political parties and actors could because of subjective or objective reasons, would put the competition for seats in EP before the internal domestic political struggle. This does not mean that political parties are not interested in European matters as such, however, the usual electoral cycle often shadows these election in light of the, for domestic actors much more crucial, national ones.