



Getting Serbia into the EU: Prospects and challenges

SERBIAN-BAVARIAN HIGHER EDUCATION DAY

NIKOLA BURAZER

BAMBERG, SEPTEMBER 2019

EU enlargement in the Western Balkans

- ▶ Negotiating for membership: Montenegro (2012), Serbia (2014)
- ▶ Candidates for membership: North Macedonia (2005), Albania (2014)
- ▶ Potential candidates: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*
- ▶ Western Balkans Strategy: February 2018

EU integration of Serbia

- ▶ Candidate status: March 2012
- ▶ Opening of accession negotiations: January 2014
- ▶ First chapters opened: December 2015
- ▶ 35 chapters, special status of chapters 23, 24 and 35
- ▶ Serbia opened 17 chapters and closed 2 chapters as of September 2019

Major factors

- ▶ The question of Kosovo
- ▶ State of democracy
- ▶ Stricter conditions for joining the EU after the examples of Romania and Bulgaria



Kosovo as a part of the EU accession process of Serbia

Kosovo as a part of the EU accession process of Serbia

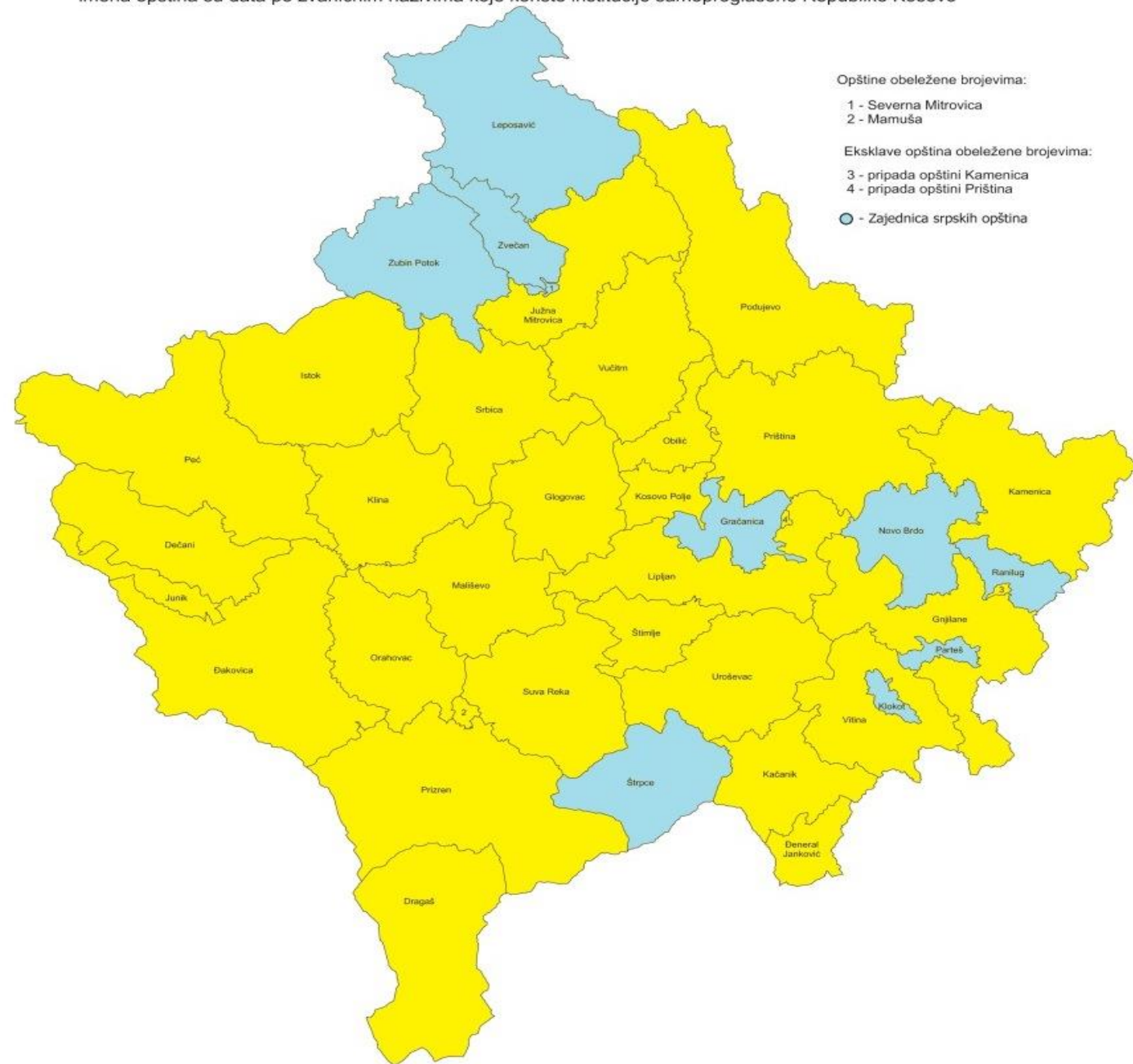
- ▶ Major steps Serbia made in the EU accession process came after agreements with or about Kosovo
- ▶ Candidate status after the agreement on regional representation (February 2012)
- ▶ Date for opening accession negotiations after the Brussels Agreement (June 2013)
- ▶ First chapters opened after the 4 agreements from August 2015

Belgrade – Pristina Dialogue

- ▶ Technical Dialogue (2011-2012)
- ▶ Political dialogue (2012-)
- ▶ The First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations (Brussels Agreement) signed on 19 April 2013
- ▶ The logic of the normalization process:
 - ▶ Serbia will disband its parallel institutions and allow North Kosovo to be integrated into Kosovo
 - ▶ Kosovo Serbs will gain autonomy within the Association/Community of Serb Majority Municipalities and strengthen their position within Kosovo's political system

Opštine Kosova po zakonima samoproglašene Republike Kosovo

imena opština su data po zvaničnim nazivima koje koriste institucije samoproglašene Republike Kosovo



Key documents

- ▶ Framework for EU accession negotiations of Serbia (January 2014):

*„This process shall ensure that both can continue on their respective European paths, whilst avoiding that either can block the other in these efforts and **should gradually lead to the comprehensive normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, in the form of a legally binding agreement** by the end of Serbia’s accession negotiations“*

- ▶ EU common position for Chapter 35 (December 2015):

*„Serbia should engage in reaching further agreements, furthering the normalisation in good faith, with a view to **gradually lead to the comprehensive normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo**, in line with the negotiating framework“*

Recent developments: Urgency to reach normalization

- ▶ EU's Western Balkans Strategy (February 2018):

“A **comprehensive, legally binding normalisation agreement is urgent and crucial** so that Serbia and Kosovo can advance on their respective European paths” and “in Serbia's case, the interim benchmarks related to the normalisation of relations with Kosovo (chapter 35) must be met and a **comprehensive, legally binding normalisation agreement concluded urgently**“

- ▶ Territorial changes: US and EU institutions open to it, Germany and UK strongly against
- ▶ Kosovo tariffs on Serbian goods (November 2018) and the stalemate in the dialogue
- ▶ Internal conflict, Kosovo rejects both territorial concessions and the establishment o ASM

Possible options

- ▶ Territorial changes: North Kosovo goes to Serbia, maybe Preševo goes to Kosovo, Serbia recognizes Kosovo independence
- ▶ Original framework: Kosovo creates Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities, Serbia de facto (but perhaps not de jure) recognizes independence of Kosovo
- ▶ Serbia recognizes Kosovo without either territorial gains or ASM (highly unlikely)
- ▶ Status quo, no solution, and probably no EU integration

Recent developments

Germany and United Kingdom are against border changes, and are in favour of the current framework (two Germanies, comprehensive normalization)

USA open to border changes (interested in formal recognition and diminishing Russian influence in the region)

Kosovo introduces 100% tariffs on Serbian goods, no dialogue before they are withdrawn

Kosovo government falls, elections scheduled for 6 October

What will the new European Commission do?

Democracy in Serbia

Democracy in Serbia

- ▶ Chapters 23 and 24 of fundamental importance in the EU accession process
- ▶ Serbia opens less chapters than it is ready to mainly because of lack of progress in key areas (unofficial)
- ▶ Democracy in Serbia declines, anti-government protests, boycott of the parliament
- ▶ The latest European Commission report extremely harsh on Serbia regarding work of the parliament, freedom of media and elections
- ▶ The danger of elections boycott in 2020 worries the EU (because of Kosovo or because of the state of democracy?)

Democracy in Serbia

- ▶ Democracy in Serbia declines, anti-government protests, boycott of the parliament
- ▶ The latest European Commission report extremely harsh on Serbia regarding work of the parliament, freedom of media and elections
- ▶ The danger of elections boycott in 2020 worries the EU (because of Kosovo or because of the state of democracy?)

Other concerns

- ▶ Chapter 31: Common foreign and security policy; Serbia with least alignment, Kosovo the main factor
- ▶ Chapter 27: Protection of the environment a major challenge, requiring significant investments