

Christophe Solioz

# Thinking the Balkans out of the Box

EU Integration and Regional Cooperation –  
Challenges, Models, Lessons



Nomos

## **Southeast European Integration Perspectives**

Edited by

**Wolfgang Petritsch,**

former High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina  
and Special Envoy of the EU for Kosovo

**Christophe Solioz,**

Philosophy professor at the Collège de Genève

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Geneva, 28 August 2017



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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
AER	Assembly of European Regions
AFSJ	Area of Freedom, Security and Justice
AII	Adriatic-Ionian Initiative
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
BRESCE	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
BRICSAM	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Mexico
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
BTTC	Brics Think Tank Council
CADSES	Central European, Adriatic, Danubian, South-Eastern European Space
CAP	Center for Applied Policy Research
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Democratisation and Stabilisation
CBC	cross-border cooperation
CBR	cross-border regions
CCSI	Centre de Contacts Suisses-Immigrés, Geneva
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement
CEI	Central European Initiative
CEIS	Center for European Integration Strategies, Geneva
CiO	chairmanship-in-office
CLRAE	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CoE	Council of Europe
COMECOM	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSDP	Common Security and Defense policy
CSO	civil society organisation
DAI	Dinaric Arc Initiative

*List of Abbreviations and Acronyms*

EEA	European Economic Area
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
EFB	European Balkan Fund
EFTA	European Free Trade Associationm
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERICarts	European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research
ERGEG	European Regulators' Group for electricity and gas
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI	European Stability Initiative
ESS	European Security Strategy
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EULEX	European Union Rule-of-Law Mission in Kosovo
EUPM	European Union Police Mission in Bosnia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of United Nations
FDI	foreign direct investment
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
FTA	free trade agreement
GAMA	Citizens' Action for Peace
GDP	gross domestic product
GFAP	General Framework Agreement for Peace
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
hCa	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Community
IBM	integrated border management
ICAN	International Contemporary Arts Network
ICESS	International Conference on Education and Social Science
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

IUCN	International Union for Conservation Union
IDP	internally displaced person
IETM	International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts
IFI	International financial institution
ILECUs	International Law Enforcement Coordination Units
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	Institute for International Relations, Zagreb
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JHAE	JHA external dimension
KFOR	NATO-led Kosovo Force
MANS	Network for the Affirmation of the NGO Sector
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MedPO	Mediterranean Program Office of WWF
MERCOSUR	Common Southern Market
MFF	Motovun International Film Festival
MLG	multi-level governance
MMA	monitoring, mentoring and advising
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
ND	Northern Dimension
NDEP	Northern Dimension environmental Partnership
NIS	Newly Independent States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NUNS	Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
NRA	New Regionalism Approach
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute

*List of Abbreviations and Acronyms*

PED	EULEX Police Executive Department
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
PISG	provisional institutions of self-government
PJC	Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal Matters
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PROSECO	Public Prosecutors' Network
RBA	Region Building Approach
RCA	revealed comparative advantages
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
R&D	research and development
REC	Regional Environmental Centre
RECOM	Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about War Crimes and Other Gross Violations of Human Rights Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia
RoK-FOR	Regions of Knowledge for Forestry
ROSTE	UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Technology
RTA	regional trading agreement
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAM	South Africa and Mexico
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SECI	Southeast European Cooperative Initiative
SEDM	Southeast European Defence Ministerial
SEE	South East Europe/European
SEEBRIG	South Eastern Europe Brigade
SEECF	South East European Cooperation Process
SEEI	Southeast European Initiative
SEER	South East Europe revue – Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe
SEEPAG	Southeast European Prosecutors Advisory Group
SELEC	Southeast European Law Enforcement Centre
SDC1	Swiss Development Cooperation
SCCA	Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SIPA	State Investigation and Protection Agency
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SP	Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe
SPAI	Stability Pact Anti-corruption Initiative
SPOC	Stability Pact Initiative against Organised Crime

SSR	Security sector reform
SWFs	Sovereign wealth funds
TFC/CBC	Transfrontier / cross-border cooperation
UCTE	Coordination of the Transmission of Electricity
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UJDI	Association for the Yugoslav Democratic Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNECE	UN Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPS	United Power Systems
VG	Visegrád Group
WISC	World International Studies Committee
wiiw	Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies
WOA	World Order Approach
WTO	World Trade Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WWII	World War II





## Bridging the Gap

### *Rethinking Integration and Regional Cooperation Together*

EU Integration and the enlargement processes are widely perceived as an unprecedented success story. Nevertheless, after the 2004 “big bang”, which brought in ten new members, followed by the 2007 membership of Romania and Bulgaria, enthusiasm for enlargement, and, where many were concerned, even for Europe as such, largely vanished.

Despite the rhetoric and the many conferences with their (self-) reassuring statements and promises, accession prospects seem unambiguously bleak for South East Europe (SEE) countries. The enthusiasm and political will have evaporated, and, most crucially, the EU policy and strategies have failed to acknowledge the emerging new world order.

But really has nothing changed in the last two decades?

- On the one hand, no: Slovenia (May 2004) and Croatia (July 2013) have become full-fledged EU member-states.
- But on the other, yes: the other SEE countries remain in the EU’s waiting room.

Resistances to rethinking and renewing European strategies for South East Europe can be traced back to the first EU–Western Balkans Summit, held in November 2000 in Zagreb. After the second EU–Western Balkans Summit organised in the framework of the Thessaloniki European Council (June 2003), the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP) identified that progress regarding South East Europe had reached a stumbling block and called therefore for a “determined rethinking and a renewal of European strategies for South Eastern Europe”.<sup>1</sup>

It is important, however, to include another dimension: further completing the EU integration process would certainly be a way to renew the pan-European dynamic and thus also to reconnect with and renew “early regionalism” (see below). As we will discuss, a pan-European vision sets the bilateral and multilateral issues, as well as regional integration and cooperation, in a coherent and significant framework for an efficient development of economic, political and cultural cooperation (see Chapter 2.3). Additionally, a pan-regional approach such as this represents a bold vision

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1 Centrum für angewandte Politikforschung, *The Next Europe: Southeastern Europe after Thessaloniki* (Munich: CAP, 2003), p. 1.

for South East Europe, and also for Europe as a whole. Fredrik Söderbaum recalls the main features of pan-regional movements:

Pan-regional movements were usually motivated by a mixture of geopolitical, socio-economic, cultural (sometimes even racial) and, to some extent, functional beliefs and goals. They were multidimensional and reflected shared ideas and goals of political and intersocietal unity rather than intergovernmental regionalism in a more narrow sense.<sup>2</sup>

It would be a mistake to think “early regionalism” is outdated. Today’s Organisation of American States (OAS) can be traced back to the 1889–90 regional cooperation in the Americas. It is the oldest still working organisation of this kind in the world. Thus, albeit rebranded, pan-regional movements may become relevant in the new world order (see Part 3).

Encompassing the years 2000 through to 2017, the first aim of this book is to focus on two intertwined processes: the EU integration and the regional cooperation in their relation to SEE. Obviously, the nexus between both is as complex as it is manifold. It is thus crucial to envision a framework that encompasses the multi-layered structure of regional cooperation and EU integration.

The following key issues will be discussed throughout this volume:

- ⇒ in the view of the EU, “regional cooperation” is a key to, and a formal conditionality for, EU integration;
- ⇒ both, in SEE, are more top-down than ground-up driven processes;<sup>3</sup>
- ⇒ both are widely perceived in SEE as exogenous products (push factor), and so there is an obvious lack of regional “joint ownership”;
- ⇒ both encompass a set of dimensions: politics, economics, security and culture;
- ⇒ both refer to different scalar processes and strategies active at different levels;
- ⇒ but they differ inasmuch as EU-integration specifically addresses the state-level while regional cooperation processes may involve provinces and regions (micro-regions), and/or states, and/or various (part of) states (macro-regions).

These are some of the typical issues broadly discussed, but most of the

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2 Fredrik Söderbaum, *Rethinking Regionalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), p. 20.

3 For an effective ground-up approach, see the volume (focusing on the Scandinavian countries) edited by Herald Baldersheim, Ave Vergard Haug and Morten Øgård, *The Rise of The Networking Region* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011).

scholars tend to split what I consider to be intrinsically linked. The gap between the EU and regionalism studies, as well as between their respective scholars, may partly explain this.

Furthermore, while in South East Europe, “integration” is almost exclusively related to the European Union accession process, the term ought instead to be understood in a much broader sense, as a process that establishes, confirms and deepens the EU membership. Here “territorial cooperation”, intended as partnerships established between the regional or local authorities of one state and the equivalent authorities in one or more other states, plays a key role in the perspective of a qualitative integration strategy. The New Regionalism Approach (NRA) — developed from the mid-1980s on, notably by the seminal work of Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum — offers an adapted conceptual framework in its advocacy of a multi-layered and comprehensive understanding of regionalism, which is not bound to the Westphalian state-centred approach. The NRA, further developed in the framework of the “comparative regionalism”, highlights a multi-dimensional and pluralistic type of regionalism, as well as new institution designs and the active role of non-state actors.

Additionally, we have to consider that many regional cooperation initiatives involve at the state level countries (or regions belonging to states) that are not yet EU member-states and are also non-EU countries. Accordingly, regional cooperation programmes had been developed from the mid-2000s on in the respective frameworks of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (2006) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (2007). Regional cooperation thus developed specific programmes treating in a different way both “internal borders” — separating adjoining territories of (forthcoming) member states — and “external borders” — delimiting member states from non-EU countries. The former anticipate and accompany the accession process of incoming EU member-states, while the latter play a substantial role in “managing” the new “East–West” divide.

Nothing is really new here. Since its early stages, regional cooperation and integration had been largely related to reconstruction and reconciliation as illustrated by the following milestones that belong to the “old regionalism” era (see Table 2, p. 23): the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, of the Common Market in 1957, of the German–Dutch Euregio and of the European Economic Community (Treaty of Rome) in 1958, of the Regio Basiliensis and of the Franco–German reconciliation (Elysée–Treaty) in 1963.

The key element in the next stage — which corresponds to the “new regionalism” phase initiated by the White Paper on internal markets (1985), the Single European Act (1986), and the fall of the Berlin Wall