

Border Puzzle: The Results of Disintegration and EU Integration Processes on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia

Anton Gosar*

Abstract

Since 1990 seven independent, sovereign nation-states emerged out of one multi-ethnic Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Kosovo (pending UN status), Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - FYRM), Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Disputes over border-line delimitation among former brothers-in-arms have been solved sporadically. International arbitrary decisions are pending. Further fragmentation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, resulting out of poor economic conditions and rivalry between nation-state ethnicities, is a constant threat. There are no reports of border disputes on the Montenegro-Serbian and Macedonian-Serbian border, but even there, ethnic minorities strive for regional autonomy.

Management of the Kosovo-Serbian border is under the consideration of Serbia. The borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina are fragile since major energy and traffic issues are related to this issue. The long-lasting Slovenian-Croatian border problem (in particular in the Bay of Venice) has moved from a bi-partisan solution to the European arbitrary court.

The EU's integration process shows several stages. Slovenia is a member of the European Union. The EU is looking forward to integrate Croatia by 2013. Montenegro has made substantial efforts in becoming an EU member. Bosnia and Herzegovina, and recently Serbia, are in the initial stages of the EU integration process. Kosovo is not yet seriously involved in the integration process. Macedonia is facing an obstacle to integration from Greece, related to the country's name and history. The reality of cross-border co-operation by members of the EU will be elaborated through the example of a tourism project in the three-border area of Austria, Italy and Slovenia.

The Disintegration of Yugoslavia

Since 1991 seven independent, sovereign nation-states have emerged out of the multi-ethnic (since 1919) and communist (1945-1991) Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Kosovo (pending UN status), Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYRM), Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Yugoslavia was a politically powerful post-World War II European country, economically viable and rich with resources; the country was among the leaders of the unallied movement (along with India, Egypt and Indonesia) from the early 1960s. Despite being communist, it opened its borders equally to foreign nationals and firms as well as to its own citizens

* Anton Gosar is Professor at the University of Primorska, Slovenia. This paper was first presented at the Second International Winter Symposium of the Global COE Program "Reshaping Japan's Border Studies – De-Areanization of Border Studies: The 'Greater Eurasia' and its Neighbours," December 4-5 2010.



Figure 1 Nation-States on the Territory of Former Yugoslavia, 2008

Source: UN ICTY (2008): What is the former Yugoslavia? (1 January 2008) United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, <http://www.icty.org/sid/321>

who could freely travel across Europe and the world. What caused the collapse of a successful European East-West gateway country?

There is consensual opinion among geo-politicians and political geographers that the secession of (socialist) republics and the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991 and after had several characteristics: political (transition from communism to democracy and market economy), cultural and religious (nationalism growing in particular in the provinces [i.e. socialist republics] of Serbia and Croatia), demographic and social (population increase and subsequently unemployment in the south and population decrease in non-Muslim cultural environments), economic (growing disparity between the industrial north and the resource-rich south – see Table 1) and finally, historical (as until the nineteenth century the territory was split between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires).¹

The secession of Slovenia from Yugoslavia in 1991 went relatively smoothly. Due to its ethnic homogeneity (87% Slovenes), and the well-organized Slovenian territorial force (and logistics), the war with the Yugoslav Federal Army (JNA) lasted only 10 days. Macedonia followed the example

¹ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1999); Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (Toronto: Times Books, Random House, 1999); Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Anton Bebler, “Federalist Experience in South-Eastern Europe and the Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina” in Milan Bufon et al. (eds.), *The Western Balkans: A European Challenge. On the Decennial of the Dayton Peace Agreement*, (Koper: Založba Annales, 2006) pp. 67-93; James Anderson, J. “Ethno-National Conflict: The Limits of Territoriality and Territorial ‘Solutions,’” in Milan Bufon et al. (eds.), *The Western Balkans – A European Challenge: On the Decennial of the Dayton Peace Agreement* (Koper: Založba Annales, 2006) pp. 47-65.

Table 1 Yugoslavia 1990: North-South Population and Economic Relationships

Socialist Republic /Autonomous Province/	Population (in 000)	Employment (in %)			Illiterate (in %)	Index GNP*
		Agriculture	Industry	Unemployed		
Serbia Proper	5.840	34.5	20.9	12.0	11	100
AP Vojvodina	2.051	32.0	25.6	12.5	6	117
AP Kosovo	1.939	42.2	20.7	45.6	18	28
Montenegro	639	26.0	21.9	26.6	9	77
Macedonia	2.111	28.9	23.7	22.1	11	67
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.479	28.5	26.2	20.1	15	69
Croatia	4.683	24.1	26.1	7.4	6	127
Slovenia	1.948	12.5	36.9	3.2	1	204
YUGOSLAVIA	23.690	28.6	25.3	18.7	9.6	\$ 4.450

* Serbia = 100 (1990); Source: "Statistički godišnjak" *SFRJ* (1991), pp. 442-445.

of Slovenia, as no shot was fired, but had to use force to restrain Albanian insurgents in 2001. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina fought wars with the rebellious Serbs (who were supported by the JNA) on several fronts for four years, between 1991 and 1995. International, EU and UN arbitration could not stop war atrocities in the Balkans for a long time. The genocide of Srebrenica (where, unprovoked, Serb forces killed close to 8,000 residents of the town) became a turning point in the "Bosnian conflict." The US led final arbitration and the introduction of NATO forces which culminated in the Dayton Peace Agreement (Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as the strengthening of the Croatian Army, finally brought peace in 1995. Kosovo's tragedy, the displacement of the Albanian population by the Serbs, was solved by a short military action of NATO, led by the US in 1999. Less than 10 years later Kosovo declared independence, and Montenegro split from the union with Serbia in 2006.

The Twenty-first Century EU Integration Process

The EU's integration process, involving nation-states established on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, is showing several stages of development: Slovenia is already a member of the European Union, Croatia's request for EU membership will be positively resolved in 2013, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina are in the initial stages of the EU integration process, Macedonia is facing an obstacle to EU membership from Greece related to the country's name and history, and Kosovo and Serbia are not yet seriously involved in the integration process. On November 9 2010, the EU Commission adopted its annual strategy document explaining its policy on EU enlargement.² In this document, the Commission stated that "several complex problems remain to be solved in the Western Balkans, in particular the governance of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the name question concerning Macedonia. Open bilateral issues remain and differences over Kosovo's status

² EU Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2010-2011" (2010), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/strategy_paper_2010_e.pdf

have held up regional cooperation.”³

As shown in Table 2 the territory of the former Yugoslavia is in 2010 fragmented into seven entities varying greatly in size. Serbia remains the biggest in size in terms of territory and population, followed by Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. All other nation-states are less than half the size of the above. The quantity of the residential population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is estimated, as the last census was executed more than 20 years ago. In the last century political independence was achieved by four nation-states, as support for independence was not only to be found within the national frame but also within the European Union, in particular in relation to Slovenia and Croatia. Iceland, the Vatican and Germany recognized their independence even before the January 1992 EU decision to do so.

Germans had especially close ties with Yugoslavia. One reason was that many Yugoslavs, mainly Slovenians and Croats, lived and worked in Germany. And on the other hand, Yugoslavia was a holiday destination for Germans. The people had gotten to know each other and a very friendly relationship evolved. German foreign policies regarded Yugoslavia as a factor of independence. It was very important that a European country should participate in the anti-colonial movement of the nonaligned states. So Yugoslavia had a special position in German policies and within the European Community. Germany advocated closer cooperation with Yugoslavia.⁴

Table 2 Territory of the Former Yugoslavia 2010: Political and Economic Overview

NATION-STATES	Sovereignty	Economic Progress			Political Alliance	Military Alliance
	(Year)	Size/Population (km ² /000.000)	GNP per capita (in US\$)	€ Trade Balance Export / Import	EU membership	NATO membership
Serbia	2006	77.474/7.4	5819	-5.361b	Potential Candidate, 2010	Partner 2006
Kosovo	2009+	10.887/1.9	2984	no data	Potential Candidate, 2010	No
Montenegro	2006	13.812/0.6	6633	-1.346b	Potential Candidate, 2005	Partner 2006
Macedonia (FYRM)	1992	25.713/2.1	4515	-1.362b	Candidate, 2005	Partner 1995
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1995*+	51.129/3.9	4546	-2.728b	Potential Candidate, 2008	Partner 2006
Croatia	1991	56.542/4.4	14100	-8.843b	Candidate, 2004	Member, 2009
Slovenia	1991	20.253/2.0	24600	-1.551b	Member, 2004	Member, 2004
Territory of former YU	1919	255.810/22.4	9028	-21.191b	-	-

Sources: “Letopis Republike Slovenije 2010,” *Der Fischer Weltalmanach* (2010) pp.578-579.

*Dayton Peace Agreement

+ Supervision by UN / EU / NATO

³ Stefan Füle, “European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy European Commission: Press Conference Brussels,” November 9 2010, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/639&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

⁴ Deutsche Welle, “Recognizing Slovenia, Croatia Brought Peace, Genscher says,” *European Ties* (2011), <http://www.dwworld.de/dw/article/0,,15182463,00.html>

The economic situation is extremely diverse. Slovenia, a member of the EU and NATO since 2004 is, regarding its financial and economic strength, ahead of all 10 nation-states joining the EU in 2004 (and of two joining the EU in 2007: Romania and Bulgaria). Slovenia aligns itself with the old EU member states Portugal and Greece. Being located at an important geostrategic position between the Mediterranean and the Central European landlocked countries, trade has an important role in the success of this Central-European gateway country. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and in particular Kosovo are among the five poorest countries of Europe where the GNP per capita does not exceed US\$5,000. Another problematic issue relates to foreign exchange as in all seven countries imports are, in regard to value, higher than exports. The EU's, Turkey's and Russia's financial investments and EU's exports to the region dominate the economy (Table 2).

The states located within the territory of the former Yugoslavia, except Slovenia, have not been integrated into the EU. The six nation-states and Albania are surrounded by the borders of the European Union. The European Union makes constant political and economic efforts to embrace the war torn countries into their federation (Table 2). However, integration could only be achieved if both political players coordinate their efforts. European support for projects in border regions, administration, infrastructure and environmental programs, exchange of students, academia and many other fields of activity is highly welcomed. The political will on both sides exists, but EU criteria are not yet met or are blocked in several countries of the region. Only Croatia and Montenegro are close to achieving the EU's and their own goal.

In 2009 the EU Parliament agreed on eliminating the visa requirements for the EU potential

Table 3 Territory of Former Yugoslavia: Bi-lateral Disputes and Problems

<i>Nation-State</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo	FYR Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Slovenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	X	Border, Traffic	-	-	Minority	Genocide, Border, Minority	(New Minorities) Bank Deposits, Seasonal Labor
Croatia	Border, Traffic	X	-	-	Border	Genocide, Border, (Nuclear PP plan)	Border, Minority, Nuclear PP, Bank Deposits, EU Accession
Kosovo	-	-	X	Minority, Border	Minority	Genocide, Border, Minority, Political Status	-
Macedonia	Plane incident	-	Border, Minority	X	-	Border	-
Montenegro	Minority	Border	Minority	-	X	- (Minority)	-
Serbia	Genocide, Border, Minority	Genocide, Border, Nuclear PP	Genocide, Border, Minority, Political Status	<u>X</u>	- (Minority)	X	- (New Minority)
Slovenia	(New Minorities) Bank Deposits, Seasonal Labor	Border, Minority, Nuclear PP, Bank Deposits, EU Accession	-	-	-	(New Minority)	X

member candidates of the Western Balkans: Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro. Croatia had this status since 2004. In 2010 the visa requirements were additionally lifted for residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania.⁵ The only remaining nation-state not enjoying this EU-privilege is the Republic of Kosovo. In addition to threats of further disintegration of existing nation-states, in particular within Bosnia and Herzegovina (the case of the autonomy of the Republika Srpska), bilateral disputes remain the biggest obstacle for a peaceful regional co-operation after the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia 20 years ago. Among bilateral disputes, disagreements on nation-state border delineation are most serious.



Figure 2 The Ethnic Puzzle in the Balkans

Source: Fabian-Vendrig (2010), <http://balkan.fabian-vendrig.eu/balkan/>

The Border Puzzle

The fragmentation of the former, strong Balkan state of Yugoslavia has produced a regional geography of dispute. Disputes over border-line delimitation among former brothers-in-arms (socialist republics) have been solved sporadically. At the moment, several international arbitrary decisions are pending.

⁵ Tanja Fajon, “European Parliament Backs Albania, Bosnia Visa Liberalization: Visa-free travel for Bosnians and Albanians along with Serbians, Macedonians and Montenegrins” (2010), <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/european-parliament-backs-albania-bosnia-visa-liberalization>

The Yugoslavia Conference

As the disintegration of Yugoslavia became a reality, on August 26-27 1992, a conference to discuss the situation took place in London. The conference was centred on a paper produced by a group of western constitutional lawyers (from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Belgium) and led by the French lawyer Robert Badinter. Experts handed down fifteen opinions on “major legal questions” raised by the fragmentation of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Opinion no. 3 deals with the border delineation among new, sovereign nation-states of the region. The Arbitrary Commission dealt with the border issue by focusing on Lord Carrington’s (EU peace-maker) question: “Can internal boundaries between Croatia and Serbia and between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia be regarded as frontiers in terms of public international law?”

Applying the principle of *uti possidetis*, the commission concluded that “The boundaries between Croatia and Serbia, between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and possibly other adjacent independent states may not be altered except by agreement freely arrived at” and “Except where otherwise agreed, the former boundaries (of socialist republics) become frontiers protected by international law.” The Conference on Yugoslavia justified the relevance of the Badinter Borders Principle by reference to article 5 of the 1974 Constitution of Yugoslavia which argues that: “(1) The territory of the SFRY (Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia) is indivisible and consists of the territories of its socialist republics. (2) A republic’s territory cannot be altered without the consent of that republic, and the territory of an autonomous province – without the consent of that autonomous province. (3) A border of the SFRY (Yugoslavia) cannot be altered without the concurrence of all republics and autonomous provinces. (4) A border between republics can only be altered on the basis of their agreement, and – in the case of a border of an autonomous province – on the basis of its concurrence.”⁶ In referring to article 5, some critics are saying that the Badinter Commission ignored paragraphs 1 and 3 of the 1974 Yugoslav constitution and that the Commission was guilty of selective quoting. The Commission’s decision was in particular criticized recently – as Kosovo, a former autonomous republic (of the Republic of Serbia), and not a (socialist) republic, declared independence and became a sovereign entity in 2008. But the ICJ – the UN International Court of Justice – led by President Hisashi Owada ruled against Serbia claiming that “the move did not violate general international law.”⁷

The International Borders of the Former Yugoslavia

The inherited external borders of SFRY were not disputed by the new nation-states. In contrast, the external borders of the former Yugoslavia remain the most stable and undisputed borders of the area. But, due to the weakness of the smaller states within the former Yugoslavia, neighboring

⁶ “London Conference on Yugoslavia: London Conference Documents Transcript, The CBS Interactive Business Network,” *Bnet* (2010), http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1584/is_nSUP6-7_v3/ai_12800559/

⁷ Leo Cendrowicz, “A Court Upholds Kosovo Independence: Now What?” *Time World* (2010), <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2005996,00.html>

states' nationalist parties sometimes press for a reconsideration of signed agreements with their formerly more powerful neighbor. The recent relationship between Macedonia and Greece is just such a case (see above). Austria does not consider Slovenia (or Croatia) to be the rightful successor of Yugoslavia's signature under their 1955 Austria establishing act and Italy has questioned the border co-operation agreements, signed in Osimo (1976). Also the above named states have pushed towards granting more rights to minorities, in particular for Italians and Germans in the new nation-states. The question of real estate nationalized under communist Yugoslavia has come into the foreground of this debate and, to some extent, affected Slovenia's path towards EU membership.

Perhaps the greatest change which affected the once international border of Yugoslavia took place as the European Union decided in 2004 on enlargement and subsequently on the implementation of the Schengen accords. The Schengen accords call for tougher controls on the EU's outer borders and for the general elimination of controls and border posts among EU member states. Therewith, tougher EU border controls affect the Slovenian-Croatian, the Hungarian-Croatian, the Hungarian-Serbian, the Romanian-Serbian, the Bulgarian-Serbian, the Bulgarian-Macedonian, the Greeco-Macedonian borders on land and Croato-Italian and Montenegro-Italian in maritime waters, whereas the Italo-Slovenian, the Austro-Slovenia and the Hungarian-Slovenian border posts have been physically removed. By bilateral agreement, border posts can be re-installed only if terrorism threats are considered high (it was put in place for two weeks for the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland).

New International Borders on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia

The toughest boundary disputes are yet to be approached within the territory of the former Yugoslavia. None of the existing nation-states of the Western Balkans have exchanged binding documents on the (new) border-lines. Bosnia and Herzegovina has issues in this regard with Croatia and Serbia; Croatia has disagreements with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia over the placement of borders; Kosovo registered problems with Serbia and Macedonia (in addition to its general nation-state status, which is not acknowledged by Serbia); Macedonia's objections are related to the part of the border with Serbia and Kosovo; Montenegro is trying to solve its border problem with Croatia; Serbia's border disputes are with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Macedonia; Slovenia has disputes with Croatia over 13 border segments on land and sea.⁸

According to the EU, Badinter's commission and the 1992 London conference proposal, the

⁸ Mladen Klemenčić and Clive Schofield, "War and Peace on the Danube: The Evolution of the Croatia-Serbia Boundary," *Boundary and Security Bulletin: IBRU (International Boundaries Research Unit)*, Vol.3 No.3 (2001) p. 60; Mladen Klemenčić and Anton Gosar, "The Problems of the Italo-Croato-Slovene Border Delimitation in the Northern Adriatic," *GeoJournal*, Vol. 52 No. 2 (2000) pp. 129-137; Gerald Blake and Duško Topalović, "The Maritime Boundaries in the Adriatic Sea. Maritime Briefings," *Boundary and Security Bulletin: IBRU (International Boundaries Research Unit)*, Vol.1 No. 8 (1996) p.69; Mladen Klemenčić, "Internal Order and Identities of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Boundary and Security Bulletin: IBRU (International Boundaries Research Unit)*, Vol.4 No. 4 (2001) p.9.

former Yugoslav provincial (socialist republic) boundaries should act as international borders now. There are five types of reasons for non-compliance with the provisional international border-line set by Yugoslavia's constitution as provincial borders in 1974:

1. Due to purely natural reasons (e.g. rivers changed course)
2. Due to changes in nature provoked by human impact (e.g. irrigation measures – canals; dams on rivers – lakes for hydro-electric power)
3. Due to inherited historical/political actions and decisions (e.g. lack of delimitation of the sea aquatorium; historical use of natural resources – woodlands in border areas)
4. Due to infrastructure and other changes to the built environment put in place (e.g. railway construction crisscrossing the border; former military installations of the Yugoslav Air Force located (now) in two sovereign countries)
5. Due to demographic and other reasons (e.g. re-settlement of ethnic groups – Roma; ethnic re-awakening of Albanian/Muslim ethnic groups)

Table 4 Territory of the Former Yugoslavia: Border Disagreements by New Nation-States – According to Type

<i>Nation-State</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia	Kosovo	FYR Macedonia	Montenegro	Serbia	Slovenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	X	1, 2, 3, 4	--	--	5	2, 3, 4	--
Croatia	1, 2, 3, 4	X	--	--	3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Kosovo	--	--	X	4, 5	5	3, 4, 5	--
Macedonia	--	--	4, 5	X	--	2	--
Montenegro	5	3	5	--	X	--	--
Serbia	2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3	3, 4, 5	2	--	X	--
Slovenia	--	1, 2, 3	--	--	--	--	--

1. Nature; 2. Nature/Humans; 3. Historical; 4. Built environment; 5. People

The secession of Yugoslavia is legally not yet solved. The present-day border settings in the Balkans are a hindrance to traffic, development and exchange of peoples, goods and information. There are still no direct flights from the Croatian capital Zagreb to the Serbian capital Belgrade. Interested travelers are asked to take flights to Vienna, Munich, Budapest, Zurich or Prague first and then switch to planes destined to Belgrade. Such a trip would take at least three hours 35 minutes (about half the time it would take by train). The same is true for the flights that used to exist between Pristina (Kosovo) and Belgrade. To reach Belgrade from Ljubljana by train one has to spend at least eight hours 50 minutes and take into account (the humiliation of) four border controls. The traveling time in 1980 was six hours and 15 minutes. Another example of the border being a hindrance to traffic relates to the shortest railway line between the Croatian port of Split and the capital Zagreb being one which crosses Bosnian territory. Since 1992 this route has not been used. Several other railroads within the territory of the former Yugoslavia have been shut down by the authorities due to economic or political reasons, resulting from new realities and strategic considerations. A rare bright light in the railway traffic situation along this route is the agreement of the Serb, Croatian and Slovenian railways to work on a within joint logistic system which would enable the shortening of

freight-train-times from 20 to 12 hours. German Railways are namely pushing to deliver freight from Germany to Istanbul and vice versa from on average of 60 hours to 25 hours in the near future (Bosphorus Europe Express).

The Disputed Borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is at present along with Kosovo the most fragile sovereign state in the area. Borders are still in the making. Six layers of borders exist in BiH:

- International border of the federal state
- Border (international and internal) of the Brčko district
- Border of the Republika Srpska and the Croato-Bosniak Federation (according to the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995) the Inter Entity Border Line (the IEBL))
- Provincial borders within the Croato-Bosniak Federation (cantonal division)
- Provincial borders within the Republika Srpska (regional division)
- Borders of municipalities in both autonomous entities of the state⁹

Here the focus will cover the international border issue. The discussion of the IEBL and a possible new international border – if Republica Srpska decides to declare independence (as often threatened) – will be added.

The international border and the internal borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have several disputed parts. Fifteen years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, the border delimitation has not been put on the agenda for a final resolution in the parliaments of neighboring states. To the contrary, some border disputes, which seemed to be solved under the late BiH president Alija Izetbegović and the late Croatian president Tudjman, seem to be popping up again. The international border of Bosnia and Herzegovina is – in comparison to the size of the country (51,129 km²) – among the longest in Europe. The borderline is 1,537 kilometers, of which 24 kilometers are placed in the Adriatic Sea. Of the 1,513 kilometers of “land” borders, 751 kilometers are on rivers and 752 kilometers in mountainous landscapes. 931 kilometers of border is shared with Croatia, 375 kilometers with Serbia and 249 km with Montenegro.¹⁰

Disputes with Serbia remain to be solved on the meandering Drina River and in the area of the hydroelectric power station Bajina Bašta. Herzegovina’s historical issues with Montenegro’s Boka Kotorska Bay are not questioned, but the ethnic consciousness of the Muslim population (the

⁹ Safet Nurković and Ranko Mirić, “Implikacije političko-teritorijalnog sistema Bosne i Hercegovine na regionalno-geografsku strukturu i razvoj (Implication of political-territorial system of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its regional-geographical structure and development),” *Zbornik 1. kongresa geografa Bosne i Hercegovine, Geografsko društvo Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo* (2005) pp. 26-44.

¹⁰ Safet Nurković and Ranko Mirić, “The Political-territorial System of Bosnia and Herzegovina as Factor of Transformation of the Regional-geographical Structure,” in Milan Bufon et al. (eds.), *The Western Balkans: A European Challenge. On the Decennial of the Dayton Peace Agreement* (Koper: Založba Annales, 2006), pp. 421-436.

Bosniaks) in Montenegro's northwest and Serbia's southwest (the Sandzak area) could be a matter of future disagreements. But, BiH – Croatia relations are very complex:

- Minute parts of the border in the municipality Hrvatska Dubica are disputed due to the meandering Sava River
- Disputed are small pockets of the alluvial plains and the already mentioned Split-Zagreb railroad infrastructure along the Una River: “The Una River Line”: Zagreb-Sisak-Bihač (BiH)-Knin (HR)-Split. Sections of the Una River and villages at the base of Mt. Plješevica are cadastrally part of Croatia, while some flatlands are within BiH territory. This causes eight border crossings on a single railway line and highway route and impedes any serious development within the region. The Zagreb-Bihač-Split railway line was not in use until 2004 due to the destruction of infrastructure that occurred during the war. The line is still not operational for regular passenger traffic due to border and other unrelated issues. The electric tracking will most likely never be reestablished
- Disputed was the delimitation of the once major Yugoslav Air Force (JLA) base Zeljava between Bihač (BiH) and the Plitvice Lakes National Park (Croatia)
- The border crossing in the northern town of Kostajnica was a long-time disputed matter. It was resolved in 2003, as the border-posts were moved eastward, and as Croatia became the winner in claiming its own strip of land between the rivers Una and Unčica and in insisting a border crossing be set up on Unčica. The Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska), where Kostajnica is located, pointed continuously, but unsuccessfully, to the Dayton Peace Agreement that put the border on Una, leaving the Old Town of Kostajnica in Bosnia. Bosniak and Croat authorities in Sarajevo seem to have been willing to accept Croatia's claim in order to annoy their Serb countrymen of the Republica Srpska, where the disputed territory was located. On June 17 2004, BiH and Croatia signed the Treaty on Co-location of Border Posts providing the legal framework for the functioning of jointly operated border-crossing points. This development enabled the long-awaited opening of the border crossing at Kostajnica¹¹

Most likely the most complex Croatian-Bosnian border relations exist in the southwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina where it “owns” a short stretch of the Mediterranean/Adriatic Sea. This issue was partially addressed in the Agreement on Special Relations with Croatia. Under topic 14, the following statement was made “in accordance with the provisions of Washington and Peace Agreements, the Parties, within the limits of our authority, shall strive towards the establishment of a European traffic corridor from the Ploče port to the northern border of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and support the need to construct a road Dubrovnik - Ploče - Bihač - Zagreb.”¹² Therewith two crucial

¹¹ Milan Bufon et al. (eds.), *The Western Balkans: A European Challenge. On the Decennial of the Dayton Peace Agreement* (Koper: Založba Annales, 2006).

¹² OHR, “The Agreement on Special Relations between the Republic of Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Background Documents. Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative. Sarajevo*, May 12 1999, http://www.ohr.int/other-doc/fed-mtnng/default.asp?content_id=3636

issues were raised:

- The fact that there is no continuous in-state land based traffic route from the core of the Croatian territory (Zagreb) to its southern periphery, the municipality of Dubrovnik, as it is cut-off by the short, 24 km stretch of Bosnia and Herzegovina's coast-line around Neum
- The fact that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has no economically viable harbor to support their major north-south traffic axis; it must therefore rely on maritime links through the Croatian port of Ploče

The BiH municipality of Neum cuts Croatia into two non-contiguous parts on land. The southernmost part of Croatia can therefore be considered an exclave of Croatia. This is a result of the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz when the then – Republic of Dubrovnik gave the Neum region to the Ottoman Empire to ensure that it would not border on the encroaching Venetian Republic. The fact that the border must be crossed twice to reach the southern region of Croatia has caused the Croatian government to plan a bridge from the Dalmatian mainland to the Pelješac peninsula to circumvent the area. This may cause, to some extent, maritime traffic isolation of the Bosnian coast. Neum is the only Mediterranean/Adriatic seaside resort of Bosnia and Herzegovina and has around 1,810 beds available in hotels and motels. Neum is just 60 km to the north of the Croatian major tourist resort of Dubrovnik and 50 km away from Mostar and Međugorje, the two major tourist attractions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Profits from tourism are expected.

Due to historical reasons Bosnia and Herzegovina is “in accordance with UNCLOS [the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea], entitled to a territorial sea of up to 12 nautical miles, stretching out from its narrow passage of sea at Neum. As Bosnia's coastal front falls within Croatia's straight baselines system, Bosnia's maritime areas are, uniquely, surrounded by Croatia's internal waters”.¹³ Therefore an urgently needed agreement had to be negotiated by both parties. After a number of attempts, in October 1998, the Croatian government issued a statement that they had initialed the Ploče/Neum Agreement. As reported by US Special Envoy to the Balkans, ambassadors Jacques Klein and Richard Sklar assisted with the negotiations.¹⁴ Protests arose from the Dubrovnik-Neretva County (županija). There, the assumption was that the very tip of the Klek peninsula, for eight centuries part of the Republic of Dubrovnik, could not, due to historical reasons, be included into Bosnia and Herzegovina's territory. In addition, according to cadastral evidence, two unpopulated islands were in the pre-1991 Yugoslav era in Croatian administrative evidence and therefore should have remained within Croatia. The BiH-Croatia border agreement was also put in question in 2004 due to the effect it could have on the sustainable development of Ploče. The Croatian harbor operated at 20 to 30 percent of its capacity. It would certainly help the Croatian

¹³ Mladen Klemenčić, “Internal Order and Identities of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Boundary and Security Bulletin*: IBRU (International Boundaries Research Unit), Vol.4 No. 4 (2001) p.9.

¹⁴ OHR, “OHR Chronology January-December 1998,” *Press Office. Office of the High Representative and EU Special Representative*, December 31 2009, http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/preso/chronology/default.asp?content_id=5789

economy of the lower Neretva region to get a higher degree of capacity utilization. As the OHR Office of the High Representatives reports, the agreement would establish a free trade zone within Ploče and provide arrangements for Bosnia and Herzegovina to import and export goods from the port free of duty. The Port Authority would consist of members from the Republic of Croatia as well as from Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily made up of representatives of shippers and users. According to economists the biggest obstacle seemed to have been the local authorities in Ploče and “certain political structures.”¹⁵

The present first level of internal political division of Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of its constitution that makes up Annex 4 of the General Framework Agreement on Peace concluded at the Dayton Peace Conference and signed in Paris on December 14 1995. The key component of this agreement was the delineation of the IEBL, to which many of the tasks listed in the other Annexes referred. In particular the IEBL affected the tasks of the military annexes; such as the initial (immediate) separation of forces, the creation of an initial zone of separation, the transfer of areas between the entities and the removal of forces to containment areas. The borders of Republika Srpska were, in contrary to what many believed, neither determined on the basis of any natural or cultural geographical features, nor ethnic divisions. The IEBL that divides Bosnia and Herzegovina into two, more or less autonomous entities – the Republika Srpska and the Croato-Bosniak Federation – runs essentially along the military front lines, as they existed at the end of the war in October 1995. Due to the speed and intensity of the negotiations in Dayton, a series of IEBL commission sessions still needed to be held over the first six months of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) operation to iron out the remaining details of the border. Dayton marked the first occasion when three-dimensional satellite image technology and digital cartography were used to determine and delineate boundaries in an official peace treaty. Some adjustments were made in the western part of the country, especially around Sarajevo. All together over 40 changes to the IEBL were negotiated by the parties in meetings facilitated by IFOR’s Chief of Staff, Major General Michael Wilcox, and the final document was finally signed by Admiral Leighton Smith in July 1996. The total length of the IEBL border is approximately 1080 km. (If the territory of Republika Srpska were in the shape of a circle, the total length of its borders would be a mere 561 km; now the length of all Republika Srpska’s borders is 2,170 km.) Today the IEBL is the source of dispute, confusion and stagnation of several local and regional integration processes. For example the IEBL cuts major state roads and rail corridors at 24 points, regional roads at 51 points, and local roads at 92 points. The IEBL was controlled for eight years (1995-2003) by military and police. At present the border is neither policed nor controlled by any means.¹⁶

The IEBL disintegrated 62 of the total 109 municipalities (opština) of the former Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only 47 municipalities kept their territorial scope from 1992.

¹⁵ S. Tukić, “Suradnja Hrvatske in Bosne i Hercegovine u Pločama (The co-operation of Croatian and BiH in the Harbor of Ploče),” *The French- BiH Chamber of Commerce Report*, Vol. 4 No.2 (2001) p.1.

¹⁶ Gerard Toal and Carl Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade. Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal* (Bethesda, USA: Oxford University Press, 2011).



Figure 3 Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL)

Source: Safet Nurković, “Suvremeni socijalno-geografski problemi regionalnog razvoja Bosne i Hercegovine (Contemporary socio-geographic problems of BiH regional development).” *Annales 16/2006-1, Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno raziskovalno središče*, (Koper, 2006) pp. 203-212.

The disintegration of the settlement system is equally a problem in urban and rural areas. The division of the city of Sarajevo by the IEBL is a characteristic example of an enforced, unnatural division and of increasingly non-functional relations. To establish an urban area like Sarajevo to function as one unit again will be a very difficult task to achieve. Namely, within metropolitan Sarajevo, 44 settlements are divided by the IEBL – 15% of all in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Disintegration of the country due to the IEBL is evident in several geographical components. As a result of it the economy and other forms of life are affected. Eight out of the total of 11 river basins within BiH are disintegrated. In particular, the disintegration of river streams of the first rank, like Bosna, Neretva, Vrbas, Una, Drina, and Trebišnjica, impacts the production of electricity and other economic areas of life, in particular tourism. The unified pre-war hydropower production and distribution network is now split among three separate electro-power systems (Elektroprivreda BiH, Elektroprivreda HZ Herceg-Bosna, and Elektroprivreda Republike Srpske). 312 settlements out of 5,825 are divided by the IEBL.¹⁷ Regional co-operation and development is almost impossible to achieve due to diverse laws which are still in place in the two entities. The traffic infrastructure is

¹⁷ Safet Nurković, “Suvremeni socijalno-geografski problemi regionalnog razvoja Bosne i Hercegovine (Contemporary socio-geographic problems of BiH regional development).” *Annales 16/2006-1, Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno raziskovalno središče*, (Koper, 2006) pp. 203-212.

negatively affected by the IEBL, because improvement of roads, train schedules and maintenance has to be negotiated and planned well in advance.



Figure 4 The Three-Border Area of Italy, Austria and Slovenia: Geography

Source: Anton Gosar, "The Cross-border Bricklaying Concept in the Alpen-Adria Region," *Tourism Analysis*, Vol.10 No.1 (2005) pp.65-78.

The EU Integration Processes: The Example of the Three-Border Area of Italy, Austria and Slovenia

The former Yugoslav (socialist) Republic of Slovenia, a sovereign nation-state since 1991, became an EU member in 2004, like its neighbors Austria, Italy and Hungary. Italy is one of the founding members (1957) of the EU, while Austria joined in 1995, and Hungary joined with Slovenia. The removal of border posts took place on December 22 2007.

In the Three-Border Area (Dreilaendereck, Tre Corni, Tromeja) of Italy, Austria, and Slovenia, an international border had existed since 1919. Since the fourteenth century, under the Habsburg's Monarchy, the region was allocated to three provinces of Austria: Carniola, Carinthia and Gorizia-Gradisca; and unhindered exchange of people and goods took place. The post-World War I nation-states introduced into the region *their* own regional development policies, and a variety of cultural landscapes came into existence next to each other.¹⁸

The Italian part, once an intermingling economic space of four ethnicities and language groups (Slovenian, German, Friulan and Italian) become predominantly Italian in demography,

¹⁸ Vladimir Klemenčič, et al., "Tromeja – obmejna regija Jugoslavije, Avstrije in Italije: mednarodni meduniverzitetni geografski raziskovalni projekt (The three border area of Austria, Italia and Yugoslavia: an international research project of geographers from the Universities of Ljubljana, Klagenfurt, Udine and Trieste)," *Oddelek za geografijo Filozofske fakultete: Znanstveni inštitut*, No. 7 (1990).

appearance and function: trade, traffic and tourism infrastructure came to the foreground of the economy. In the Austrian part, the German ethnic component strengthened, thereby replacing the equal co-habitation of Slovenes and Austrians, and the economy, related to mining, ore-smelting and trade supported the nation-states' ferrous metallurgy. Lake-side tourism played an important role throughout the twentieth century (Carinthian Riviera). The Yugoslav/Slovene part of the Three-Border-Area has become less Slovene and more South-Slavic, with hiking/winter tourism dominating the landscape. Everywhere agriculture declined, though least in Austria, and the demography was characterized for most of the subsequent decades by a natural decrease and heavy emigration. The divisions between Romance, Slavonic and Germanic cultures became obvious, particularly after

Table 5 The Three-Border Area: The Pre-EU Cross-border Flows 1965-2000

THE BORDER POST	1965	1970	1980	1990	2000
Jezerško/Seeberg	40.184	30.085	112.000	299.672	88.041
Ljubelj/Loibl	330.685	2.214.339	1.630.000	3.828.223	2.071.187
Koren/Wurzen	516.656	2.240.910	1.998.000	3.222.855	1.534.014
Karavanke/Karawanken	-	-	-	-	2.458.129
Rateče/Fusine	127.038	379.536	745.000	1.520.220	1.229.629
Predel/Predil	17.629	74.241	119.000	210.395	189.617
Učja/Uccea	-	21.294	4.000	89.346	106.907
CROSS-BORDER FLOW	1,032,192	4,960,405	4,608,000	9,170,711	7,677,524

Source: *Letni pregled prometa in zvez* (Ljubljana: Statistični urad RS, 2005)

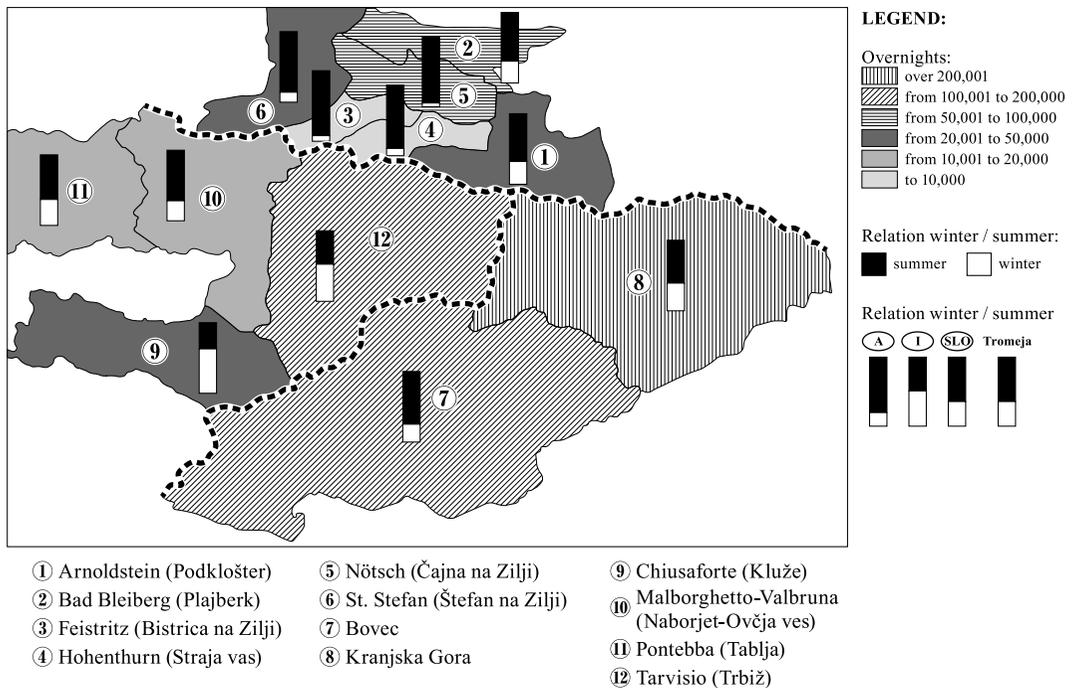


Figure 5 The Three-Border Area of Italy, Austria and Slovenia: Tourism Amenities, 1996

Source: Anton Gosar, "The Cross-border Bricklaying Concept in the Alpen-Adria Region," *Tourism Analysis*, Vol.10 No.1 (2005) pp.65-78.

World War II. Later, the small-scale trade and economy became cross-border competition, using the advantages of the legal system of the respective states, as well as the geopolitical location and the function of the border region itself. Sometimes, like in the case of the duty free shops at Slovene border crossings, or through gasoline pricing policies in any of the named countries, the state itself utilized the advantages of the border. The weakening of the “local/regional” and the presence of “the nation-state” reduced knowledge of the language of the neighbor (English became a lingua franca) and increased stereotypical perceptions of the next door citizen.¹⁹

The changing character of the border has had an impact on development of the wider border area and the living conditions there. The border itself has, since 1919, experienced five phases of legal existence and functioning:

1. The phase of the “Closed Border” (1919 and 1945 until 1965): The border was at first a border between two rival Kingdoms/Republics - Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia – and, since 1945, a line of division between a neutral (Austria), a communist (Yugoslavia/Slovenia) and a NATO/EU member (Italy). The border was water-tight: Yugoslavia/Slovenia introduced a 100 m wide border exclusion zone protected by military units; Italy placed mid-range missiles into the area; and Austria introduced tank protection devices along all roads leading to the border (and re-enforced them in the 1990s).
2. The phase of the “Filtered Semi-Open Border” (from 1965 until 1991): Bi-lateral agreements on cross-border cooperation (Alpen-Adria Cooperation Initiative) and several free-trade agreements, related to border zones (Zoll-Grenzbezirk), produced living conditions favorable to the citizens of border regions. Customs and police controls remained in place.
3. The phase of the “Open Border” (from 1991 until 1996): A liberal control system was introduced; the increased cross-border cooperation, in particular in tourism, was supportive and beneficial to the economies of the countries involved. The young “nation-state” of Slovenia realized profits resulting from the border by introducing duty-free-shops at border posts. Cross-border flows also increased.
4. The phase of the “Dual Border Regime” (from 1996 until 2007): The border between the EU member states Austria and Italy was eliminated; Schengen accords (of a semi-closed border) were applied on the EU’s outer borders; but a milder treatment on entering the Schengen zone was implemented in regard to the citizens of Slovenia. Duty free shops had to be closed and were replaced by entertainment enterprises, like casinos. Cross-border travel reduced in quantity (Table 5).
5. The phase of “No Border” (in a physical sense) took place in 2007, and subsequently a “Europe of three mobilities” – the free flow of information, people and goods – came into existence.

¹⁹ Jože Pirjevec, “Die Alpen Adria Region 1919 bis 1939” in Andreas Moritsch (ed.), *Alpen Adria: Zur Geschichte einer Region*, Klagenfurt/Celovec: Mohorjeva/Hermagoras (2001) pp. 431-453; Dušan Nečak, “Die Alpen Adria Region 1945 bis 1991” in Andreas Moritsch (ed.), *Alpen Adria: Zur Geschichte einer Region*, Klagenfurt/Celovec: Mohorjeva/Hermagoras (2001) pp. 485-517.

Table 6 The Three-Border Area: Destination and Travel Goals, 1996*

DESTINATION (To)	Italians %	Austrians %	Slovenes %	Shopping %*	Work and Services %*	Other (pure tourism)*
Kranjska gora	52	36	2	37	29	34
Tarvisio	0	40	31	53	36	11
Arnoldstein	10	1	3	43	25	32
Jesenice/Kranj	10	6	1	44	38	18
Villach	21	3	45	48	24	28
Klagenfurt/Udine/Ljubljana	5	7	10	21	12	67
other destinations	2	7	8	-	-	-
Reason – TOTAL	100	100	100	73	18	9

* Interviews conducted by the author and students on border-crossings: P. Predel/P, Predil, Korensko sedlo/Wurzenpass, Rateče/Fusine, on Saturday, August 24, 1996 from 8:00 until 10:00 o'clock: (n = 287).

“Living with the border” meant that in the last decades of the twentieth century, profits were made from the different law and finance rules on either side of the border. In 1996, residents of municipalities of the Three Border Area were interviewed at border crossings in regard to their motives for travel. Only 9% declared their intention of visiting the neighboring country as “purely tourism.” Two-thirds were seeking to purchase inexpensive goods (shopping-spree: 73%) or had in mind to visit special (known inexpensive) services, like dentists, car repair shops, etc., in the other state (18%) (Table 6). As the border disappeared in 2007, the perception of the border changed: the economic competitiveness based on national legislature was diminished. Nation-state icons and stereotypes, like quality products in Austria; excellent food in Italy and/or inexpensive entertainment and holidays in Slovenia, are still in place. The border remains in the mindset of people.

In the Austro-Italo-Slovenian Three-Border Area (promotionally called “Alpen-Adria”), regional co-operation received a new image. It all started in 1998 as the Austrian province of Carinthia, the Italian province of Friuli Venetia-Giulia and the young nation-state of Slovenia forwarded a joint bid to organize the 2006 Winter Olympics – the Winter Olympics without borders – the “Senza Confini Games” (“Klagenfurt 2006”) to the International Olympic Committee. The bid was not successful since Torino, Italy, against all expectations, got the games. The consequence of this initial co-operation, orchestrated by politicians and tourism managers alike, was the firm belief that this whole area, despite its diverse nation-state belongings, could become a unique tourist destination. The local managers have, with the help of experts from nearby universities of Udine, Klagenfurt and Ljubljana produced possible co-operation programs, in particular in the field of sports, recreation and tourism. The area suddenly became compatible in the tourism products they offered. The so called Brick-Laying Concept was implemented. The already existing recreation/tourism attractions, located on different locations and in different countries, have been bundled into a new tourism product. The fact that this area has a tradition of Romance, Germanic and Slavic intermingling was the reason why culinary products and cultural events were placed into the foreground of advertisement. The virgin alpine scenery, snow and white waters, imbedded in particular in the Triglav National Park and other protected areas of the region, has become another core subject of development. The Three-Border Area was also a region of some of the worst fighting

in World War I. The “Isonzo/Soča battlefield” at Kobarid (in Italian Caporetto) “produced,” in the Italian language, the word synonymous with “total defeat” (caporetto). The first “Blitzkrieg” took place there, and Hemingway set the story of the tragedy in “Farewell to Arms” there. From this context the World War I Museum at Kobarid was awarded “Europe’s Best Museum” twice, in 1995 and 2009. As other battle-grounds, like in Normandy and Gettysburg, this area has become a magnet for tourists. A regional, cross-national tourism promotion center was established in Tarvisio, Italy and a voucher policy was implemented to overcome different national currencies. Tourists can take the cable car to the top of the mountain (Kanin) in Slovenia (Bovec), ski down in Italy (Sella Nevea) and have lunch in Austria (Arnoldstein) with one single ticket/voucher. The “Alpen-Adria Tourist Region” has become a brand name well recognized in the German, Italian and Slovenian speaking worlds.²⁰

Conclusion

In the region of the former Yugoslavia, and in particular in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, two decades since the disintegration of Yugoslavia started, the situation is still fragile. International peace-keepers and political and humanitarian institutions are still operating in the region. Balkanization, the term used to identify “the breaking up into small, mutually hostile political units, as the Balkans after World War I,”²¹ is still a threatening vision. Despite Belgrade’s strong opposition, Montenegro gained independence in 2006. Kosovo took the same path in 2008, by disregarding the nation-state of Serbia’s 2006 constitution, as well as the EU Commission’s initial advice on Yugoslavia’s break-up. The international community is therefore again put under pressure. For example Spain and Romania, both EU members, declined recognition of Kosovo. Following the Kosovo example, Russia took the opportunity to encourage South Ossetia and Abkhazia to secede from Georgia in 2008 and proclaim sovereignty. The autonomous Republika Srpska of Bosnia and Herzegovina is threatening to follow this trend as well.

Border delimitation should become a nation-state priority of every country which has arisen out of the ashes of Yugoslavia. It is considered that close to 22 territorial border disputes have yet to be resolved. The multiple problems, elaborated within this research in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s borders, show that international arbitration would most likely be needed in many cases, as bi-lateral talks have not achieved viable consensus on any of the major issues yet. The Badinter’s commission directions of 1992 are very general and could not be used in all of the existing disputed territories. In particular this has to be acknowledged in the case of how to delineate the Adriatic Sea boundaries – since Yugoslavia’s 1974 constitution considered the maritime waters as Yugoslavian, without subdividing them into (socialist) republics’ territorial waters.

The international border and the internal borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have several

²⁰ Anton Gosar, “The Cross-border Bricklaying Concept in the Alpen-Adria Region,” *Tourism Analysis*, Vol.10 No.1 (2005) pp.65-78.

²¹ *Webster’s New World Dictionary, Third College Edition*. (Cleveland: Simons & Schuster Inc., 1998) p.105.

disputed parts. Fifteen years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, the border delimitation has not been put on the agenda for a final resolution in parliament. The Bosnia and Herzegovina international border is 1,537 kilometers long – 931 kilometers of the Bosnia-Herzegovina border is shared with Croatia, 375 kilometers with Serbia and 249 kilometers with Montenegro. Two territorial border disputes with Serbia remain on the meandering and hydro-power rich Drina River. On the border with Croatia four major areal border disputes exist: on the Sava River, along the Una River, in the Karstic highlands of Zeljava and on the Mediterranean coast, as Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory cuts the Croatian state in two. The 1,080 kilometers long IEBL, within the multi-national state (which was policed for 8 years until 2004), is another case of dispute as the Republika Srpska provincial border hinders harmonized regional development. For example, the IEBL divides 312 settlements (5.3%) and cuts major state roads and rail corridors at 24 points, regional roads at 51 points, and local roads at 92 points.

The EU's Slovenian example of economically, socially and politically successful cross-border co-operation, which resulted from initial historical relations among peoples of Italian, Austrian and Slovenian heritage in the Three-Border Area (even before EU membership of all three countries), is living proof of how history can work against chauvinistic attitudes, which is the case in so many cultural environments around the world. To change people's nationalistic mindset, to get familiarized with the language and the culture of the neighbor, and to erase borders in each nation-states' residents' heads is a very difficult task. It is a particularly difficult task to achieve on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.