

KOSOVO'S EUROPEAN FUTURE



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Executive Summary

After the Yugoslav civil war, the European Union tried to establish a period of peace and stability within the Western Balkan area. With the help of the European Union many Western Balkan countries were able to develop themselves and join the European Union. Nevertheless, Kosovo¹ remained unstable and dependent on EU's aid. Despite Kosovo's numerous challenges, Kosovo still aspires a future within the European Union and recently made great progress to become an official EU candidate state. The central research question in this research paper is: ***"How can Kosovo facilitate the process from currently being a potential candidate state to becoming a candidate state within the EU's enlargement process?"*** A qualitative approach has been applied within this research. The qualitative research was based on, both, desk research for the literature review and field research for primary data collection. For the desk research, books, e-journals, reports and policy papers were consulted. For the field research, semi-structured interviews with four participants were conducted. This study intended to examine how Kosovo might be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. This research makes clear that Kosovo is not ready to facilitate the process to become a candidate state any time soon. In addition, since politics are becoming more important in today's world, Kosovo's European future not only depends on Kosovo itself. Due to the EU's internal problems, Kosovo's integration process is pushed to the long term agenda. Moreover, Serbia and Russia are major obstacles for Kosovo to develop as an independent state as well. Nevertheless, Kosovo itself has to face numerous challenges as well, which cannot be solved at once. The challenges which are addressed in this research include; corruption and organised crime, Kosovo's civil society, Kosovo's disputed international status and Kosovo's relationship with Serbia. The willingness to integrate from both EU's and Kosovo's perspectives is seen as an overarching factor that is connected to all abovementioned challenges. A remarkable result of this study is that the EU succeeded in their main priority to keep Kosovo stable and peaceful. However, due to the priority to keep Kosovo stable, the EU did not address the elites in Kosovo and therefore could not get a grasp on corrupt practices in the country. Further research to the progress that both Kosovo and the EU has made when the EU's enlargement fatigue no longer applies in 2020, might eventually lead to a more specific vision on how Kosovo could facilitate the step to become a candidate member state.

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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Preface

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List of abbreviations

EEAS	European Union's External Action Service
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission (Kosovo)
ICJ	International Court of Justice
KCSS	Kosovar Centre for Security Studies
KCSF	Kosovo Civil Society Foundation
KiM	Kosovo and Metohija
NATO	North Atlantic Trade Organisation
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the topic

"We, the democratically elected leaders of our people, hereby declare Kosovo to be an independent and sovereign state. This declaration reflects the will of our people and it is in full accordance with the recommendations of UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement. We declare Kosovo to be a democratic, secular and multi-ethnic republic, guided by the principles of non-discrimination and equal protection under the law" (Assembly of Kosovo, 2008).

The road to independence has been long for Kosovo. During the late 1980s, former Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milošević began terminating several autonomous privileges that were granted to the Kosovar assembly in 1974 (Malcolm, 2002). These procedures of Milošević attracted criticism, which eventually led to the first independence declaration of Kosovo in 1990, at that time only recognised by Albania (Malcolm, 2002). During the Yugoslav wars, Kosovo remained largely out of sight. Nevertheless, in 1996 the Kosovar Liberation Army began to attack federal security forces. This led to a NATO intervention, which eventually caused the end of the Kosovo war. During the Post Kosovar War period, the United Nations, led by special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, started a process to determine the final status of Kosovo. Due to a lack of progress concerning the Ahtisaari plan, Kosovo's parliament declared independence in 2008. At present, Kosovo has been recognised by 109 United Nations (UN) member states, including 23 European Union (EU) member states (Republic of Kosovo Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.).

Even though one of the major members of the UN has recognised Kosovo (US), including a majority of the EU Member States (Germany, France, UK), many other members of the UN have refused to recognise Kosovo. Even Russia, who is a permanent member of the Security Council and ancient ally of Serbia (Vallely, 2008). Serbia's opposition to recognize Kosovo has various complex motivations. One of the motivations is that Kosovo is still seen as a part of Serbia. The current constitution of Serbia describes Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia but with "substantial autonomy" (Serbian Government, 2006).

After the independence declaration, the EU decided that member states could individually recognise Kosovo's independence. As stated above, a majority of EU member states have recognised Kosovo. Nevertheless, Spain, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Cyprus have not. The motivations of these countries diverge. For example: Some Spanish politicians argue that Kosovo's road to independence could be a path for independence of Catalonia and the northern Basque Country (España respeta la

decisión sobre Kosovo, pero no reconocerá su independencia, 2010). This is one of the many obstacles that Kosovo has to face to develop as a full member of the international community today.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo might be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide *new concrete ways* for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.

1.3 Significance of the study

The process of accession of Kosovo is important to understand Kosovo's and EU's perspectives on future accession. Since Kosovo continues to develop on different interest fields, a clear overview of their development, challenges and current position in the international community is crucial to determine if Kosovo will be a valuable addition to the EU.

After Kosovo declared independency, the country was far from a stable country with proper functioning institutions, a reliable security force, compliance to human rights and a solid relationship with Serbia. The EU provided assistance in various areas to help Kosovo become more stabilised. This thesis will not only give an overview of what already has been achieved by both the EU and Kosovo, it also addresses the potential (dis) advantages of Kosovo's accession to the EU. In addition, it will also research the possible ways for Kosovo to overcome their major current challenges.

In 1999, when the Kosovo war had come to its end, the European Union provided political support with launching The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (Palokaj, 2013, p. 7). By signing a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) an European future for the Western Balkan countries could be measured (Palokaj, 2013, pp. 5-6). On 1 July 2013, Croatia became the first Western Balkan country that joined the EU. At present, Serbia, Macedonia and Albania are official candidate states, while Bosnia, Herzegovina and Kosovo are still potential candidate states. In light of the effort that the EU puts in its enlargement policy in the Balkans, it pre assumes that it would be ideal for Kosovo to join the EU. Therefore, the research question will include an underlying hypothesis to verify this pre assumption.

This leads to the following research question:

“How can Kosovo facilitate the process from currently being a potential candidate state to becoming a candidate state within the EU’s enlargement process?”

In order to answer the central research question, the following sub-questions were conceived:

- *What is the history and relationship between Kosovo and the EU?*
- *What are the differences between a candidate state and a potential candidate state?*
- *What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of Kosovo joining the EU?*
- *What are the current challenges that Kosovo is facing to become a candidate state?*
- *What are possible ways of overcoming these current challenges?*

1.4 Research structure

This dissertation shall use the following structure in order to present the valid outcome of this research. Firstly, in order to get a more detailed overview of the research, the literature review provides an analytical framework and key terms are defined.

Secondly, the methodology section gives an overview of the used research methods. Both desk research and conducting interviews are used for this research. The methodology section provides the justification and verification of used methods.

The findings of the desk research are presented in the results chapter. Since the accession of Kosovo is a continually discussed topic, relevant information has added during the research process. The discussion chapter describes useful information of the conducted interviews, linking its findings and observations in context of the literature review. Based on the findings of the dissertation, relevant recommendations are provided. Finally, a conclusion is drawn to summarise the outcomes of the dissertation.

2. Literature Review

This chapter outlines the most relevant ideas and models that are used for this research. As stated by Taylor, “a literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers” (Taylor, 2016). Firstly, the chapter describes some key concepts concerning the topic. Secondly, the chapter reviews and describes the most relevant literature regarding the engagement of the EU in Kosovo after Kosovo’s independence declaration in 2008, followed by a description on the current situation concerning Kosovo’s international status. In addition, literature regarding both the EU’s and Kosovo’s perspective on accession to the EU is reviewed. Finally, available literature regarding Kosovo’s major challenges are analysed and described.

2.1 Terminology

When discussing the contemporary developments of Kosovo’s status, two key terms should be defined. This section clearly describes the differences between the two terms, as they are often linked very closely. For the purpose of this research, the terms will be used according to the definitions provided in the following:

Potential candidate state: “A country is offered the prospect of membership (it becomes a potential candidate). This means it should be offered official candidate status when it is ready” (European Commission, 2016).

Candidate state: The candidate status can be seen as a purposeful step towards accession of the EU. The EU could decide to give an European country the candidate status if a country makes significant progress aligning with the Copenhagen Criteria and European standards. In addition, the Western Balkan countries must engage in regional cooperation and establish good relations with neighbouring countries (European Commission, 2015). The candidate status is a political recognition that a closer cooperation between the EU and a particular country has been started. The criteria that a country should meet to obtain a candidate status have remained quite flexible over the years (European Commission, 2015). Most of the restrictions are open for its own interpretation by European institutions and EU member states. During the past decades, due to stricter and more detailed rules and regulations, it has become more difficult for countries to fulfil the demands of the EU and become a candidate state. Important considerations are fight against corruption and organised crime, the maintenance of an independent judiciary and the rule of law, an efficient public administration, freedom of the media and the involvement of civil society. These are subjects that became more prior to the EU in their decision is granting a country the candidate status (Berenschot, 2012). As soon as a country obtained the candidate status, the country is able to begin the 35 chapter long negotiations

with the EU to become an official EU member state. Nevertheless, obtaining the candidate status is by no means a guarantee of eventual EU membership (European Commission, 2015).

With both terms described, the differences between a potential candidate state and a candidate state are therefore made clear. The EU only provides countries with a clear prospect of joining the EU in the future a potential candidate status. Besides Kosovo, Bosnia & Herzegovina and the Turkish Cypriot Community are entitled with the term 'potential candidates' (European Commission, 2017). A special framework, known as the Stability and Association Process (SAP), was designed for the Balkans to make it easier to obtain the potential candidate status. When a country is 'ready', the EU decides if the official candidate status could be granted. This process is different to the SAP. When a country becomes an official candidate state, it moves on to the formal membership negotiations. These negotiations include: implementation judicial, administrative, economic and other reforms necessary to become an official member state (European Commission, 2016).

2.2 EU engagement in Kosovo since 2008

Ever since its declaration of independence in 2008, Kosovo has made European integration one of its key foreign policy objectives (Zephyr Dessus, 2017). The EU operates actively in Kosovo through its Special Representative (EUSR), and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission in the rule of law area (EULEX) (European Union Office in Kosovo, 2016). In addition, the EU is also present through member countries' Embassies and Liaison offices. Regarding economical support, Kosovo received more than €2.3 billion since 1999 (European Commission, 2016). While it initially focused on emergency relief actions and reconstruction, it now concentrates on promoting Kosovo's institutions, sustainable economic development and Kosovo's European future (European Commission, 2016). Moreover, the European Commission launched a development fund for the northern area of Kosovo to strengthen the Kosovo-Serbia relationship (European Commission, 2016).

The progress that Kosovo has made is reviewed in annual progress reports. The progress report of 2016 is summarised by political scientist Krenar Gashi. He points out that Kosovo is catching up with its neighbouring countries regarding the alignment of EU standards, however EU membership is still far away for Kosovo (Gashi, 2016). Gashi describes the establishment of the Specialist Court and Specialist Prosecutors, and the fact that Kosovo's judges and prosecutors are appointed by their peers, as a positive subject of the 2016 progress report (Gashi, 2016). On the other hand, the use of tear-gas by the opposition in the plenary sessions of the parliament and the dropped public spending on education, are the biggest concerns regarding Kosovo's progress (Gashi, 2016). The following sub-

chapters provides a more in-depth description of the progress that has already been accomplished by Kosovo and the EU.

2.2.1 Stabilisation and Association Process & Stabilisation and Association Agreement

In 2000, the European Commission (EC) created the Stability and Association Process (SAP). After Croatia and the former Republic of Yugoslavia faced democratic changes, a communiqué followed in 1999 foreseeing a new, ambitious agenda for the Western Balkans (Sebastian, 2008). The developed SAP tried to establish a more coherent, comprehensive policy framework in the Western Balkans by examining the process of potential European memberships and at the same time foster, stabilise institutions, change to a market economy and improve regional cooperation (Sebastian, 2008). Accordingly, the SAP was launched as a flexible instrument “to accommodate a range of situations from post-conflict reconstruction and stabilisation to technical help with matters such as the approximation of legislation to the core elements of the EU acquis” (European Commission, 2006).

The ideas behind the creation of SAP includes (European Commission, 2006):

- “The recognition that a credible prospect of European membership, together with the outlining of a set of conditions attached to membership, represented a key driver for reform in the region”.
- “The need to encourage bilateral relationships”
- “The need for a more flexible approach tailored to the conditions of the Western Balkans”

The eventual end goal of the SAP was the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). With the signing of the SAA, a real perspective of joining the EU could be realised. On 1 April 2016, the SAA between Kosovo and the EU entered into force. The SAA focuses on respect for key democratic principles and core elements that are at the heart of the EU's single market. The SAA will establish an area that allows for free trade and the application of European standards in other areas such as competition, state aid and intellectual property. Other provisions cover political dialogue, cooperation in a wide variety of sectors ranging from education and employment to energy, the environment and justice and home affairs (Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of European Intergration, n.d.). A legal trick has been applied for the signing of the Stability and Association Agreement. Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, the EU is a legal entity and can conclude such agreements by itself. The EU countries have given their consent in the European Council, but they are not party to the treaty themselves and therefore do not have to approve the agreement officially. This avoids sensitivities in non-recognising EU member states (Heck, 2015).

2.2.2 EULEX mission

The EULEX mission entered into force in April 2009. The European Union's External Action Service (EEAS) defines the EULEX mission as, "EULEX Kosovo assist Kosovo, judicial authorities and law enforcement agencies in their progress towards sustainability and accountability and in further developing and strengthening an independent multi-ethnic justice system and multi-ethnic police and custom service, ensuring that these institutions are free from political interference and adhering to internationally recognised standards and European best practices" (European Union External Action, n.d.). The EULEX Kosovo mission entails two main objectives: Firstly, through its "Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising" (MMA) objective (European Union External Action, n.d.). This entails that EULEX provide support to Kosovo's rule of law institutions, tries to strengthen the criminal justice chain and assists on improving the Kosovo-Serbia relationship (European Union External Action, n.d.). Secondly, the executive objective of EULEX entails the completion of the rule of law services to local authorities, both for civil justice as the prosecution of selected criminal matters (European Union External Action, n.d.). The EULEX mission is reviewed by the EU external action service in annual progress reports. The official mandate of the EULEX mission ends on 14 June 2018.

The last annual report of the EEAS reports on the progress that has been made during the period of June 2016 to June 2017. In this report, matters such as progress of local police force, selected judicial cases and customs services are reviewed. In the report, the EEAS shows that only one section of the rule of law sector has made significant progress (the Kosovo Customs). All the other sectors that are reviewed in the report have either made little progress or made no progress at all (European External Action Service, 2017).

2.2.3 Critics

Despite all the efforts of the EU in Kosovo, some people argue that the EU failed to establish a stable and peaceful state. Author of the book 'State building in Kosovo' Andrea Capussela is one of the scholars that criticised international efforts in Kosovo. He argues, that Western countries were not really committed to build a proper functioning state and rule of law, but rather intentionally allowed the important political elite (criminal groups) to maintain as much power as they need to keep Kosovo stable. This means that the cooperation of the Western countries with these criminal groups were necessary for their own interest in short term stability in this area (Capussela A. , 2015, p. 33). In addition, reader in International Relations at the University of Westminster, Aidan Hehir, criticised Western efforts to establish a recognised, stabilised state as well. He argues that Western determination to establish a peaceful and stable façade within Kosovo has led external actors to tolerate and sometimes even support corruption and intimidation by Kosovo's criminal groups (Hehir,

2016). Despite EU's efforts to establish a peaceful and stable state, Kosovo's international status remains disputed.

2.3 Kosovo's international status

The international status of Kosovo is very complex. When Kosovo declared their independence, some EU member states did not recognise Kosovo as an independent state. A country such as Spain which is afraid that Catalonia will push their will to be independent through if Spain recognise Kosovo as such. Thus, Kosovo is not recognised by the EU as a whole, but the EU member states could recognise Kosovo individually. In addition, Kosovo's aspirations to become a member of the UN is a difficult process as well. Since Serbia does not recognise Kosovo as an independent state, neither will Russia since they stand by Serbia. With Russia's veto power in the UN, Kosovo is blocked from membership until their relation with Serbia is normalised (Palokaj, 2013).

Because the recognition of Kosovo's independence is closely connected to the Serbia-Kosovo relationship, a brief summary of the ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is given to better understand the complex relationship between Kosovo and Serbia and why Serbia has still not recognised Kosovo as an independent state.

After Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, Serbia requested ICJ for an advisory opinion on Kosovo's declaration of independence. The subject of the advisory opinion was the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo about the territory of Kosovo. The ICJ delivered its advisory opinion on 22 July 2010. The decision of the ICJ (with 10 votes in favour and 4 against) entailed: Kosovo's independence declaration did not violate general international law since international law includes no "prohibition on declarations of independence" (International Court of Justice, 2010). In addition, the declaration did not violate UN Security Resolution 1244, because the resolution did not describe the final status of Kosovo (International Court of Justice, 2010).

The international community reacted diverged. Countries that recognised Kosovo, pointed out that the decision of the ICJ was unique and did not set a precedent for other areas that aspire independence (for example, Catalonia and the Basque region in Spain). However, countries which did not recognise Kosovo pointed out that the ruling of the ICJ could set a precedent of supporting secession at other areas across the globe (BBC, 2010). While Serbia does not recognize Kosovo as independent state, the EU tried to strengthen the relationship between both countries.

Some scholars argue that the recognition of Kosovo is different from other recognitions of independence in the past. As Warbrick argues, the countries that have recognised Kosovo, recognise Kosovo as a state that is yet to come into being or, define Kosovo's status as "independence under

international supervision" (Warbrick, 2008). Furthermore, he argues that Kosovo is an entity that is in the process of state building under the protection of the international community. Such an understanding of Kosovo's current status is arguably to be preferred to straightforward recognition (Warbrick, 2008)

2.3.1 Kosovar-Serbian relationship

The relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is complicated and historically rooted. The bad relationship between both sides affects Kosovo's development towards becoming a full member of the international community. Serbia's decision to not recognize Kosovo as an independent state hinders Kosovo's progress. Therefore, the EU launched the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue on 8 March 2011. The aim was a normalisation of the relationship between Belgrade and Pristina (European Union External Action, 2016). According to the Progress Report of 2016, progress of the dialogue has been slow. According to the progress report this is partly due to "respective internal circumstances, with parliamentary elections followed by a government formation process in Serbia and the domestic situation in Kosovo" (European Commission, 2016). According to former Serbian interior minister Dacic, the Serbian government, almost all political parties and the overwhelming majority of public figures, persist in the notion that Serbia will never "give up" Kosovo, which sits at the "heart" of Serbian identity and statehood (Subotic, 2013). As recently as 2010, when he was interior minister, Dacic said, "The issue of Kosovo is very difficult for Serbia, because Kosovo is that foundational stone Serbia was built on, and if that foundational stone is pulled out, then, of course, the entire story will fall apart (Subotic, 2013)." Nevertheless, current Serbian president Alexander Vucic, proposed to start an 'internal dialogue' with Kosovo and established a working group that has to support the dialogue's progress. According to groups chair Marko Djuric, the dialogue is tasked with hearing "opinions on KiM (Kosovo and Metohija) and the dialogue is conducted on several levels, responsible, and have clearly defined goals (Tanjug, 2017). The proposal of an internal dialogue was highly criticised. Economist Milan Kovacevic argues that, the internal dialogue would be an initiative in Vucic's own interest. Boban Stojanovic from the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade has a slightly different view. He argues that, such a progress would little achieve as Vucic already has a fixed opinion on Kosovo's future (Rudic, 2017). Controversially, despite the critics, Serbia's established working group has recently announced to move to the 'second phase' of the internal dialogue (Zivanovic, 2017). However, some experts have called the formation of the new group absurd, saying the result of the first phase remain totally unknown. Belgrade expert Bosko Jaskic, was very surprised to hear that the second phase was initiated, "while we don't know anything regarding the first phase of the internal dialogue" (Zivanovic, 2017). While Serbia and Kosovo are working on a brighter future perspective for both of the countries, the question remains, what perspectives the EU and Kosovo have to offer each other?

2.4 Perspectives of Kosovo and the EU

This dissertation mainly focuses on the challenges that Kosovo should overcome in order to enter the EU. Nevertheless, it also address the potential pros and cons on potential future accession of Kosovo. As stated in the introduction, examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. In addition, since the disadvantages for Kosovo to enter the EU are not clear stated in academic literature, interviews will be conducted to obtain this information.

2.4.1 Perspectives of Kosovo

According to the EU's enlargement strategy report of 2015, the EU's enlargement policy is focused on three points; peace, security and stability in Europe. The policy provides both trade and economic opportunities for aspiring member states and the perspective on EU membership fosters democratic, political, economic and societal change. (European Commission, 2015). As Kosovo is still a very unstable state with a lot of challenges to overcome, the prospect of any further EU support in the future in order to become more peaceful and stable is very attractive (Bieri, 2015).

With the signing of the SAA, Kosovo already benefits in the field of trade, as Kosovo's export products are enjoying better access to European member states (Collaku, 2015). Despite the former crisis of the Euro, the desire for EU accession remains widespread in the population across the Western Balkans. (Bieri, 2015, p. 3). For this region, the economic promise that the EU holds is still considerably greater than for example, Russia (Bieri, 2015, p. 4). In Serbia, trade with the EU accounted for 62 per cent of the country's foreign trade, while trade with Russia accounted for only 9 per cent. Furthermore, up to €11.7 billion in EU pre-accession funds are transferred to the Western Balkans and Turkey by 2020 (Bieri, 2015, p. 4).

2.5 Perspectives of the EU

The perspectives for the EU seems marginal at first. After years of political and financial support, little progress has been made to develop Kosovo as a stable country. Nevertheless, the EU has important reasons to stay committed to the Western Balkans and many argue that the EU has to boost their efforts even higher in order to keep the entire Western Balkan region on their side. This chapter will highlight the main perspectives of the EU on Kosovo's potential accession to the EU.

2.5.1 Economic and political perspectives

With the potential Western Balkans joining the EU, the political and economic perspectives of the EU are great. As argued by, Flessenkemper and Reljić, the accession of the Western Balkans are to EU's own interests (Reljić and Flessenkemper, 2017). With joining the EU, the area becomes more attractive for trade and investment and it will boost their transport, energy and digital networks (Reljić and Flessenkemper, 2017). In contrast, Warbrick argues that an independent Kosovo will remain wholly

dependent upon the international community (in particular the EU) for any foreseeable future (Warbrick, 2008). Furthermore, Flessenkemper and Reljić argue that the political gains are obvious too. With a stronger regional security in the Balkan area, Europe will increase the EU's position in a new era of geopolitics (Reljić and Flessenkemper, 2017). The EU's democracy model could have a new extension and restrict the influence of other actors in the region (Reljić and Flessenkemper, 2017).

2.5.2 Migration

When the EU tried to tackle the peak of the migration in 2015-2016, the role of the Western Balkans was crucial in containing migration waves (Piacentini, 2017). After years of political and economic instability, the EU seems to give migration high priority the next few years (European Commission, 2015). Furthermore, EU representatives responded positively to the great victory of Vučić as new president of Serbia (BBC, 2016). Meanwhile, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are slowly moving to illiberalism, and renewed ethnic tensions in these countries could trigger minorities in neighbouring countries as Kosovo (Greider, 2017). In February 2017, an EURACTIV facilitated poll, showed that 38% of the people in Serbia, fearing war will break out in the Western Balkans in the next five years (Vukojcic, 2017). A new conflict in the Western Balkans would create an entirely different migration crisis for the European Union. They would undoubtedly want to avoid a similar migration crisis. The lack of a common policy during the migration policy, the criticism and debate about the EU has only increased due to EU's handlings (Greider, 2017). While the Balkans are dealing with their own issues, the EU has to deal with theirs. With issues as Brexit, rising populism and the wake of the migration and the Euro crises, Balkan leaders may feel less likely to see the EU as the club they want to join (Greider, 2017). China, Russia and Turkey already responded and increased their influence in the region. With Serbia, Bosnia and Macedonia rely on oil and gas from Russia (Greider, 2017), Russia could easily encourage nationalist groups and feed Euroscepticism in these countries (Greider, 2017).

2.5.3 Influence of Russia in the Balkans

French president Emmanuel Macron recently said, "the EU will have to open itself up to the Balkan countries" once they meet the conditions, because that will help consolidate "peace and stability on our continent". At stake, he added, is the need to prevent Balkan nations from "turning their backs on Europe and moving towards either Russia or Turkey, or towards authoritarian powers". The last statement of Macron appears as an important reason for the EU to regain its influence within the Western Balkans (Krastev, 2017). While Russia always included a political aspect in their economic engagement in the past ten years, it never seriously challenged the EU perspective for the Western Balkans states (Bieri, 2015, p. 2). This perspective has changed since the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Since then, Russia's foreign policy for the Western Balkans is focused on problematize the slow progress of

EU integration in this area (Bieri, 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, the decision of Russia to use their veto power and not recognize Kosovo as an independent state is seen as a keystone of the Serbian position in this dispute. This also explains the rising popularity of Russia among the Serb minority in Kosovo (Bieri, 2015, p. 2)..

2.5.4 EU enlargement critics

The perspectives of the EU are not always positive. Some argue that the EU is expanding too quickly and that therefore problems are inevitable. Duenwald, Gueorguiev and Schaechter argue that for example, Bulgaria and Romania were not ready to join the EU (Duenwald, Gueorguiev and Schaechter, 2009). Issues such as corruption and organised crime were issues that clearly did not meet EU standards at that time. Moreover, Western nations have been flooded with cheap labour while the newcomers' low labour standards and unfair taxes have sucked investment Eastward (Duenwald, Gueorguiev and Schaechter, 2009). In addition, if the Balkan countries eventually do join the EU, the question remains if their economies are strong enough to compete with other EU member states' economies and eventually become dependent on Western countries (Duenwald, Gueorguiev and Schaechter, 2009).

After conducting further research on other potential disadvantages of the accession of Kosovo towards the EU, the literature of the disadvantages largely overlaps with the chapter that deals with the current challenges Kosovo is facing today. The disadvantages contain information regarding human trafficking and corruption. Due to these findings, the decision has been made to address the disadvantages in depth in the following chapter.

2.6 Kosovo's domestic and external challenges

Kosovo is facing numerous domestic and external challenges in their process to become a fully accepted member of the international community and enter the European Union (European Commission, 2016). This chapter describes the most important challenges that Kosovo is currently facing. These challenges are in line with the main focus points of the newest enlargement policy of the EU which includes: the fight against corruption and organised crime, the construction of an independent judiciary and the rule of law, involvement of civil society and strengthening the regional cooperation in the Balkan area (Berenschot, 2012). Overcoming these particular challenges is an important aspect of establishing a future within the European Union.

2.6.1 Civil Society

The lack of a proper functioning civil society is one of the major domestic challenges that Kosovo is facing today. In order to strengthen Kosovo's civil society, the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF) was created with the aim to strengthen the civil society as a whole. As the mission of the KCSF entails, "An independent, not-for-profit organization focused in supporting local civil initiatives leading to a strong civil society movement that will promote a democratic culture and will be responsive to the

socio-economic needs of Kosovo with a strong focus on supporting and contributing to the EU Integration Process” (KSCF, n.d.).

As the KSCF tries to strengthen the civil society in Kosovo, they are realising that civil society has overcome various challenges. The KSCF is pointing out that the gap between large and small Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) is increasing due to the constant increase of EU's portion in civil society funds, bureaucratic procedures increase as well, making it more difficult for smaller organisations to benefit of these funds (KSCF, n.d.).

As argued by Silander and Janzekovitz, cohesion and development are absent in Kosovo's civil society. This results in politically disempowered citizens. Citizens of Kosovo are more concerned about their individualistic needs and less concerned about Kosovo's future as a state. In addition, they point out that, because civil society is never been explicitly present in Kosovo, they struggle to establish a stable civil society today.

The lack of historical traditions is not the only reason of the instability of Kosovo's civil society. As stated by Mentor Aghani, the former governments of Kosovo did not give high priority in conducting credible prosecutions (Agani, 2012, pp. 98-99). Citizens of Kosovo feel that post-conflict trials are going in a slow pace, resulting in perceptions that justice cannot be brought in modern Kosovo. Therefore, the entire Kosovar society is soaked in polarized thinking and mutual grievance (Agani, 2012, pp. 98-99).

2.6.2 Corruption and organised crime

Corruption and organised crime are the next challenges to overcome, which could make it easier to facilitate the step from potential candidate state to candidate state for Kosovo. According to the corruption report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the inhabitants of Kosovo perceive corruption as the major problem to facilitate any further development (UNODC, 2011). Corruption can occur on various levels of society. As pointed out by the UNODC corruption report of Kosovo, “corruption has a devastating impact on the rule of law, hinders equal access to public services, affects trust in public institutions and is a hurdle to economic and social development, especially in young democracies” (UNODC, 2011). In addition, Hehir argues that the international community has turned a blind eye to the activities of Kosovo's criminal groups. Despite the presence of UNMIK and EULEX, the European council report described corruption as “omnipresent”. Moreover, the Transparency International's latest Corruption Perception Index listed Belarus and Azerbaijan as the only countries in Europe more corrupt than Kosovo (Hehir, 2016).

As Hehir continues, corruption should not be seen as a ‘typical Balkan issue’ but rather closely linked to the interests of the internationals (Hehir, 2016). If Kosovo changed in to a conflict zone again, this

would have compromised the “success” narrative advanced afterwards. To prevent Kosovo from any kind of conflicts, international organisations worked together and tolerated activities of criminal networks in Kosovo that emerged from within the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) (Hehir, 2016). The international community was afraid that these criminal groups would violently resist against any attempts to restrict its activities, which would have endangered peace in Kosovo and Kosovo’s public relations value (Hehir, 2016). The toleration of corruption, to keep the image of liberal internationalism, is especially apparent with the support to current president of Kosovo Hashim Thaci (Hehir, 2016). In 2010, Thaci was named in a report of the Council of Europe as one of the ‘key players’ in an investigation to mafia like structures of organised crime in the city of Drenica. This group was accused of people and drug trafficking, political assassinations protection rackets and organ harvesting. With overwhelming evidence, the international actors chose not to act (Hehir, 2016). The report stated:

“What is particularly confounding is that all of the international community in Kosovo—from the Governments of the United States and other allied Western powers, to the EU-backed justice authorities—undoubtedly possess the same, overwhelming documentation of the full extent of the Drenica Group’s crimes, but none seems prepared to react in the face of such a situation and to hold the perpetrators to account” (European Council, 2010).

2.6.3 Human Rights

Protection of human rights is an important prerequisite for EU integration. The Copenhagen Criteria state that any country likely to join the EU has to respect human rights and protect minorities (European Council, 1993). The constitution of Kosovo provides that international human rights instruments are immediately applicable and form an integral part of Kosovo’s legal framework. According to the Progress Report, Kosovo still aligns legislation with these instruments and continued its practice of ad hoc reporting (European Commission, 2016).

According to the Human Rights report of 2016, the at times violent obstruction of parliament by opposition deputies, blocking free debate and the passage of legislation, is one of the major human rights issues in Kosovo (Human Rights Report, 2016). In addition, according to the progress report of the European Commission, shortcomings of human rights are particularly affecting the following areas (European Commission, 2016):

- Gender-based violence and women’s limited access to property ownership significantly hamper women’s full enjoyment of their rights. Similarly, the rights of persons with disabilities continue to be hindered by inadequate support and health services, and poor access to existing services

- Strategies and legislation on the rights of persons belonging to minorities and their protection throughout Kosovo are not sufficiently implemented
- The protection of cultural heritage, including cooperation between the Serbian Orthodox Church and Kosovo authorities, remains a challenge. Legislation to address illegal construction needs to be fully implemented and enforced

With the EU's facilitated Serbia Kosovo Dialogue, the EU tried to promote regional cooperation between the two sides to support the two countries on their road to EU accession. (European Union External Action, 2016). On 1 September 2017, in a meeting facilitated by EU High Representative Mogherini, President Hashim Thaçi of Kosovo and President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia agreed on the full implementation of the Justice Agreement by 17 October 2017. With this agreement, judges, prosecutors and judicial staff will be integrated into the Kosovo judiciary. It will allow Kosovo to deliver justice across their state, especially in the Northern part of Kosovo (European Union External Action, 2017).

With this agreement, there lays a big opportunity for Kosovo to improve on its human rights protection, especially in the Northern part of the country (Human Rights Report, 2016). Due to the lack of cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo in the past, Kosovo only made little progress in prosecuting persons that committed war crimes or violated human rights. While human rights agreements are included in its constitution, and cooperation with Serbia is set in motion, human rights protection should improve quickly (Human Rights Watch, 2016). In addition, in January 2016 Kosovo and The Netherlands signed a host-state agreement. With this agreement, The Netherlands is able to host a special court with international judges and prosecutors that will have jurisdiction over crimes committed by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army during and after the Kosovo war against humanity, war crimes and other crimes under Kosovo law (Human Rights Watch, 2016). On 5 July 2016, the Specialist Chambers became fully judicially operational (Kosovo Specialist Chambers & Specialist Prosecutor's Office, 2017). The new mandate of the EULEX mission that has been extended until 2018. In which judges and prosecutors continue their involvement in Kosovo's institutions and serve in accordance with Kosovo law until complete transition of functions to the Kosovo's rule of law institutions (European Union External Action, n.d.).

2.7 Conclusion

This literature review has concentrated on EU engagement in Kosovo, the perspectives of both sides and the current challenges of Kosovo. Nevertheless, even with all the EU's efforts to stabilise the country, Kosovo only made significant in some areas of rule of law and in the dispute between Kosovo and Serbia. It appears that due to continued bureaucratic procedures civil society in Kosovo could not develop as much as both parties desire. Contradictions in the EU's state-building mission still remain.

As the EU tries to foster and promote long term stability and a European future, Andrea Capussela argues that EU's involvement has been corrupt and only was created in interest of short-term stability. As the advantages for Kosovo are stated clear in academic literature while the disadvantages are not known. Now the available literature is reviewed and described, the next chapter will provide the research methods and approached that are used in this study.

3. Methodology

According to Kothari, "it is decisive to be clear in used methods and research approaches with any type of research. The used sources should be clear and transparent, especially when primary research is conducted. The researcher should explain why he is using a particular method or technique and why he is not using others so that research results are capable of being evaluated either by the researcher himself or by others" (Kothari, 2004, p. 7). The following chapter describes which methods are used in this research and foresee clarification why used methods are believed to be most suitable for this research.

3.1 Research Methods

This research tends to be a descriptive one. Seeking to describe the efforts made by both Kosovo and the EU. As pointed out by Anastas, "Descriptive research designs help provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how associated with a particular research problem; a descriptive study cannot conclusively ascertain answers to why. Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena and to describe "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation" (Anastas, Jeane W., 1999, p. 123). Nevertheless, this research also includes both exploratory and explanatory elements as its objective is to explain the current situation in Kosovo and seeks to relate the different developments to overcome Kosovo's major challenges.

An inductive research method has been chosen for this research. According to Hodkinson, "inductive researches attempt to take empirical social phenomena as their starting point and seek through the process of research and analysis to generate broader theories about social life" (Hodkinson, 2009, pp. 82-83). This means that results are not one fixed response and can be a combination of answers. This research tries to gain information when researching existing academic literature and providing opinions of experts, obtained through interviews. In light of the effort that the EU puts in its enlargement policy in the Balkans, it pre assumes that it would be ideal for Kosovo to join the EU. Nevertheless, an inductive research method is to be found most suitable for this particular research.

Moreover, it is important to determine if the research method will be quantitative or qualitative research. According to Gilbert, "quantitative research is research that aims to measure using numbers. On the other hand, qualitative research most often describes scenes, gathers data using interviews, or analyses the meaning of documents" (Gilbert, 2009, p. 35). The aim of this research is not to focus on numerical results, but rather attempting to acquire facts and existing information of documents, books and academic articles. Therefore, a qualitative research method has been chosen over quantitative research. The qualitative research method applies to both primary and secondary research for this dissertation.

3.2 Secondary research

According to Crowther, secondary research implies “‘Second hand’ in as much as it is not new data collected specifically and primarily for the purpose of consultancy being conducted” (Crowther, 2012). The process of Kosovo’s accession to the EU is complex. Various issues exist that are in need of clarification. Therefore, desk research is used to create a more clarified image regarding the history of Kosovo, their international status and their current challenges. “Desk research is used to collect actual data and existing research data to answer the explanatory research questions” (Annelien Krul, n.d.). The platforms that are used most for desk research are the internet, relevant academic articles and books.

3.3 Primary research

The objective of this research is to perform primary research data by conducting interviews. Interviews are preferred over questionnaires, surveys or focus groups, as, stated by Gilbert, “interviews can be more flexible and can extract more information from the individual than a survey or questionnaires” (Gilbert, 2009, p. 97). Primary research meaning, “techniques of original data collection or research direct from the target respondents” (Oxford Reference, n.d.). will be used to gather new information using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews can be seen as an interview method that is placed in the middle of structured and un-structured interviews. As mentioned by Kothari, “structured interviews involve the use of a set of predetermined questions and of highly standardised techniques of recording. Thus, the interviewer in a structured interview follows a rigid procedure laid down, asking questions in a form and order prescribed. As against it, the unstructured interviews are characterised by a flexibility of approach while asking questions. Unstructured interviews do not follow a system of pre-determined questions and standardised techniques of recording information (Kothari, 2004, p. 98). As stated by Bailey, “in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses an interview guide with specific questions that are organized by topics but are not necessarily asked in a specified order” (Bailey, 2007, p. 100). Especially in an area with a lot of different opinions regarding the future of Kosovo, it is crucial to get familiar with different perspectives of specialists. By using semi-structured interviews it allows the interviewer to ask additional question if any provided information is unclear. The interviews are conducted preferably in person. As pointed out by Kothari, “personal interviews provide most often a high response rate and are usually longer than telephone interviews” (Kothari, 2004, p. 99). Nevertheless, “certain types of respondents such as important officials or executives or people in high income groups may not be easily approachable under this method and to that extent the data may prove inadequate” (Kothari, 2004, p. 99). Telephone interviews are a fast and easy method of obtaining information. On the other hand, “little time is given to respondents for considered answers; interview period is not likely to exceed five minutes in most cases” (Kothari, 2004, p. 100). Given the limited financial resources and time-constraints, the respondents which reside in the

Netherlands are interviewed in person, the respondents which have their residence in a foreign country are interviewed over e-mail or via skype.

The following respondents are recruited by e-mail:

- *Jan Marinus Wiersma*: is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Clingendael Institute. He is a specialist on East-European Studies and is a Dutch former politician and publicist. He was a member of the European Parliament on behalf of the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) (Clingendael, n.d.).
- *Shpend Kursani*: is an External Senior Researcher at the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies - KCSS. Currently Kursani is also a Member of Assembly at the Pristina Council on Foreign Relations - PCFR, and a Founder and Member of the Steering Committee at the Balkan Think Tense - BTT. Kursani is an adjunct lecturer in the field of International Relations at the University College Universum as well (Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, n.d.).
- *Arife Muji*: Arife Muji completed her bachelor's degree at the University of Pristina, in the department of Political science and concurrently she completed further studies at the faculty of French language and literature at the same university. She holds a Master's degree in European Politics at "Masaryk University" in the Czech Republic. She was awarded by a full scholarship from the Joint EU SEE Penta programme of the European Union. her research interests include: EU integration, EU Missions in Kosovo, Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, Violent Extremism and Radicalization (Kosovar Centre for Security Studies, n.d.).
- *Krenar Gashi*: is a Kosovar Albanian political scientist, currently based in Belgium as a Basileus doctoral fellow at the Centre for EU Studies, Ghent University. His research interest includes international relations and foreign policy of the European Union, democratization and democratic transition, political systems and party politics, while his special focus is the relation between the EU and the countries of the Western Balkans (University of Gent, n.d.).

3.4 Research Ethics & Limitations

Kosovo is a relative new state, inhabited by various different ethnical groups. There are a lot of different opinions regarding the future of Kosovo and the question if they should join the EU at all. Therefore, Kosovo remains a sensitive research subject and all participants are protected from any type of harm or violations of privacy during the research process.

Many research projects in the field of social science would be classified as being 'minimal risk of harm' for the participants. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that risk of potential harms still exist (Walton, Social Sciences & Humanities, n.d.).

As stated by Walton, "Research ethics is specifically interested in the analysis of ethical issues that are raised when people are involved as participants in research" (Walton, n.d.). During this research the three objectives in research ethics will be taken in to consideration.

1. The protection of human participants. (Walton, n.d.).

The persons that participate in the interviews will have the option to remain anonymous after the interview is conducted.

2. The objective of the research will serve the interests of individuals, groups and society as a whole (Walton, n.d.).

The research objective will not serve the objective of one participant or the researcher himself. Therefore, several interviews will be conducted with different experts who have different opinions.

3. The research activities will be examined for their ethnical solidity (Walton, n.d.).

The principle of informed consent is applied during the interviews. The persons that participates in the interviews will be given full information regarding the research topic and the nature of the interviews. This has been done in order to assure the comfortability of the participants. Moreover, to transcribe the interviews, a mutual audio recording is created of each interview. The transcripts of the interviews do not literary the whole conversation, but rather try to form the transcripts into a fluent and easy to read script. The recordings and transcripts of the interviews are only accessible for the particular participant, the researcher and the assessors of this research.

Finally, the bias of the researcher is taken in to account. As outlined by Pannucci, "In research, bias occurs when "systematic error [is] introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others" (Pannucci, 2010). Therefore, to ensure that potential biases will be eliminated it is crucial for the researcher to get familiar with the different viewpoints of the subject and the completion of the ethics form that can be found in the appendices.

3.4.1 Limitations

Kosovo has to deal with numerous challenges to overcome in order to become a candidate member state. Given the scope and time for this research, not all challenges could be addressed. This thesis will only research the main challenges for Kosovo. The following chapter will provide the most important result of the conducted interviews are described.

4. Results

In this chapter the most important findings of the interviews regarding Kosovo's European future are set out. In order to have a clear overview of the findings, related answers are described thematically. The themes based on the interview results are: The failure or success of the EU in Kosovo, the potential advantages and disadvantages of Kosovo and the EU, the current main challenges of Kosovo and alternative scenarios for Kosovo if they are not be able to join the EU. The more detailed transcripts of all participants can be found in the appendices.

4.1 Efforts of the EU in Kosovo.

The responses to the question: if the efforts of the EU in Kosovo, to establish a more stable and secure state, had failed or succeeded were quite similar. Most participants argued that especially the EULEX mission has failed to meet with its expectations (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 20). On the other hand, the participants agreed that the EU has brought an era of peace to the Western Balkan area (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 29).

According to Shpend Kursani, the primary focus of the EU and other international organisations such as NATO, was to keep Kosovo stable (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 26). Although he argues that Kosovo has faced a relatively stable period since the NATO and the EU have intervened in Kosovo after the Kosovo war, Kosovo has paid a considerable price for this period of stability (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 30). "The EULEX mission has failed to establish a proper rule of law system in Kosovo since their creation" (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 32). In addition, the EU has not focused on prosecuting criminal politicians and war criminals because this would have brought instability to the country (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 34). Moreover, Krenar Gashi argues that the EULEX mission has not met the expectations with their exclusive right to prosecute war criminals and combat organised crime (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 23). According to Gashi, the EU foreign policy in Kosovo has not met the expectations of the EU, of the member states and subject of intervention, Kosovo, and therefore, the overall intervention of the EU in Kosovo has failed to succeed (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 30). In addition, Jan Marinus Wiersma argues, that the EU has failed to address the elite in Kosovo and were therefore unable to grasp issues such as corruption and organised crime (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 70).

Arife Muji states that, "the aim of the EU is to bring peace, their values and it's wellbeing of its people" (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 10). EU's peacebuilding efforts in Kosovo have to be seen as an instrument which prevent any kind of conflict between the ethnic communities living in Kosovo (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 10). In terms of the efforts of the EU's preventing policy and comprehensive toolbox of peacebuilding, in this matter, the EU has succeed in

preventing violent conflicts (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 12). In some extent EULEX has achieved to prevent ethnical violence and dealt in some extent with corrupt practices using high profiled cases (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 28). Nevertheless, despite the presence of EULEX, cross border smuggling and organised crime is still a problem (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 27). On the other hand, Muji argues that the EU has made success in bringing Serbia and Kosovo closer together. The EU successfully brought Serbia and Kosovo to the negotiating table and pushed the two countries to reach agreements (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 41). Despite the positive efforts, the EU has not stepped in between the two sides with Serbia interventions on Kosovo's internal affairs (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 43).

In addition, Wiersma links the failure of EULEX to the growing bureaucratic processes in which the staff of EULEX had to operate (Wiersma, personal conversation, line number 85). When Wiersma visited the EULEX headquarters in Pristina, he heard the same story over and over again. If EULEX wanted to put pressure on a certain issue, they first had to ask permission of the EU in Brussels and the NATO. During these intergovernmental consultations, the EU member states were also involved and the non-recognising member states often voted against any type of measurement of EULEX. (Wiersma, personal conversation, line number 86). "This shows the complex situation EULEX had to operate in" (Wiersma, personal conversation, line number 92).

However, the EU has also succeeded in Kosovo. According to Wiersma, the independence of Kosovo is now assured and the EU is putting a lot of effort to improve the social and educational system in Kosovo, which includes improving Kosovo's infrastructure and diploma recognition (Wiersma, personal conversation, line number 95).

4.2 Potential advantages and disadvantages

The potential advantages and disadvantages of Kosovo joining the EU, from both perspectives, are discussed in the next interview question. The participants argue that there would be many advantages for Kosovo if they would join the EU in the future (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 110), (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 161). On the other hand, potential disadvantages seem marginal (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 161). (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 88).

4.2.1 Advantages

According to Kursani, there could be many advantages for Kosovo if Kosovo joins the EU (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 110). Accession to the EU includes a lot of benefits for new member states. Kosovo would have a more just legal system, just society and they would also have benefits of opening up the labour market. In addition, the aspect of mobility is seen as a big advantage

as well. Simply because free movement of people through the EU is not possible for inhabitants of Kosovo at this time (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 111). In addition, Muji argues that advantages of EU integration are interconnected with economic, social and political developments (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 78). To be more specific; the advantages of EU integration include regional long term perspective, favour of domestic ownership of candidate countries, institutional development stability and cooperation (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 79).

4.2.2 Disadvantages

According to Kursani, the only disadvantage for Kosovo, if they join the EU, would be that their economy might not be strong enough to compete with other European economies (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 118). A slightly different view from Muji is that the people of Kosovo would have to change their mentality and culture if they want to be a successful state in the EU (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 91).

4.3 Current main challenges for Kosovo.

This interview question dealt with the participants view on the current main challenges that Kosovo is facing today. The current main external challenge that Kosovo is facing, is their disputed status issue (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 127). The complexity of the challenges is that all challenges are somehow connected with each other. As stated by Wiersma: “a market economy cannot function properly if the rule of law is not functioning properly and you cannot properly implement EU law if the rule of law does not function” (Wiersma, personal conversation, line number 185). This shows the complexity of the current challenges that Kosovo is facing today. The challenges cannot be overcome one by one, because they all stand in relation with each other.

4.3.1 Rule of law

The rule of law is a major domestic obstacle for Kosovo. The law should apply the same to all citizens of Kosovo. “This is not the case as it is today” as argued by Kursani (Kursani, personal conversation, line number 122). “Such a perfect society does not exist. However, at least the law should apply as equal as possible and settle differences between Kosovo’s inhabitants. Therefore, the people have to change and their mind-set has to change as well” (Kursani, personal conversation, line number 123).

Participants argue that the establishment of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague could be related to the failure of the war crimes prosecutions by EULEX and former NATO intervention. According to Kursani, the EULEX mission already had the exclusive right to prosecute war crimes. “Why do we need an international tribunal if they were so successful before?” (Kursani, personal conversation, line number 49). As Kursani states, the failure of the EULEX mission to prosecute war crimes in the past is evident. In addition, most of the staff are former employees of these missions. “It’s a bit

hypocritical” (Kursani, personal conversation, line number 56). Similarly, Arife Muji argues that EULEX had the full competences to deal with war crimes committed by Kosovars (Muji, personal conversation, line number 33). “The establishment of a special court is the prove that EULEX somehow failed to achieve its objectives” (Muji, personal conversation, line number 34). It is not only important for the politic elite to prosecute war crimes, since the Kosovar families are also still waiting for justice. These people do not know what they should expect of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague (Muji, personal conversation, line number 36). A more critical view on the establishment of the Specialist Chambers is given by Krenar Gashi. He argues that the idea of a Specialist Chambers was to externalise on prosecuting war crimes, which only raised hope amongst the Serb communities in Kosovo and Serbia (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 148). The creation of these Chambers has been a politically driven one (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 149). Furthermore, the hope amongst the people in Serbia and Kosovo have raised again (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 149). However, he points out that prosecuting war crimes that have been committed many years ago, is a very difficult task (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 150). The decisions that this court will take could also be a negative trigger between ethnic communities in the Balkans (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 151). On the positive side, he argues that the court can be seen as a mirror to Kosovo’s society (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 154). As Gashi argues further, “Kosovo has done well to publicly accepting and discussing war crimes. However, Kosovo is still far from where it want to be. The specialist chambers can serve as an opening for these kinds of debates and discussions” (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 156).

4.3.2 International status

According to Kursani, the main external challenge for Kosovo is their disputed status for both the EU and Kosovo (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 127). If major changes in world politics would emerge then the disputed status of Kosovo could be solved (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 130). Only if Russia change their standpoint, only than there could be a change in Kosovo’s status (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 102). The same opinion is given by Wiersma, he provides an example: “by 2020 there will be a shortage of 400.00 IT workers in The Netherlands. We simply do not have the resources to train and hire all Dutch IT workers by 2020. A lot of those people might be coming from the Western Balkan area”. Only large demographic changes as this example can change the current status situation for Kosovo (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 280).

4.3.3 Serbia-Kosovo

The third main challenge is the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo. Most participants argue that Most participants argue that if Kosovo wants to be part of the EU, Serbia eventually has to recognize them. (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 109). Kursani has a slightly different view, he argues that even if Serbia would recognise Kosovo as an independent state, it is unlikely that Russia would recognise Kosovo as well. "Why would Russia recognise Kosovo, as it considers Kosovo to be a NATO or primarily an American puppet state? Russia will ask the US to recognise Crimea as a part of Russia and to change their maps of the world as well." (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 103).

Gashi argues that "the main concern is that Kosovo's development is no longer a priority for the EU anymore" (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 143). The EU has to deal with their own problems first, like Brexit or the nationalistic issues in Poland and Bulgaria. As stated by Wiersma, the willingness of integration to the EU has to come from both sides (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 262). At the moment, the two sides are negatively influencing each other. "If, for example, the EU noticed that a country like Kosovo is not really cooperating, the EU asks itself: why do we still want these countries to join? And then those countries as Kosovo would ask themselves: why should we reform? But you do not reform for Brussels, you do that for your own country. So it makes no sense to blame the EU, but yourself. Because you are not obliged to become a member of the EU. So it has to come from both sides" (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 265).

Another factor that makes the road to a solution more difficult is, according to Kursani, that Serbia invested a lot in nationalising historical accounts and creating a perfect Serbia the minds of their inhabitants. Serbia nationalised the public discourse, the political arena and most importantly the educational system (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 64). Furthermore, the national politicians are not able to change the public discourse of Kosovo in Serbia because if they do, they will be portrayed as traitors with possible horrible consequences (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 66). In addition, as stated by Muji, the people of Kosovo think that only Serbia will benefit from the EU's created dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. With the EU facing its own problems, the dialogue is not a priority anymore and both of the countries are left in a corner and have to figure out what is best for both. (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 50).

4.4 Alternative scenarios

In the last theme of the results section, the alternative scenarios for Kosovo are discussed. Most participants argue that there will be no future for Kosovo if they are not able to join the EU. On the other hand, some participants argue that Kosovo would be fine as long as the EU and Kosovo maintain a good relationship. Wiersma and Kursani argue that Kosovo could become a sort of Switzerland.

Kosovo would in this case remain closely connected with the EU and participate ways to keep developing. (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 292), (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 143). In contradiction, Muji and Gashi argue that Kosovo has become what it is due to the EU. Everything in Kosovo is focused on the EU and the inhabitants are in great favour to enter the EU at some point in the future. There are no other options for Kosovo than join the EU. (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 105), (Gashi, personal conversation, 2017, line number 209).

This chapter described the key findings of the interviews. Most participants agreed on the failure of the EULEX mission in Kosovo and linked the establishment of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague and the priority of the EU to keep Kosovo stable to the failure of EULEX. Furthermore, the participants argue that Kosovo would highly benefit from a potential EU member state status in the future and that potential disadvantages would be marginal. The disputed status of Kosovo is seen as the most important challenge for Kosovo to overcome. If Kosovo would be recognised by Serbia and Russia, most other important challenges would become more easily to solve. Finally, as Kosovo is soaked of EU regulations and measurements, an alternative scenario for Kosovo is hardly thinkable. If Kosovo is not able to join the EU in the future, Kosovo is likely to become like Switzerland, and will be fully participating within the EU's society, however, without an official Member State title. The next chapter will analyse the findings of the interviews and compare these findings with the available literature outlined in the literature review.

5. Discussion of findings

In this chapter the results of the findings are interpreted and linked to the literature review. Based on the results presented in the findings, only the most relevant outcomes are interpreted in this chapter under the headings: EU efforts in Kosovo and Kosovo's main challenges. This chapter is divided into two parts, the first part compares the findings of the results with the literature review. The second part outlines the argumentation of the researcher. Ultimately, this discussion is to lead to a conclusion, alongside with recommendations that sufficiently answer the wide-ranging aspects of the question that is at the heart of the research.

5.1 EU efforts in Kosovo

The efforts of the EU in Kosovo are highly criticized by academic literature and the respondents that participated during this research project. The initial goal of the EU was to keep Kosovo stable and secure (Muji, personal interview, 2017, line number 20). The EULEX mission was created to strengthen the rule of law in Kosovo and address corrupt practices and prosecute war crimes. Nevertheless, EULEX did not meet its expectations and corrupt practices have even occurred within EULEX itself (Hopkins, 2017).

The EU has made the EULEX mission their largest civilian mission and invested a certain amount to establish a more peaceful and stable state (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 20). Despite all the efforts, the EU failed on certain critical points, however, they succeed in their initial goal to create a stabilised state out of Kosovo (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 32).

As argued by Capusela and Hehir, the interest of the Western countries was not to establish a proper functioning rule of law system in Kosovo, but rather intentionally allowed the important political elite (criminal groups) to maintain as much power as they need to keep Kosovo stable. Therefore, the EU has, in some cases, supported the corrupt and intimidation practices in Kosovo (Capussela A. L., 2015), (Hehir, 2016). This argumentation is in line with the view of Wiersma, the EU did not get a grasp on corrupt practices in Kosovo because, the first priority of the EU was to stabilise the country (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 70). Therefore, Kosovo is still not as secure as it could be after all these years of investment (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 71). In addition he argues that the northern part of Kosovo, especially the city of Mitrovica, should be of top priority. The EU has failed to establish proper security and stabilisation in this part of Kosovo, despite all of their exclusive competences and the possession of mobile police units in this area (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 68).

Despite all the criticism on the efforts of the EU in Kosovo, the EU has been successful on various subjects. According to the interview with Arife Muji, the EU succeed in establishing a peaceful region

out of the Balkan area. In addition, after the NATO bombings, no significant clashes have occurred (Muji, personal conversation, 2017, line number 12). Moreover, the EU currently addresses the social part of the country. Drawing more and more attention to the humanitarian aspects (Wiermsa, personal conversation, 2017, line number 95).

5.1.1 Serbia-Kosovo relationship

In order to become a EU member state, Kosovo has to normalise its relations with Serbia and vice versa (European Commission, 2016). The relationship between Serbia and Kosovo is very complicated and historically rooted (European Commission, 2016). The dispute between Serbia and Kosovo hinders both Kosovo and Serbia to become a full member of the EU. The EU has initiated a dialogue to assist both countries efforts to come closer together (European Commission, 2016). Although this dialogue initiated in 2011, its progress has been slow. According to the Progress Report of 2016, the slow progress is due to respective internal circumstances, with parliamentary elections followed by a lengthy government formation process in Serbia and the domestic situation in Kosovo" (European Commission, 2016).

When Kosovo declared independence, Serbia included Kosovo in their constitution as an integral part of Serbia but with "substantial autonomy". "Serbia absolutely does not accept the declaration of independence" (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 138). According to the interview with Kursani, Kosovo is seen as an important bargaining chip in the negotiations with the EU by Serbia. If Serbia immediately had recognised Kosovo, they would have lost this important bargaining chip in the negotiation process with the EU. "Now Serbia is able to soften their approach to Kosovo once in a while and get rewarded by the EU" (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 86). Moreover, Russia, ancient ally of Serbia and permanent member of the UN Security Council, hinders Kosovo as well to become a full member of the international community (Bieri, 2015). As long as Serbia and Kosovo do not let the past behind and solve their problems, Russia will continue with their practices and keep blocking Kosovo to become a member of the UN (Bieri, 2015).

Marinus Wiersma states that the current president of Serbia, Alexander Vucic, has initiated a discussion on the Kosovo matter. He argues, "perhaps Vucic succeeds in getting a discussion going that will lead to a kind of consensus and to the step that they really have to make in order to conclude the negotiations with the EU"(Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 149). This is what has been done by Vucic. Vucic has started an internal dialogue on the Kosovo matter to support the Serbia-Kosovo dialogue progress. While little is known about the goals and objectives of the internal dialogue, the internal dialogue recently moved on the a second phase (Zivanovic, 2017).

According to all interviewees, the expectation that Serbia will recognise Kosovo at some point in the future is positive. Formal negotiations with Serbia started in 2014 and are still not finished. In order to proceed with respectively chapter 23 and 24 of the negotiation process, Serbia has to recognise Kosovo as an independent state. If that happens, Russia might no longer hinders Kosovo's aspirations to become member of the international community. In addition, the other non-recognising EU member states might eventually recognise Kosovo as well in order to integrate Kosovo as a member state within the EU (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 164).

5.2 Kosovo's main challenges

Kosovo's main challenges as described in the literature review are civil society, corruption, organised crime and human rights. The findings of the results show that the willingness of the EU and Kosovo can be seen as an additional challenge that is connected with all other challenges that Kosovo has to overcome.

5.2.1 Corruption

Both the literature as the interviewees linked the priority of the EU to keep Kosovo stable and out of any conflicts to the corrupt practices as they occur today (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 70), (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 34), (Hehir, 2016). As Hehir argues, corruption should not be seen as a 'typical Balkan issue' but rather closely linked to the interests of the internationals (Hehir, 2016). If Kosovo changed in to a conflict zone again, this would have compromised the "success" narrative advanced afterwards. To prevent Kosovo from any kind of conflicts, international organisations worked together and tolerated activities of criminal networks in Kosovo that emerged from within the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) (Hehir, 2016). In addition Wiersma and Kursani argue that the EU failed to address the elites in Kosovo and therefore did not address corrupt practices in Kosovo (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 70), (Kursani, personal conversation, 2017, line number 34). Especially in the Northern part of Kosovo, the city of Mitrovica is typified as a 'gangster area' where the rules imposed by the EU do not apply and is still under control of Belgrade (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 64).

5.2.1 Willingness of the EU and Kosovo

In order to meet with the Copenhagen criteria and the additional conditions, it should be of great importance for Kosovo to keep showing their willingness to integrate into the EU. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Kosovo and the EU are currently negatively influencing each other (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 272). While the EU invested a lot of money in Kosovo since 1999, it could be argued that Kosovo should be a top priority of the EU to make Kosovo one of their success stories. Nevertheless, the EU is facing more important issues such as a good settlement of Brexit and

the rising nationalism problems in Poland and Bulgaria (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 276). Therefore, Kosovo and their EU aspirations are pushed to the long term. In reaction, Kosovo feels that the EU is not actively help them in order to integrate in the EU, in reaction Kosovo ask itself: why should we reform? As argued by Marinus Wiersma, “you do not reform for Brussels, you reform for your own country. It makes no sense to blame the EU, but yourself” (Wiersma, personal conversation, 2017, line number 280). Thus, willingness of both the EU and Kosovo can be seen as the overarching factor when it comes to meeting the criteria to facilitate the steps to become a candidate member state.

The first part of the discussion chapter provided a comparison between the literature review and the results chapter. In the second part the researcher describes the comparisons that have been made using his own argumentation.

Since the EU decided to assist Kosovo to become a more stable and peaceful state, the EU has put a lot of efforts in the country, with variable successes. The EULEX mission was created to establish a proper functioning rule of law system, which has failed to meet with its expectations. Moreover, corrupt practices in Kosovo are still present in all levels of society since the EU's priority was to maintain stability in Kosovo. Nevertheless, EU's efforts not only failed in Kosovo. The EU succeeded in preventing any kind of major conflicts in the area and are still actively involved in Kosovo's society today. Despite major failures of EULEX and the grasp on corrupt practices, the question remain: 'what if the priority of the EU was not to keep Kosovo stable but rather something completely different'? Tensions between different ethnical groups are still present today, but the EU has managed not only to prevent conflicts in Kosovo but in the whole Balkan area as well. With this time of peace, the EU has created an opportunity for the Balkan countries to forget the past and move on with each other. This is only proved more difficult than initially thought. The relation between Serbia and Kosovo especially still is very complex. With the EU's initiated Serbia-Kosovo dialogue, the EU tried to bring the two sides closer together. Nevertheless, Serbia considered Kosovo as an important bargaining chip in the negotiation process with the EU and recognition is not likely to happen any time soon. If Serbia would recognise Kosovo in the future, there is no guarantee that Kosovo will be recognised by all UN (Russia in particular) and EU members. Therefore, Kosovo and the EU have to think about other alternatives. If Kosovo would not be able to join the EU. Due to the fact that Kosovo is an important part of the Balkan route that is used by migrants, as the EU will draw more and more attention their migration policy, is Kosovo of strategic importance for the EU. Maintaining good relations with Kosovo could help the EU to get a grasp on potential migrant streams through Kosovo and the rest of the Balkan. Nevertheless, the EU is not very actively seeking an alternative any time soon. It could be argued that, if the EU and Kosovo find an alternative in which Kosovo's citizens could travel freely throughout the EU zone, many

Kosovars will move to other EU member states to find better jobs and living conditions. Moreover, opening up the borders with Kosovo will allow corrupt practices, such as human trafficking or drugs smuggling, to practice their operations much easier throughout the rest of the EU. Therefore, the EU is not to agree on alternatives any time soon. On the other hand, the EU has made Kosovo their most expensive operation so far. The EU would not just reject Kosovo from their EU aspirations. However, with the EU facing their own internal problems, it is logical that Kosovo is moved to the long term agenda. After the EU has dealt with its own issues, Kosovo could be a main priority again. Until that time Kosovo has to show that the willingness to reform is still present and that Kosovo actively tries to overcome their challenges. Only then will the EU allow Kosovo to move on to the next step in their enlargement policy. Now the results are analysed, the last chapter of this study provides a conclusion and relevant recommendations.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to answer the following question: *“How can Kosovo facilitate the process from currently being a potential candidate state to becoming a candidate state within the EU’s enlargement process?”*. In order to answer the main research question, the literature review first provided an overview of the available literature regarding the following subjects; potential candidate state and candidate state, the historical relationship between Kosovo and the EU, the potential (dis)advantages for both Kosovo and the EU if Kosovo would be able to join the EU and the current main challenges that Kosovo has to overcome in order to become a candidate state.

The EU invested both financially as politically in Kosovo to establish a peaceful and stabilised state. The efforts of the EU have resulted in a period without any significant violent conflicts in the Balkans. Nevertheless, with the creation of the EULEX mission, the EU had a very powerful instrument to establish a proper functioning rule of law system in Kosovo. Despite that this mission was the largest and most expensive mission created by the EU, the mission failed to meet with their goals and objectives. It has been pointed out that EULEX seemed to be stuck between the ever growing bureaucratic processes of the EU and NATO and therefore, was not able to draw attention to important subjects. Nevertheless, while stuck between the EU and the NATO, EULEX had exclusive competences to prosecute war crimes and access to police deployment in the unstable northern part of Kosovo, which they never used. In addition, the failure of EULEX is linked to keeping Kosovo stable as main priority. Therefore, the EU did not address the elites in Kosovo and could not get a hand on corrupt and criminal practices in Kosovo. With the establishment of the specialist chambers in The Hague, this establishment of the international tribunal is seen as a failure of the EULEX mission in Kosovo as well. If the EULEX mission had met their expectations there would have been no need of an international tribunal. Nevertheless, one remains hopeful, that this tribunal could bring justice to families in Kosovo soon.

If Kosovo joins the EU in the future, both sides will mainly benefit from each other. From EU perspective, if the EU wants to deal more accurate with migration streams in the future, Kosovo is of strategic importance. With joining the EU, the area becomes more attractive for trade and investment and it will boost their transport, energy and digital networks. In addition, with a stronger regional security in the Balkan area, Europe will increase the EU’s position in a new era of geopolitics. The EU’s democracy model could have a new extension and restrict the influence of other actors in the regions such as Russia and Turkey. On the other hand, the accession of Kosovo could negatively affect the EU as well. -Kosovo is still a very unstable country with an underdeveloped economy and corrupt practices are still present today.

At the same time, Kosovo will benefit greatly if it joins the EU. As a matter of fact, no significant disadvantages are known. With the prospect of further financial support and political support, the country should be able to continuously develop itself. It will not only provide financial benefits, in terms of mobility Kosovars would be able to travel freely throughout the EU-zone. Which is not the case today. Moreover, if Kosovo would join the EU, their disputed international status issue might no longer be a point of concern.

President of the EU, Jean-Claude Juncker, initiated an enlargement fatigue until 2020. Therefore, Kosovo is not able to enter the EU any time soon. Kosovo and the EU have to focus on facilitating the next step of Kosovo and become a candidate member state. In order to facilitate this step, Kosovo and the EU signed the stabilisation and association agreement in 2016. With this agreement both Kosovo and the EU strengthened their commitments to each other.

With this research it has been shown that all main challenges are somehow closely connected to each other. The main challenge for Kosovo is to normalise their relationship with Serbia. In order to do so, the EU initiated the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue in 2011 to support both countries in this process. While the EU is focusing on their internal problems, there is hope that current president Boris Vucic is strong enough to advocate the next step in the dialogue and bring both sides closer together. If the Kosovo-Serbia challenge is resolved, the next step of facilitating the step to become a candidate member state is to receive recognition from other EU-member states and ancient ally of Serbia, Russia. If these countries would recognise Kosovo as an independent state, Kosovo be a step closer to become a candidate member state and member of the UN. Moreover, the EU is critically watching the efforts of Kosovo to tackle the challenges of corruption and organised crime. Kosovo is listed as the third most corrupt country in the world. Nevertheless, it has to be pointed out that Kosovo remains highly dependent on EU support on these matters. While the EULEX mission has still a mandate to operate till 2018, corruption and organised crime should be addressed better. Moreover, in order to facilitate the next step to become a candidate member state. Both Kosovo and the EU should show willingness to reform. Without the willingness to reform, both sides are negatively effecting each other. The EU has to deal with its own internal problems such as Brexit, rising nationalism and the aftermath of the Euro crisis. When the EU has overcome their own internal issues, Kosovo could be given priority again and challenges as human rights and corruption would be highlighted again. Because of the enlargement fatigue, this will not happen any time sooner than 2020, in the meantime, both Kosovo and the EU should show willingness to reform, even though reforming is not always pleasant.

6.1 Recommendations

The findings of this research lead to several recommendations. First of all, for further research it would be interesting to research the progress that both the EU and Kosovo has made if the EU's enlargement fatigue no longer applies in 2020. To be more specific, what progress has been made on the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and how is Kosovo addressing domestic corrupt and criminal practices? Moreover, it might be clear by that time if the EU has handled with their internal problems well. With this prospect, it could be interesting to study if Kosovo is ready to become a candidate member state.

One of the findings of this study was that exact conditions posed by the EU to become a candidate member state for Kosovo are missing. It is unclear when Kosovo is ready to become a candidate member state and which steps Kosovo exactly has to take. If a situation would be achieved in which Kosovo is more aware on the conditions and the objectives that they should meet, then Kosovo could set explicit goals to become a candidate state. With Kosovar politicians better understanding their roles and expectations, Kosovo's EU integration policy could work more specifically to future goals and objectives.

Another recommendation would be to closely monitor EU's progress on prosecuting war crimes and addressing corrupt practices. This could be done by a review of the EULEX mission when their mandate ends in 2018 and to research the functioning of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Personal conversation with Shpend Kursani

Jordi: Could you please introduce yourself Mr. Kursani? Tell me a little bit about your personal background and what you are doing right now

Kursani: At this moment, I live in Florence, Italy. I am in the 3rd year of my PhD study at the European University Institute. I study the post second World War contested states. Which includes also the historical cases not only the current ones, they include like cases as Kosovo, Ukraine, Taiwan and Palestine. Historical cases are for example Bahrain and Nigeria. I researching why these cases are surviving and others not. I got my masters in Cambridge where I studied the relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans. In addition, in Kosovo I participated in different think tanks of civil society organisations and for some time I served as a political activist. In the meantime, I have researched and wrote a lot. Especially policy reports regarding the Kosovo-Serbia relationship, EU-Western Balkans relations, and more recently I am working on peer review articles about recognition and foreign policy.

Jordi: And could you please tell me a little bit more about the current organisation where you are working for? The Kosovar Centre for Security Studies (KCSS).

Kursani: Yes of course, The KCSS was founded in 2008 and is one of the few organisations that focuses on security matters. So this ranges from more soft aspect. Like human security. Up to the emerge of the foreign fighter phenomenon from Kosovo and the Balkan area. That is really the main focus. But also cases involving a lot of polls about what the Kosovo population think about the EU, NATO, Serbia, Russia and what they think is the main security threat in Kosovo. So basically, it tries to establish a think tank that focuses on only security matters in Kosovo and the Western Balkans as well.

Jordi: Do you think that the efforts of the EU in Kosovo to establish a more stable and secure state has failed or succeeded?

Kursani: The question of stability is quite particular. One reasons with a normative twist. On one hand you have stability that can survive with injustice. And on the other hand there is justice living together with justice temporally. It is true that the primary focus of the EU in Kosovo was stability. Not only the EU but NATO and other international organisations as well. So the idea of stability: keep the state or entity stable, so there is no threat of an internal war or potential war. This has come with the price that the EU has not failed in keeping Kosovo stable. It has remained relatively stable since

1999, with exception of a few ethnic clashes in 2004. This has come with the price of the failure of justice. For example, the EULEX mission, which was the most ambitious mission of the EU, to establish a stable rule of law in Kosovo. I think this is a major failure. The reason for this, in order to keep stability the EU has also focused on not prosecuting Kosovo criminal politicians and other powerful people. If you remove these people, you will get instability. They have charged some people, but they were selective. The local politicians are very intelligent, they know what the primary concern of the EU is and they played with that card. And yes, the EU has to some extent managed to keep the stability but with the failure of other goals or mandates that they have, as establishing a proper rule of law system and bringing justice to society. There are recent reports saying that EU officials are totally corrupt in Kosovo. And now the EU even won't deny that they have corrupt prosecutors or judges and police officers. The police officers were asked to hide cases and to do stuff that they aren't supposed to do. In general, yes it managed to keep stability. In the northern part the situation remained a sort of stable, there have been several clashes.

Jordi: What do you think about the establishment of the Specialist Chambers in The Hague?

Kursani: I will remain hopeful that be the case. If we take a look of recent history of international tribunals or bodies that were tasked to prosecute war criminals, I not expect to be the consequences of this tribunal will not serve the purposes of justice for which their establishment. If we take a look into the UN administration in Kosovo. They were supposed to prosecute war criminals without any involvement of locals. They had the exclusive power to prosecute war crimes. To a larger extent, they failed. The measurement of failure we can see today. Why do we need an international tribunal if they were so successful before? So it's very easy to judge whether the UN was successful in prosecuting war criminals in the past, and I think it wasn't. Then the EULEX mission, again with the sole executive authority to prosecute war crimes. Again it did not did a good job. No we have a new international tribunal. And I ask and honest question. Why can somebody convince me why would this tribunal in the end achieve the goal of justice for the victims when the UN and EULEX missions both failed? In addition most of the staff are former employees of these missions. It's a bit hypocritical. We always have to remain hopeful that justice will be brought for the families. I have my doubts. I am not against this tribunal, but in order to be in favour I need answers of these questions. And sure this tribunal will bring some justice for some families, but it will also fulfil its political goal, by holding some files behind politicians backs, to scare them if they don't listen. This is what the Un and EULEX has been doing. Again, against the price of some consequences, these consequences were that they did not prosecute this people, not because lack of evidence, but because of an overwhelming focus on stability. The EU should not have to think that justice should bring instability.

Jordi: Why have Serbia still not recognised Kosovo as an independent state?

Kursani: The reasons are very obvious. First of all, Serbia consider Kosovo as a part of their state. There is another story, Serbia has invested a lot in nationalising historical accounts and creating a perfect Serbia the minds of their inhabitants. Were Kosovo is portrayed is the heart of Serbia and without Kosovo there is no Serbia. If you have this narrative in education and in the society in general. Who will be the politician that will come out and say 'our historical interpretation has been wrong' There is no politician in Serbia that will do that. Because, they will be treated as national traitors and will fear for they lives. The president of Serbia Zoran Zunic was assassinated because he was considered to be a traitor. These thing matter in Serbia, because they have nationalised the public discourse, the political scene and most importantly the educational system. There is no Serbian politician that has the guts to exactly to challenge what Serbia has built. For example: In Nazi Germany, there was no German politician that said this is all wrong. Simply because they would end up in death camps, jail or killed in some other way. Now Serbia is not nationalised in the same way the Germans where. But the nationalised Serbia is a real problem. I think even if the political elite says that Kosovo is part of Serbia, it would be very difficult to recognise Kosovo at some point. And the legal aspect I would buy their story. In international law they say it is illegal to declare independence. The ICJ said off course that it is not illegal, but they didn't say that succession is illegal. Succession is illegal in international law if it is done unilaterally. There are also other strategic matters. The Serb minority, it consist of 5/6 % of the population. If Serbia has moved on with a quick recognition of Kosovo, they will feel that they leave their brethren in Kosovo on the hands on Albanians and that they would not be treated nicely. So Serbia has politically gains with not recognising Kosovo in their process to be a EU member state and in their dialogue with Kosovo. Because if they had immediately recognised Kosovo, It would have lost a big bargaining chip. If you recognise a country that you basically you have not any other negotiation chip. Nowadays, Kosovo is brought in a vacuum. If Serbia will soften on Kosovo a little bit, then the EU would praise them and award them. And the EU would move on to another chapter of the accession negotiation process of Serbia. And then they have to do the real reforms. But now Kosovo is the bargaining chip in most cases membership negotiations, This is not the only thing that the EU is concerned about. Serbia tries to do other reforms, Kosovo is not the only thing. I don't see Serbia explicitly, recognise Kosovo at the same way as for example The Netherlands, Germany or France has done. I don't think this will ever happen. Serbia may write a very dubious document ten or twenty pages being a bit vague. With that that document Kosovo will say thank you for recognising us. Likewise, the EU will say great job. But Serbia will with that document tell its people that it's not a real official recognition. It will be a very dubious recognition, but the EU and the rest of the world will take it as an official recognition.

Jordi: So do you think that of Serbia will Kosovo, other countries like Spain will recognise Kosovo at some point in the future?

Kursani: That is relating again to the point if Serbia will recognise Kosovo. If Serbia remains very vague, then actually Spain will not move on with a recognition. If Serbia explicit recognise Kosovo then Spain will recognise Kosovo. Now, because of other geo-political aspects that have emerged after the independence of Kosovo. For example, the Russian recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, establishment of Luhansk and the annexation of Crimea. Now, it is about UN membership. Even as Serbia recognise Kosovo. I don't think that Russia will recognise Kosovo, despite of the bounds between Serbia and Kosovo. Why would Russia recognise Kosovo as it consider to be NATO or primarily an American puppet state. Russia will say to the US, okay we will recognise Kosovo, but why don't you recognise Crimea as a part of Russia and change your maps of the world. It sounds as a quite pessimistic view, but I think it is a more realistic view

Jordi: If Kosovo joins the EU what will be the advantages and disadvantages for Kosovo?

Kursani: There will be many advantages. We will assume that accession to the EU includes a package of good things about domestic issues of member states. At least it will be having a more just legal system and society and also have benefits of the opening of the labour market. If we look at Kosovo's population, there are a lot of people that would work. And there is the aspect of mobility, not only to the aspects of jobs, but just the fact that an average Kosovar can visit a family member somewhere else in Europe what is now not possible. It will open society minds, it opens a lot of opportunities that come with it. In terms of international aspects, It is a political gain it will open up relationships with other countries in the world. It will have a say in various EU institutions. As it is geographically a large country. But also in terms of disadvantages Kosovo's economy is not strong enough to compete with other European economies.

Jordi: What are the main challenges for Kosovo if they want to join the EU?

Domestically speaking, it is fundamentally about the rule of law. Rule of law in a fundamental sense. That the law will apply equally to all citizens. What is not the case right now. I know such a perfect society doesn't exist. But at least the law applies as equal as possible and settle differences between the people of Kosovo. This will takes time, not with a EU mission of with money. People has to change, their mind-set has to change as well. Time will kill. About the economy, that is not a condition. If we look at Greece, their Kosovo is much worse that Kosovo's.

Externally, the status of Kosovo is the main challenge. This is the biggest challenges for both the EU and Kosovo as well. Spain is the major obstacle. I think recognition of Kosovo is not dangerous for

Spain, but the discourse that Spain have created with Catalonia. I don't see it happening. There can occur major changes or surprises in the world, with will take the issue of Kosovo's status take away. I wouldn't rule out potential conflicts in the Balkan area. Nationalism is on the rise, especially Bosnia is a very big problem and the region of the WB is very interconnected, if it will blow at one country, it will blow in the entire region. Unlike, the beginnings of the 90's we have a lot of interventions of the international community.

Jordi: Do you think that Kosovo will join the EU in the future?

Kursani: I think that it will eventually happen. But not any time soon. A few things must change, including Serbia's attitude towards Kosovo and there should be no other conflict in the region. Under these 2 conditions, in maybe 2 decades it will maybe happen.

Jordi: What will be alternative scenarios for Kosovo if they aren't able to join the EU.

Kursani: I will answer this in two ways. The alternative for Kosovo will simply be to live with the fact it will not become a member of the EU. I think they will be fine. It can develop and stay strong. Establish good relations with the EU. I am not saying that Kosovo will become like Norway or Switzerland. The EU will lose some leverage in the region. In the matter of policy I think it will survive. The problem will be, understanding the Kosovo policy makers, the public discourse. There is been a lot of effort of the EU. Kosovo has invest a lot of EUnising not EUopenising. Even with the flag. It have all the colours of the European flag and with the national anthem. The EU has established a sort of discourse if it was a sort of God. If all the efforts of the EU will crash, then we must rediscover our own identity.

Appendix 2: Personal conversation with Krenar Gashi

Jordi: Could you please provide a brief introduction about yourself?

Gashi: I am a political scientist. I am currently doing my doctoral science at the Gent University. My research focuses on EU and the Western Balkans, EU in Kosovo and Serbia and the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Furthermore, I was involved in Kosovo's first and biggest think tank, I established the institute for development policy, which currently happens to be the most influential think tank in Kosovo.

Jordi: Do you think that the efforts of the EU in Kosovo to establish a stable and peaceful state has failed or succeed?

Gashi: That's a very straightforward question, unfortunately the answer isn't. Because first off all, I need to elaborate a bit from the position that I will talk. My own academic advancement is one of the reason that my opinion has shifted a bit. When you ask, if the EU has been successful or not. This is a major discussion point today. Especially with the EULEX mission in Kosovo. Then the first logical question is: relative to what? Have they been successful with the EU perspectives and aims in terms of the EU shaping a world intervention as their foreign common policy. Or have they been successful in terms of delivering to the expectations of the people of Kosovo? And then the answer, very significantly depending on where do you put your relative point to compare. If we take a look at the EU foreign policy, which I did also during my 2nd masters in Kosovo. Then there is what Christopher Hill will call a huge gap between capabilities and expectations. If you calculate the overall expectations, the expectations of the EU, of member states, and the subject of intervention which is Kosovo. Then by far, the success has been really slipped. Now if you look at the EU's self-proclaimed goals of the policy than the situation gets a bit fuzzy. Because the goals of the EU in Kosovo are very vague and very spin able as such. If we look at the EULEX mission. It can be interpreted that the mission was a success because after all it delivered some justice in Kosovo. But if you dive deeper in to the mission of EULEX, you see that the mission had exclusive competences to combat organised crime and to prosecute war crimes. If you look at the verdicts that were delivered by EULEX judges and prosecutors on all those matters than EULEX is indeed a miserable failure. I am taking EULEX as an example. But the same applies for the overall EU's intervention in Kosovo. Be that development aid, diplomatic efforts of the external service by the foreign policy in Kosovo. Lately my focus was put on Kosovo itself and what Kosovo expect from the EU. And there, I mean all the efforts have had marginal effects. Whether it have been successful or not, unfortunately from the perspective of Kosovo the answer will be rather not.

Jordi: Do you think that Kosovo is now a more stabilised state then it was before their declaration of independence?

Gashi: Please remained me to answer your question directly, because I make a huge direction. I think that the major problem with the overall international intervention of Kosovo was the prioritization of stability above all. If you look at the what the UN mission only has done between 1999 and 2008, they have putted all the efforts in to stability. But then the question raises: what is stability? So take 1999 when it all was unravelling. Everyone was expecting that the Albanians would take revenge on the Serbs. And what the UN basically did, was put NATO soldiers as kind of a strong arm the KEFOR mission and to keep Serb and Albanian communities separated from each other. And the logic behind that was, they could not kill each other if they are separated which was good for the UN reports and their headquarters in Europe. But what it produced at a sort of side effect was, in the eyes of Kosovo the real effect was the separation of communities. This is how for example the ethnically divided city of Mitrovica came in to being. Simply don't let the communities come a apart and don't let them interact because stability was put as a top priority above anything else. Now is that stability? That is what I question. It think that by all means the overall developments in Kosovo for the last decade has led to a more stable society. But was that the stability that the international community was aiming for? I don't think so. I think that development came, precisely because of development. Once there was a some kind of movement towards some kind of society with economic development then there was more stability. To answer the question directly, There was a big fear among Kosovo Serbs that once the majority of the Albanians declared there would be an 1999 scenario repeat. Unfortunately the declaration of independence as it was unilaterally accepting and implementing an internationally negotiating plan by Marti Athisari was deemed to let to more stability. I could only speculate try to use some counter facials as a method of speculation what would happen if Kosovo's independence would not have been there. 95% of the population, the Albanians be very much about the status resolution because the status resolution had been left since 1999. So in the eyes of the Albanians, independence had to happen, there was no other way. We can objectively analyse and say, yes there was more stability since the declaration of independence.

Jordi: Kosovo has signed the SAA in 2016. What has been achieved after the signing of the SAA?

Gashi: Not much really. You have to understand what is happening currently in EU-Kosovo relations, as both parties are trying desperately to make any kind of development, any kind of event as a success of their own. Again, some background a little direction. In 2008, the EU was pretty much directly involved involving the status negotiations and then in advising Kosovar authorities after the declaration of independence, but when it came to recognising the independence the EU is divided

ant to this day it still is. Some member states are only not willing to recognise Kosovo as an independent state. Some of them like Cyprus, Slovakia and Spain actively working against the independence of Kosovo. So the EU had to do a lot of improvisation when it came to Kosovo. It was a unknown terrain for the EU. But the Union has ever since it's foundation was very good in creative solutions. So even in the case of Kosovo they came up with a creative solution. As is stated in the Lisbon treaty, that the EU can sign agreements as a sort of supranational entity and it would be directly applicable to all the member states. So what we have in the first time with the SAA. It has send for rectification to the European Parliament but not to the parliaments of the member states. This would be okay, as the Lisbon treaty allows it. But it just get more complicated for Kosovo. Then if we look at the content of the agreement there is much more focus on trade and trade relationship law and political criteria. The EU has put a lot of effort in to sell this as a success story. As despite on its own conditions and despite of the circumstances of enlargement it could again have an agreement with Kosovo and directly applicable as a law. But at the same time in Kosovo, the story is completely different. Kosovo politicians have been focused on granting the SAA as a sort of beginning of a contractual relationship with the EU. And much more a sort of interpretation of the political side of the agreement which is marginal and little was discussed about the economical/ trade parts of the EU. So in other words, the SAA was wonderful because it allowed both parties to gain success for their own successes. At the same time, not so wonderful because it's very limited when it comes to what it can deliver on both of their agendas.

Jordi: Do you think that Serbia will recognise Kosovo as an independent state?

Gashi: That's a good question. The answer depends on what we witnessing on world politics for the last two years has been a very unknown shuffle. The raise of nationalism, the Trump effect in the United States and especially with the annexation of Crimea and open war in Ukraine. One cannot really see how the balance of powers is to be developed in the near future. Why does did have to involve Kosovo? So let's assume the ideal case scenario. Nothing changes in the world politics and the raise of nationalism and Trumpism is declining. The major actor in the world will remain the EU. Within the context of European policy. The European policy comes the auto logy of the Balkans. That is the political reality of the Balkan countries. And in such circumstances, it is inevitable that Serbia will eventually recognise Kosovo. How will that develop given the complications of the EU member states on Kosovo's status and the enlargement strategies its really unlikely to see how enlargement will work. Again the EU would be really creative in creating new instruments which will lead to a sort of incremental recognition by Serbia which would. From the interviews that I have conducted with EU member states representatives that will be an one click solution. So in one click, Serbia and Kosovo will both join the EU and it would be a soft kind of mutual recognition. And the one click

solution will solve all remaining crisis's and issues in the Balkans. But what if such a scenario is not a scenario. What will be the worst case scenario. And that will be an increased influence of Russia in the Balkans. Be that with the how its currently being conducted with soft power and proxies. Namely Turkey other types of proxies. Than we will have a some kind of alienation of the Serbian political scene given the sort of close ties that Serbian society perceives to have with Russia. So, basically, the seeds between Kosovo and Serbia, despite all the potential scenarios these two countries are interconnected. The question that no one ask is: Well, will Serbia be a fully consolidated state only if it recognises Kosovo. Because of the complicated situation, in the way the declaration of independence was made. And because of the context of EU's integration foreign countries has developed for at least the last decade. It is certain that the faiths of the 2 countries are tied together. And leaves me to believe that there is no other way except that Serbia will Kosovo recognise at some way its independence.

Jordi: You have earlier mentioned Spain, Slovakia and Cyprus as countries that do not recognise Kosovo as an independent state. Do you think that if Serbia will recognise Kosovo, these countries will eventually recognise Kosovo as well?

Gashi: When I talked to fellow political scientist of the Balkans I say, the last country that will recognise Kosovo will be Bosnia & Herzegovina. And probably that would be after Serbia, recognizes Kosovo. To provide an insight how complicated the political system of Bosnia is. But I think that the same will apply to at least two to three, non-recognising member states. You have to understand that Romania and Greece have maintained their position simply, because of poor dependency and the absence of any concrete tangible reasons why they would recognise Kosovo now. Bit both countries have diplomatic missions in Kosovo and they are all but formal recognition. While Spain, Cyprus and Slovakia have a total different attitude. With the recent issues of Catalonia, Spain uses this as a pretext as an excuse to not recognising Kosovo. I think it will complicate things a little bit further. I am not sure which case will come first. But if we look at the ideal case of the Balkans perspective then the one click solution will work as a one click solution. Would mean that once Kosovo and Serbia both join the EU with the same signature and become member states of the EU. Then automatically the EU will ensure mutual recognition by all of its Member states.

Jordi: What are other main challenges for Kosovo if they want to join the EU.

Gashi: I think the first obstacle is the willingness of the EU member states towards enlargement. That's is something everyone keeps ignoring. If we look at the big picture, that is the driving factor. If we zoom into Kosovo. As an activist in Kosovo I can give you a bunch of criteria like the swift move of

power which we still did not have seen, a better rule of law especially in terms of fighting against corruption and organised crime. But, if you look at the hard data of other states that are in the process of EU enlargement, there is a Serbian scholar, he produced a comparative study looking at Romania and Hungaria when they entered the EU. And there was excutally more organised crime, weak rule of law and generally the perception of corruption when they became members of the EU. Then it is currently in Kosovo and Bosnia. It is not really what countries can deliver or what they can do to prepare themselves for EU membership. A counter argument for the conditionality of the EU has upgraded since then. And it became more multi-dimensial . Initially with Croatia, it also include provisions regarding war crimes and war criminals and corruption. But now with Kosovo and Serbia it includes also bilateral relations. SO Kosovo and Serbia are rated in their progress towards the EU, not only on political, ecomimical, war crimes criteria. But also what they do in terms of normalisation with Serbia. Honestly, to repeat myself. I believe that the political willingness toward enlargement is the first obstacle for Kosovo. And as second one the criteria checklist of mainly the political domain. But also Brussels view in the rule of law domain.

Jordi: What do you think about the establishment of the Specialist Court in The Hague?

Gashi: The EU trough EULEX mission, had all the capabilities and resources to combat war crimes. The idea for a special court was really a externalisation on the matter which only raised hopes amongst the Serb community in Kosovo and Serbia. That there will be a political driven balance of the prosecution of war crimes. That said: I think that is the negative effect of such a tribunal will high hopes again that something will happen. Prosecuting war crimes that have been committed many years ago is very difficult. And secondly it will also trigger the revenge sentiment between the ethnic communities in the Balkans that have been oppressed much worse than any other ethnic communities. I terms of positive effect however, I think there is a huge deal of positive effect of serving as a mirror for the Kosovar society. Although, Kosovo has been doing much better as Serbia and Croatia when it comes to accepting publicly and discussing about war crimes we are still far from where we want to be. We are still driven by a certain discourse of war that our war was right and clean. This tribunal can serve as an opening point for these kind of debates and discussions. I see that only as a positive effect of the tribunal.

If Kosovo joins the EU, what will be the advantages and disadvantages for Kosovo?

Gashi: There are no disadvantages for Kosovo. And anything that can be produced by membership would be provide huge advantages only. Kosovo is only under the rule of the EU. We use the Euro as a currency although, we are not a member of the European Central Bank. We use the monetary policy of the EU and its directly implacable in Kosovo. As a consequence of not being a member state

of the EU we have a weird inflation. For example a pack of milk is more expensive in Kosovo than in Belgium or the Netherlands. The EU is instrumental when it comes to public policy cycle in Kosovo. Every piece of legislation has to go not only to the committee of legislation but also through the EU integration committee which ensures that it's in line with the *acquis* and other EU criteria. The EU has only a rule of law mission in place and will have a special court in The Hague to admit war crimes would be the biggest challenge for the Kosovo justice system. The EU has put strict quotas through the SAA on trade and so on. The was instrumental for Kosovo for only to sign the free trade agreement in 2004. And since then we are part of the free trade agreement zone. If you look at what are the actual southern competences of Kosovo and what are the effects of the indirect competences of the EU in such areas, then it is easy to conclude that Kosovo is already be ruled by the EU but is not a member. So given this situation, there is a stigma of no alternative to the EU. Not only in Kosovo, also in Serbia and the rest of WB. The fact that there is no alternative speaks there is an effect of EU policy in the last two decades, secondly this policy is redone is a prime foreign policy to all the rest of the Western Balkans to join the EU. SO if we look at the big picture, there are only advantages but no real disadvantages for Kosovo joining the EU.

Jordi: Would there be any disadvantages for the EU if Kosovo joins?

Gashi: In honestly, this is rather an ethical question. I will tell you about a very bizarre issue. A personal story. Kosovo is the only country in the continent that requires Visa to travel. And this is going on forever. I am living in Belgium for the last 3 years, but I had to be in Kosovo when my ID-card was expired. I thought, so I will get a Visa. So I went to the Belgian embassy and applied for a Visa and they bounced me off to the Swiss embassy because they outsourced the Visa to the Swiss embassy in Pristina. I have waited 1.5 months to actually make an appointment with the embassy and tell them basically that I wanted to go home, to Belgium. And then they bounced me off to the Belgium embassy in Sofia, because they said that I would need a return Visa and the Swiss embassy was not able to give me such a Visa. But to go to Bulgaria and apply for a Visa I had to get a Bulgarian Visa first. So here I am, two months later applying for an Bulgarian Visa and that would take another month to get be able to go get a Visa for Belgium and in the end they give me another 3 months short term Visa again. Which the Swiss could have given me in the first place. I have spent the last three months of my life and with 2000 euros of expenses, just to actually to go back home. All of this is because of a bizarre Visa regime. Honestly, if the entire population of Kosovo of 1.78 million people will automatically move to the EU today, they will go unnoticed in terms of EU migration ad hocks. There is simply no ethnical justification for such a policy. If we put this in a membership perspective nothing much will change for the EU there will be no real disadvantages. Of course every new membership is a disadvantage in terms of the institutional balance the position of the

parliament and the commission and the overall saga of the ever growing bodies of the EU and such. In terms of advantages, I think that the EU will gain a lot in terms of stability. I think that the EU will benefit a lot of the intention that its providing to Kosovo right now instead of running a whole 5 dimensional policy in different private sectors. All that will be channelled through the institutional structure of the EU. I use the word Rule Kosovo, So the EU is in Kosovo right now, but if Kosovo will be a member the EU will be able to rule Kosovo by that time.

Jordi: Do you think that Kosovo will join the EU in the future?

Gashi: Eventually, yes. Although to quote one of my interviewees I don't think that by the time Kosovo joins the EU looks like the EU as it looks right now.

Jordi: What will be alternative scenarios for Kosovo if they won't be able to join the EU.

Gashi: I think that not only Kosovo but all the rest of the Balkans have no other alternatives. For Kosovo it is even more worse in this regard. Because Kosovo's statehood and the purpose as existing as a country has been designed in the context of European integration and eventually receiving membership. What I think that will happen is that there will be a kind of a soft approach for membership of the Western Balkans. That would eventually mean that the structure of integration is so deep that all the countries will be fully integrated in the market economy, and all the other aspects but without the political aspects of the Union. I think that the decision of political membership will be an easier one.

Appendix 3: Personal conversation with Arife Muji

Jordi: Could you please introduce yourself?

Muij: I am from Kosovo, I finished my bachelor in political science and French language and literature. And then I got a scholarship from the European Commission to proceed with my master in Czech republic. After than period I started working for the Kosovar Centre for Security Studies in Kosovo. So I am a researcher, I am conducting research on different interest fields like European integration, Serbian-Kosovo dialogue, Kosovo-Serbian regional cooperation and violent extremism.

Jordi: Do you think that the efforts of the EU in Kosovo to establish a stable and peaceful state has failed or succeed?

Muij: First of all. We cannot have a black or white perspective. It's easy to say if Kosovo has failed or succeed in Kosovo. But the EU's aim is to bring peace, their values and the wellbeing of its people. And in this case of Kosovo the EU's peacebuilding in Kosovo has to be seen as an instrument which prevents any kind of violent conflicts between ethnic communities. In terms of this efforts of the EU's preventing policy and comprehensive toolbox of peacebuilding. In this case, the EU has succeed in prevent violent conflicts. But I want to go back to the roots of its problems. 5 EU countries do not recognise Kosovo's independency, and of course that have its consequences. It is understandable that this countries will upholds any decisions coming from EU institutions. Foreign policy is intergovernmental and requires unanimity so this is the problem. EU cannot decide whether to recognise Kosovo's independency or not. As far that Kosovo is not recognised by all European countries the success cannot be granted. This is demonstrated by EULEX. Internal division between EU member states can limit the actions of the EU. Considering EULEX as the largest civilian mission regarding competence of the rule of law, justice and regional dialogue. All these aspects fall under the executive competences of the mission. The EU has been criticized to not build a proper rule of law. On one hand, EU has eliminated political pressure and has been able to reduce the tensions in the north of Kosovo. Off course EULEX has played a major role of managing the problematic border crossings with Serbs in the north. About the agreement of an integrated border has started to be implemented. EULEX did not operate in all border crossing, only on those where the Kosovo government couldn't operate. Nevertheless, despite the presence of EULEX cross border smuggling and organised crime is still a huge problem. So in some extent EULEX has achieved to prevent ethnical widespread of violence and deals with corruption with the use of high profiled cases. That has been considered as a success story of EULEX.

Jordi: What do you think about the special chambers in The Hague?

Muji: I have my doubts if EULEX made any achievements in Kosovo. So why should the establishment of this special court will be necessary? EULEX had the full capacity in order to deal with war crimes committed by Kosovars. But EULEX showed itself weak. Basically it didn't fulfilled its objectives. The establishment of the special court is the prove that eulex somehow failed to achieve its objectives. But the status of this court it must still be defined. The people of Kosovo don't know what they are waiting for. I don't have any idea about the idea how it will function. We will see in the future if the court will have any possible positive effects.

Jordi: Do you think that Serbia will recognise Kosovo as an independent state?

Muij: I think that the normalisation between the two countries has positive aspects for both countries. I think that the EU has been successful in bringing the two sides to the negotiating table and pushing them to reach agreements. On the other hand, the EU has not taken any concrete measures to prevent Serbia from interfering of Kosovo's internal affairs. Serbia has been conditioned on at its aspiration to join the EU facing the dilemma 'Kosovo or the EU'. The argument implies no formal recognition of Kosovo's independence. Off course it have its impact on helping territorial integrity and Serbia's community in to Kosovo institutions. This dialogue is recently become more complex. Today our prime minister was in Brussels to meet with Frederica Morgharini and they interrupted the meeting because our prime minister was seeking help of the US to be involved in this dialogue. This dialogue has reduced the reputation of EU in Kosovo. In Kosovo the people think that only Serbia will benefit from this dialogue. Both countries should have an exit strategy of this dialogue. Something should be improved. Closing the Kosovo page will allow Serbia to come closer to the EU. It is better for Serbia to go ahead. So its precondition to follow and go to a European path. There is no sign that this dialogue would bring soon something that is positive for both countries. On the other hand EU is a mediator in the dialogue. Recently the EU is facing its own problem. Therefore, this dialogue is no priority anymore. So both countries are basically left in a corner and have to figure out what is best for both countries. But what is best we don't know.

Jordi: Do you think that other non-recognising countries will recognise Kosovo if Serbia will recognise Kosovo as an independent state?

Muji: I think that the main problem here is Russia. More than Serbia. Russia has Veto power. Russia consider it self as father of Serbia so Russia speaks on behalf of Serbia in the international arena. For Spain it is complex considering Catalonia, because they want their independency as well. Off course it will be good for Kosovo if Serbia will recognise Kosovo to become a full member of international organisations as well.

Jordi: What are the other main challenges for Kosovo in order to join the EU?

Muji: In general, European integration is one of the most demanding processes for Kosovo institutions and society. But as I said before, the EU member states should be act as one for the recognition of Kosovo's independence and even worse if Serbia will join the EU, that will be a huge problem for Kosovo as well. If Serbia does not accept the fact that Kosovo is an independent country. Besides that Kosovo will continue to face internal problems such as rule of law, corruption economic performance. Reforms in different field and radicalisation as well. Kosovo has start to be frustrated with the EU because for Putin regime and visa liberalization. The people think that the EU handles with double standards. This is the main condition of demarcation with Montenegro of getting visa liberalization. This problem was present in many different countries. Kosovo parliament does not rectified it so we have a lot of manifestations. Because people think that politicians want to give a piece of widening the border to Montenegro. So liberalization remains one of the biggest problems in Kosovo.

Jordi: What will be the disadvantages and advantages for Kosovo if they enter the EU?

Muij: advantages of EU integration are interconnected with economic, social and political developments. To be more specific; the advantages of EU integration include regional long term perspective, favour of domestic ownership of candidate countries, institutional development stability and cooperation. Kosovo is not a candidate to join the EU. Nevertheless, the EU commission said that the way to European is basically open for Kosovo. Coming closer to the Western Balkan region. Croatia is considered more like a success story rather than a failure when it comes to European integration process. Not only because of political and economic reforms but also for the regular steps that they followed under EU pressure. So Croatia can be for Kosovo a model on how to be under EU pressure. It have achieved to strengthen the rule of law, economy, adopt EU reforms and to develop as a country in general. This could be a good example on how Kosovo could improve its situation being under EU conditionality. Disadvantages is a very difficult one. We are facing some difficulties in changing our mentality and culture. So the culture itself could be the biggest problem for Balkan countries, especially for Kosovo if Kosovo joins the EU. We have to go to EU standards. And for our society, it could be unacceptable regarding for the culture and mentality. I can't see any other disadvantages.

Jordi: Do you think that Kosovo will join the EU?

Muji: At the time that Kosovo will be ready, maybe the EU will not exist anymore. I don't think that Kosovo will join the EU anytime soon.

Jordi: What could be alternative scenarios for Kosovo if they aren't able to join the EU?

Muji: Thinking that the process of EU integration and enlargement have contributed to peace and stability on the continent, especially for the Balkans. Considering that the Balkans was always an area of conflict. I think that Western Balkan countries have to find a compromise together. Many years ago the idea of a package deal, that all the western Balkan countries will enter the EU together in the so called convoy. It means that all Balkan countries can join the EU and which country was the strongest would enter first and the weakest country entered last. This was good for Kosovo because they avoid to have Serbia an veto to avoid Kosovo to join the EU. If all the Western Balkan countries would enter this package, it will create the possibility of joining the EU is unavoidable so there will be no obstacle to block the accession of Kosovo to join the EU. This is the only other scenario I could think of.

Appendix 4: Personal conversation with Jan-Marinus Wiersma

Jordi: Introduction

Marinus Wiersma: My involvement actually goes back a long way. I used to be the secretary of the PvdA. During the period that things changed in Eastern Europe, but also in the Western Balkans. The communist regime was pushed aside and Yugoslavia began to fall apart. Since 1994, I have been directly involved with the European Parliament when the developments in the Balkan region were closely monitored. I was very involved in the enlargement process of the EU as such. I was rapporteur for Slovakia who did not belong to the EU at the time. And as chairman of a number of organizations, I occupied myself with relations between countries like; Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. I have also been a member of the Southern Europe delegation for a while, which included the Western Balkans. Today this delegation no longer exists. A few years later, the Kosovo crisis started and that led to a discussion in the European Parliament. At that time I was also responsible for contacts in the region within the European social democratic family. I was the spokesperson for the party and I could also continue to do so as vice-chairman of the social democratic group. I have been involved in the region through all sorts of ways, both through various party channels and through the European Parliament. Kosovo came in the picture during the aftermath of the war and the NATO intervention in 1999 and onwards. And then after the declaration of independence and the reaction of Serbia. Kosovo is in a complex situation where 4 or 5 Member States do not recognize Kosovo as an independent state and are unlikely to do so, because of the situation in Catalonia. In 2008 I was responsible in the social democratic party for the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia. I was also very reticent when independence was declared. But my colleague, Joris Groenendijk who was a member of the party the Greens, who was the rapporteur of Kosovo, welcomed the declaration. Our cautious reaction was never well understood in Kosovo, but it did help us with our relations towards Serbia. That was at a time when the Serbian parliament was also led by social democrats at the time led by President Boris Tadic. As a result, we had a lot of contact with Serbia and in particular with the more progressive forces. We also had a lot of discussion about Kosovo itself. And how they dealt with the independence declaration. Actually, the people who we had contact with, they accepted the change in the constitution. Kosovo was a part of Serbia. They changed their constitution only after the independence declaration. Well, that shows in what contradictory situations we had to operate. That eventually helped me again. In the north of Kosovo lies Mitrovica, where half of the inhabitants are Serbs and the other half are Kosovo Albanians. I was involved in the establishment of a business school. Formally I am still chairman of the advisory board. In the beginning I had to

convince the Serbs in that area, that the school was innocent. They saw the school as a threat and have created a fire and threatened the teachers. Then I was able to reconnect with Serbia by calling my friends in Serbia and saying 'hey keep those friends of yours calm, because that school must be able to function properly'. I have been to Kosovo very often, accidentally 4 weeks ago. Often because of the school, but sometimes just to talk to people on the spot. I am not very active anymore, but I am often asked to give advice and I am also the most experienced person at Clingendael about the region.

Jordi: What exactly is your work at Clingendael?

Wiersma: I am already retired, but I sometimes work at the background for Clingendael, the PvdA and the European Social Democrats. I sometimes do research to find out what is happening in certain countries. Little by far, I am also independent. So I can be critical of my peers. Because the social democrats were very present in the Western Balkan countries, it was sometimes difficult to be critical. We do not really have relationships in Kosovo. There have been talks in the past with President Tasci to possibly conclude a collaboration. That has ultimately become nothing. We also had discussions with the party that used tear gas in parliament last year. They were on the line of a merger with Albania. In this large complex, the big Albania story is playing again. That gives all kinds of implications for Albania itself. That translates back to the situation in Macedonia. That is a complicating factor that is played with this idea and until recently this propagated openly and also opposed cooperation with Serbia. And in addition, the President of Albania speculated that the enlargement of the EU would not happen that way and that if the Balkan countries were not able to become members Kosovo would be able to join Albania again. That statement with again supported by Tasci. So beware that is still the most dangerous, the unwanted members. I know the President of Albania pretty well, and he threatened that we could not get a grip on the flow of refugees and no control over the jihadists.

Jordi: Have the EU's investments failed or successful?

Wiersma: I doubt if the EU met all the expectations in Kosovo. And that means investing in Kosovo as a state, the state does not formally exist because it is not a member of the UN and probably will not be as long as Russia vetoes in the Security Council. A lot has also been invested, also financially with the largest operation the EU has ever started, the EULEX mission. That was aimed at strengthening the rule of law and had direct intervention powers. These possibilities were reversed a few years ago. I have the impression that the EU has not sufficiently used the possibilities to really put pressure on the government in Kosovo to push through a number of reforms. And where EULEX failed the most was in northern Kosovo. That is a kind of gangster country. Where the laws are only half

enforced, where half of the cars driving around without license plate. Where gangsters in the city council make the service and is still largely controlled by Belgrade. the EU has never properly intervened there. If there were real troubles, NATO had to intervene. The EU also had access to ME-like police units there. But they were never used. Also the legal powers that EULEX had with the foreign judges were simply not used. You might say that the intentions may have been good, but the EU has never really pushed through completely. First in the north of Kosovo. But secondly, the elite has never been addressed. Maintaining good relationships with certain parties as the KFA was given priority at the time. There was insufficient pressure to get grips on certain corrupt practices or to better fulfil the independence of the judiciary. Since the agreement of New York was concluded under pressure of the UN and the EU that the interpretation of the dialogue in Kosovo itself that also Mitrovica and the Serbian enclaves fall under Kosovar authority, this is a construction in which municipalities hold enormous responsibilities for themselves. including safety. That is an important step forward, because in Mitrovica the authority of Kosovo does not apply, while it is formally Kosovo. If the Kosovo police could do their job again, but that can only be done in formulas if the police consists of Serbs, which is also part of that agreement between Belgrade and Pristina. Well they are busy with the implementation itself, but this meets with huge opposition from Kosovo itself, especially by the largest opposition party and that is the most corrupt party. That is also because they have no power, you cannot be corrupt.

Jordi: what do you think of the story that the highest judge of EULEX filed his work 2 weeks ago.

Wiersma: There are now also stories about corruption within EULEX itself. That is another proof of the inactivity of EULEX. I have been to the headquarters of EULEX and there were really 500 of those expensive Land Rovers outside. That struck me a lot, everything was very rigid. And when I came to talk and asked, what can you exactly do? Then you always heard the same story that they were stuck between NATO and the EU. I have also always understood that if someone from EULEX sounded the alarm in Brussels that they really should push on a certain issue, then there should first be intergovernmental consultation in Brussels where a number of member states always said 'do nothing'. And those were always the Member States that do not recognize the independence of Kosovo. In addition, I have to say that the EU has shown a lot of inventiveness, of course a lot of money has gone into it. Much has been done to give Kosovo a chance, I think Kosovo's independence is now assured, even though the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is still unresolved. The EU is now in the process of arranging things better especially in the social field, especially for the Serbs who live in Kosovo, but it is also mainly about infrastructure and education such as diploma recognition. The EU has now also entered into a commitment with the association agreement. Is of course a very special construction. With the Association Agreement, Kosovo can also take the next

step towards the candidate country. They are now potential candidate member states. This treaty also gives the EU the opportunity to deal more forcefully with the government, because with this treaty certain things like corruption or human rights can also be cited.

Jordi: There is not really a finger on the sore spot why the EU has not really managed to deal with Kosovo?

Wiersma: Well, it mainly concerns internal issues within the EU. And that's about issues where every member state has a veto. And to prevent that from happening, it must be diluted, otherwise nothing will happen. Watering naturally does not help if you want to put the government under pressure. That is one thing that plays. And that also has to do with the different thoughts of the member states to allow Kosovo to integrate in the EU. The biggest blockade is of course whether Serbia and Kosovo can go through one door together. That is my eyes the biggest challenge and that is absolutely not the case at the moment. So you see the dilution but also that with this committee the commitment is reduced. Juncker has announced that no more countries will join in 2020. Well, this did not matter much for Kosovo. In Kosovo everything is actually being pushed to the long term. You have also seen this in other countries such as Turkey. If the pressure is reduced, you run the risk that these countries will move in the wrong direction and show authoritarian traits. You now have President Tasci, there are all stories about organ theft and corruption. It is just not well sorted out while we should have done that with EULEX. If you add up and subtract everything and how do they look at things in Pristina, then the people who are in power think that the EU is their strategic protection. So they will always remain sensitive and the EU will always be able to exert pressure. The population is also largely in favour of EU membership. But because the pressure is a bit off, the elites also feel less inclined to really continue reforms. People in Kosovo actually live in so called transitocracies, which is a country in which the elite have an interest in being forever in transition. Actually, they do not want to fully implement the integration process, but also do not want to quit. Because then you will end up in the old situation again. AND if the EU thinks in a certain form of stability, then that is fine. When it comes to Kosovo and stability and resilience, it is about the country's ability to develop itself and to give more shape to the relationship with Serbia. It is also about stability and other fundamental issues such as people's rights are actually left out. You can now see that in the new security strategy of Mogherini, in which human rights are not mentioned at all. In addition, making a democratic culture is very difficult and also takes a lot of time. And it has been shown that not all instruments used in the Balkan countries to integrate the Balkan countries worked equally well. This also has to do with being poor countries with big complex problems and with a huge heritage from the past. If you also look at the region and the tensions that still exist today. If you only look at the conviction of that Croat here in The Hague. The Croats were fierce and

the Serbs were happy again. The Croats, in their turn, applaud the conviction of Mladic and the President of Serbia says that the tribunal is biased. That still lives there very much.

Jordi: Do you think Serbia will ever recognize it as an independent state?

Wiersma: In response to the declaration of independence and developments in Kosovo itself, they have nevertheless adjusted their constitution and see Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia. They absolutely do not accept the declaration of independence. Formally, the proposition is that Kosovo should return under the authority of Belgrade but with great autonomy. Because, contrary to Macedonia and Montenegro, Kosovo did not have the right, according to the old constitution of Yugoslavia, to separate itself from all other countries. And that is what Serbia is still doing. It took several years to get an association treaty with Serbia off the ground, something they really wanted. The strange thing is that everyone in Serbia and Kosovo realizes that they cannot join if the problem is not resolved between the two countries. It is not so much a problem for Kosovo, but especially for Serbia. Serbia in particular, sends that towards the end of the negotiations. It may be that Vucic some authoritarian steering as president also get a grip on the media that he might be able to make a big concession. You often need strong leaders to make this kind of turns. Vucic is also the one who called for a discussion about it to be started, but then you immediately saw that his coalition was immediately said 'no way'. Perhaps Vucic succeeds in getting a discussion going and that it will lead to a kind of consensus that will lead to the step that they really have to make in order to conclude the negotiations with the EU. And that is where the relationship with Russia also plays a major role. But then you talk about 5,6,7 years later. Serbia also has the complication that they do not want to become a NATO member. It is not a condition to become a member of the EU, but it is strongly recommended. But for the time being, there is no shot in the matter, the only thing that is done is trying to keep that dialogue going, which is also very controversial in Serbia as in Kosovo itself.

Jordi: If Serbia recognizes Kosovo, will other countries such as Spain, Kosovo, recognize?

Wiersma: No, I do not see any problems. It is a bit like Palestine, who also tried to become a member of UNESCO. And now Kosovo is also trying to become a member of UNESCO. And Kosovo naturally has the same international law problems as Palestine. That the state is not recognized by the UN law. And that will not happen quickly. Because in the case of Kosovo, Russia will use its veto and in the case of Palestine the US will use their veto. If a country recognizes Kosovo, that is big news, then another flag is planned for that country. And the whole foreign political lobby has been set up there, to get that recognition. Ultimately, it will therefore depend on Serbia and Russia. So if Serbia sends

the signal to the Russians we are out then the Russians will undoubtedly agree to recognition of Kosovo just like all other countries and the EU itself.

Jordi: It seems that the relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is the biggest obstacle to joining the EU?

Wiersma: Yes, 2 extra conditions are imposed on a country. The first condition is that it must absolutely be recognized by Serbia. The second is, under chapter 23 and 24 of the negotiation chapters where it is mainly about corruption, human rights and the legal state. Kosovo needs to keep a track record of this subjects. And in addition, there will be much attention drawn to internal relations. And that is a changing picture. There is now a Serbian minister in the government of Kosovo. But those are the enclaves that work together with the government in Pristina. You have the hard core of the Serbs, especially in northern Kosovo. You talk about 80,000 people. The EU will pay extra attention to this.

Jordi: Can you name the 3 biggest challenges that Kosovo has yet to overcome?

Wiersma: There are 3 basic conditions, which were drawn up in 1993 with the Copenhagen criteria. The second condition deals with the market economy and the third condition deals with the capacity to apply EU law everywhere in Kosovo. So these are 40,000 pages that all need to be put into legislation. That means that the parliament has to work overtime, but whether they have the money and the civil service to do all, I have my doubts. When it comes to the political criterion and which always places the most emphasis on the EU. How are human rights, the judiciary and then I think that 1st is the independence of the judiciary, is also linked with the 2nd condition and actually with the 3rd. So a market economy cannot function properly if the rule of law is not functioning properly and you cannot properly implement EU law if the rule of law does not function. Then it is about the role of the judiciary about the speed at which cases are handled. Let Kosovo prove that they can do that too. I think that is very important. And corruption is linked to this. That remains a big problem in Kosovo. And that also makes politics unpredictable. It also has an impact on the democratic content of the country, coupled with the approach to crime. In order to go back a while, when Kosovo, Serbia and Albania were one, sanctions were imposed by the EU. This has created a huge black market. That was a kind of co-production between the government and criminal groups. They just worked together. Oil came from Bulgaria and the black market spread to Italy to the mafia. A former Serbian president tried to tackle crime and he had to pay for it with his life. And Tadic, is now also secured for life. And you also have that structure in Kosovo and that connects itself with politics. It is not only unravelling networks that involve politicians, but also criminals, and where corruption is being cleared, and there are so many politicians just protecting their cause, that is the

worst you can have. But this is actually not that different from the demands made on the other countries. The economy is also completely undeveloped, the economy consists largely of Kosovars working elsewhere in Europe and sending money back to their families in Kosovo. I always drive from the airport of Pristina to Mitrovica in the north and you see people building. Houses, offices, garages etc. So you see more economic activity and houses are being built. But formally, that is all foreign money. I also talked a lot with young people and with students especially and said they all said that they want to leave, they want nothing to do with politics, corrupts as it is. Understandable. So there is also a problem, how that economy will develop. The electricity supply is also problematic. Quite Pristina is still full of generators. Once in a while the electricity falls out again. Politicians in Kosovo always have the phenomenal alibi of fighting for independence, that is where our priority is, we are working on that, we are protecting that. That is a bit like the lack of reform. Hide behind nationalist rhetoric.

Jordi: Actually, it is very complex.

Wiersma: It is indeed very complex and we are now more aware of this complexity. We are less convinced of our soft power ability. The transformation processes all take longer than we thought. We can analyse and describe it all, but you can also say this: What if we didn't helped Kosovo at all? If you look in Kosovo, most people have more with the EU than with the Turks, Russians or Chinese. Membership is an instrument to modernize these countries and make them stable democracies, and also to tackle the social dimension, because that is imminent. That is in the interest of the EU itself and that is going to happen by trial and error. And it is also of strategic importance, because if you look at it, it is now a complete enclave. Kosovo is completely circled with EU countries. They cannot go anywhere. Yes, the Russians will try to exert some influence. They were also so angry about NATO membership in Montenegro.

Jordi: So Kosovo is of strategic importance for the EU ?

Wiersma : Well, the whole region is of strategic importance. If you see there are a number of problems there and if you do not tackle them and solve them then you block the route to EU membership. And some member states won't accept Kosovo within the EU as long as the problems are not resolved. That is very simple. So you also have to keep investing if you want the region to continue taking steps towards the EU. Then you have to invest in mutual relationships and put pressure on them. And in the case of the Western Balkans there is a fourth criterion to be added to the three Copenhagen and that regional cooperation. That goes very wide. It is about processing the past, about reconciliation processes. But it's also about intercommunicativity. It is badly arranged. It is also about communication networks, rail connections and telephone lines. And there is also some

pressure behind that. Because a number of member states in the EU found that the integration process of the Western Balkans went too slow. And because of the hesitant attitude of Brussels and a number of member states. They have taken the initiative themselves to add more strength to these regional collaborations. That was a guidance process set up by Angela Merkel. Six EU member states are joining in and the six candidate countries in the Balkans that are still there. And that goes through a number of summits where the president of France is present, and Angela Merkel and some Italians, some Austrians and Croats. And then those six countries. These include Kosovo, Albania and Serbia. And that's what the inter communicatively economically. And when you look at what it takes to become an EU member. All those rules on budget, budgets and monetary policy. And all those countries must link their currencies to the Euro. And that has very strange consequences sometimes.

Jordi: Do you think Kosovo will ever become a member of the European Union?

I think that is hard to say. The technique behind it has something automatic. I mean to say: you register as a member, then you will be screened by the committee, which then says to the council, that is the potential member state, and they then determine whether the country is far enough to become a candidate member state. And that is always on the basis of the association agreement. All association agreements state, that all these countries may become members of the EU. That is in the treaties. What Ukraine does not like is not included in the treaty with Kosovo. That treaty was signed at the time that we conducted this Ukrainian discussion here. Anyway, there is a kind of automatism. You can see that at Montenegro, which simply continues and works from chapter to chapter. And that is actually just happening. The council must always agree with this when it is tagged. And if they have agreed, they can continue with the next chapter. But at some point they have typed all the chapters. And what do you do then? Do you say 'no'? Politically, that is possible because every Member State has a veto. But such a process is there. And with Kosovo is not negotiated yet. But if that happens, you get the same bureaucratic changes and every time again those reports of 2 years and also that tick, check off. And then we will constantly look critically at: if something has been ticked off by the committee or it really works like that in practice. But it can take 10 to 15 years.

Jordi: and what about the step to candidate country ?

I think that requires immunity. You can, according to the association agreement, better see my reforms as far as possible. Because if you then negotiate, it will go much faster and you will be better prepared. But whether the Kosovars do that depends on whether those elites are willing to reform themselves. So you have technology and technology on the one hand, but you still need a political decision to start that Kosovo process. And then you come to the recognition of Kosovo at a given

moment. But it is also about the will of Kosovo. Are they prepared to take the extra step and sometimes also take steps that are not always pleasant for themselves. That is one. Two is the will of the EU. If, for example, they notice that a country like Kosovo is not really cooperating, the EU also asks itself why they still have to make an effort to join such countries. And then those countries ask themselves why they should reform. But you do not reform for Brussels, you do that for your own country. So it makes no sense to blame the EU, but yourself. Because you are not obliged to become a member of the EU. So it has to come from both sides.

Then you may also get a positive reaction here and get less room for the current regime. They influence each other a bit negatively. “o Kosovo thinks that Brussels does not care much about us, so why do we reform? And in Brussels they argue that Kosovo is not willing to reform now, so we push everything to the long term, we do not mind at all. Because we have other problems. If this remains the case, then that can sometimes also get out of the rails. And in the pessimistic view the EU broadens its own problems. Then you fall into one Brexit in the other and then it also stops with the expansion plans. You can also see that all decisions about expansion. All have been taken in times of prosperity. Because then the atmosphere about the EU is also more optimistic. The most complicated thing is that most people here are afraid of labour competition. But in the situation that that story goes up again is that I think in 2020 400,000 it'ers are needed and I think that there will soon be many Albanians, because we just do not have them in the Netherlands. The same applies to nurses in the future. Because of this kind of demographic processes, the whole story can suddenly change again. By economic motives, that we will soon be glad that there is still a Polish contractor because in NL we cannot find them anymore. So I'm not pessimistic in advance. Kosovo is not the biggest problem for the EU. But if the EU finds a good settlement for the current internal problems, the EU will become more self-assured. If you also look at the human rights story, that has not really gone away because of the problems we have internally in Bulgaria and Poland in particular.

Jordi: Are there any alternatives for Kosovo?

Wiersma: In the past, sometimes formulas have been devised for possible provisional members. But this was very bad in Prague at the time. Then these ideas actually disappeared a bit behind the horizon. There is now more talk about other scenarios. You make it a kind of Switzerland. You integrate everything. That could be a formula for Kosovo. That could be another possibility.

Appendix 5: Personal conversation Jan-Marinus Wiersma Dutch version

Jordi: Introductie

Marinus Wiersma: Mijn betrokkenheid gaat eigenlijk heel ver terug. Vroeger was ik Buitenland secretaris van de PvdA. In de periode dat in Oost-Europa, maar ook in de Westelijke Balkan de zaken veranderden. Het communistische regime werd aan de kant geschoven en Joegoslavië begon uit elkaar te vallen. Vanaf 1994 ben ik direct betrokken geweest bij het Europees Parlement, toen de ontwikkelingen in die regio nauw gevolgd werden. Ik was zelf erg betrokken bij het uitbreidingsproces van de EU als zodanig. Ik was rapporteur voor Slowakije die hoorde toen nog niet bij de EU. En als voorzitter van een aantal organisaties hield ik me bezig met de betrekkingen tussen landen als Moldavië, Oekraïne en Wit-Rusland. Ik ben ook een tijdje lid geweest van de Zuid-Europa delegatie waar de Westelijke Balkan onder viel. Tegenwoordig bestaat deze delegatie niet meer. Een aantal jaar later begon de Kosovo crisis en dat heeft tot een discussie in het Europees parlement geleid. Ik was toen ook binnen de Europese sociaal democratische familie verantwoordelijk voor de contacten in de regio. Ik was de woordvoerder voor de partij en heb dat ook doorkunnen zetten als vicevoorzitter van de sociaal democratische fractie. Ik ben via allerlei manieren betrokken geweest bij de regio, zowel via allerlei partij kanalen als via het Europees Parlement. Kosovo begon vanaf 1999 eigenlijk heel erg te spelen met de nasleep van de oorlog en de uiteindelijke interventie. En daarna na de onafhankelijkheidsverklaring en de reactie van Servië. Kosovo bevindt zich in een complexe situatie dat 4 of 5 lidstaten, Kosovo niet erkennen als onafhankelijke staat en dat waarschijnlijk ook niet meer doen door de situatie in Catalonië. In 2008 was ik verantwoordelijk voor de sociaal democratische partij voor de relatie tussen Kosovo en Servië. Ik was ook heel terughoudend toen de onafhankelijkheid werd uitgeroepen. Maar mijn collega Joris Groenendijk van de Groenen, die rapporteur van Kosovo was, juichte dat toe. Onze terughoudende reactie is in Kosovo nooit goed begrepen, maar heeft ons wel geholpen met onze betrekkingen ten aanzien van Servië. Dat was in een periode dat het Servische parlement ook geleid werd door sociaal democraten destijds geleid door president Boris Tadic. Daardoor hadden we heel veel contact met Servië en met name met de wat meer progressieve krachten. We hebben daar ook heel veel discussie gevoerd over Kosovo zelf. En hoe ze daar mee omgingen en dat de mensen waar wij veel mee contact hadden dat zij meegingen in het vastleggen van in de grondwet dat Kosovo bij Servië hoort. Dat hebben ze toen pas gedaan. Nou, dat geeft wel aan in wat voor tegenstrijdige toestanden wij moesten opereren. Dat heeft me uiteindelijk ook wel weer geholpen. In het noorden van Kosovo ligt Mitrovica, waar de helft van de inwoners Serviërs zijn en de andere helft Kosovo Albanees. Daar ben ik betrokken geweest bij de oprichting van een business school. Formeel gezien ben ik nog steeds voorzitter van de raad van

advies. In het begin moest ik de Serviërs in dat gebied ervan overtuigen dat de school onschuldig was. Die zagen de school als een bedreiging en hebben brandgesticht en de leraren bedreigd. Toen kon ik mijn banden met Servië weer aanhalen door mijn vrienden in Servië te bellen en te zeggen van 'he hou die vrienden van jullie daar een beetje in toom, want die school moet kunne functioneren'. Ik ben heel vaak in Kosovo geweest, toevallig 4 weken terug nog. Vaak vanwege die school, maar soms ook om gewoon te praten met mensen ter plekke. Ik ben nu niet heel erg actief meer, maar wordt nog wel vaak gevraagd om advies te geven en ben ook bij Clingendael degene met de meeste kennis over de regio.

Jordi: Wat zij uw werkzaamheden precies bij Clingendael?

Wiersma: Ik ben al gepensioneerd, maar ik werk soms nog op de achtergrond voor Clingendael, de PvdA en het Europees sociaal democraten. Ik doe soms nog onderzoek om te achterhalen wat er speelt in bepaalde landen. Beetje op afstand, ik ben ook onafhankelijk. Dus ik kan ook kritisch zijn op partijgenoten. Omdat de sociaal democraten erg aanwezig waren in de Westelijke Balkan landen, was dat soms moeilijk. In Kosovo hebben wij niet echt relaties. Er zijn in het verleden wel gesprekken geweest met president Tasci om eventueel een samenwerking aan te gaan. Dat is uiteindelijk niets geworden. We hebben ook gesprekken gehad met de partij die vorig jaar traangas gebruikte in het parlement. Die zaten op de lijn van een fusie met Albanië. In dit grote complex speelt dan weer het grote Albanië verhaal. Dat geeft allerlei grote implicaties ook voor Albanië zelf. Dat vertaald zich ook weer naar de situatie in Macedonië. Dat is nog een complicerende factor dat er gespeeld wordt met dit idee en tot voor kort dit openlijk propageerde en zich ook verzette tegen samenwerking met Servië. En daar kwam bij dat de president van Albanië speculeerde dat de uitbreiding van de EU niet zo gebeuren en dat als de Balkan landen geen lid konden worden dat Kosovo weer bij Albanië zou kunnen gaan horen. Die verklaring met weer ondersteund door Tasci. Dus pas op dat is nog het meest linke, de ongewenste leden. Ik ken de president van Albanië redelijk goed, en hij dreigde dat we geen greep konden krijgen op de vluchtelingen stroom, geen greep op de jihadisten.

Jordi: Zijn de investeringen van de EU mislukt of succesvol?

Wiersma: Ik betwijfel of de EU alle investeringen die de EU heeft gedaan er ook uitgehaald zijn in Kosovo. En dat wil zeggen het investeren van Kosovo als staat, de staat bestaat formeel niet omdat het geen lid is van de VN en zal dat waarschijnlijk ook niet worden zolang Rusland een veto heeft in de veiligheidsraad. Er is ook ontzettend veel geïnvesteerd, ook financieel met de grootste operatie de EU ooit heeft gestart, de EULEX missie. Dat gericht was op het versterken van de rechtstaat en directe interventie bevoegdheden had. Die mogelijkheden zijn een aantal jaar geleden teruggedraaid. Ik heb zelf de indruk dat de EU niet voldoende de mogelijkheden heeft gebruikt om

echt druk uit te oefen op de regering in Kosovo om een aantal hervormingen ook echt daadkrachtig door te duwen. En waar EULEX het meest heeft gefaald was in Noord-Kosovo. Dat is een soort gangster land. Waar de wetten maar half worden gehandhaafd, waar de helft van de auto's zonder nummerbord rondrijdt. Waar gangsters in de gemeenteraad de dienst uitmaken en wordt nog steeds grotendeels aangestuurd door Belgrado. Daar heeft de EU nooit goed ingegrepen was. Als er daar echt stront aan de knikker was moest de NAVO ingrijpen. De EU heeft ook de beschikking gehad over ME achtige politie eenheden daar. Maar die zijn nooit ingezet. Ook de juridische bevoegdheden die EULEX had met de buitenlandse rechters zijn gewoon niet gebruikt. Je kunt misschien zeggen dat de bedoelingen misschien wel goed waren maar de EU nooit echt volledig heeft doorgedrukt. Ten eerste in het noorden van Kosovo. Maar ten tweede, de elite is nooit aangepakt. Het onderhouden van goede relaties met bepaalde partijen als de KFA heeft destijds prioriteit gekregen. Er is onvoldoende druk uitgeoefend om grip te krijgen op bepaalde corrupte praktijken of om de onafhankelijkheid van de rechtelijke macht beter in te vullen. Sinds het akkoord van New York is gesloten onder druk van de VN en de EU dat de invulling van het dialoog in Kosovo zelf dat ook Mitrovica en de Servische enclaves onder Kosovaars gezag vallen dat is dan wel een constructie waarin gemeentes enorme verantwoordelijkheden voor zich zelf houden waaronder ook de veiligheid. Dat is op zich een belangrijke stap vooruit, want in Mitrovica geldt het gezag van Kosovo natuurlijk niet terwijl het formeel wel Kosovo gebied is. Als daar de Kosovaarse politie weer zou kunnen optreden, maar dat kan alleen in formules als de politie daar bestaat uit Serviërs dat is ook een onderdeel van die afspraak tussen Belgrado en Pristina. Nou zijn ze daar met de uitvoering zelf bezig, maar dit stuit op enorme tegenstand vanuit Kosovo zelf met name door de grootste oppositie partij en dat geldt dan weer als de meest corrupte partij. Dat komt ook doordat ze nergens macht hebben, dan kun je ook niet corrupt zijn .

Jordi: wat vind u van het verhaal van dat de hoogste rechter van EULEX 2 weken geleden zijn werk heeft neergelegd.

Wiersma: Er zijn nu dus ook verhalen over corruptie binnen EULEX zelf. Dat is weer een bewijs van de inactiviteit van EULEX. Ik ben weleens op het hoofdkantoor van EULEX geweest en daar stonden toen echt 500 van die dure Land Rovers buiten. Dat viel me enorm op, alles was enorm opgetuigd. En als ik dan kwam praten en vroeg, wat kunnen jullie nou eigenlijk? Dan hoorde je eigenlijk altijd hetzelfde verhaal dat ze klem zaten tussen de NAVO en de EU. Ik heb ook altijd begrepen dat als er iemand van EULEX aan de bel trok in Brussel dat er nu echt doorgepakt moest worden, dat er dan weer eerst intergouvermenteel overleg moest komen in Brussel waarbij altijd een aantal lidstaten zeiden 'niks doen'. En dat waren altijd de lidstaten die de onafhankelijkheid van Kosovo niet erkennen. Daarnaast moet ik veel zeggen dat de EU heel veel inventiviteit heeft getoond, er is natuurlijk heel veel geld

ingegaan. Er is heel veel gedaan om Kosovo een kans te geven, ik denk dat de onafhankelijkheid van Kosovo nu wel verzekerd is, al is de relatie tussen Kosovo en Servië nog altijd niet opgelost. De EU is nu bezig om vooral op menselijk vlak dingen beter te regelen vooral voor de Serviërs die in Kosovo leven, maar het gaat vooral ook over de infrastructuur en onderwijs zoals diploma erkenning. De EU is nu ook een commitment aangegaan met het associatie akkoord. Is natuurlijk een hele bijzondere constructie. Met het associatie verdrag kan Kosovo ook de volgende stap zetten naar kandidaat lidstaat. Ze zijn nu potentieel kandidaat lidstaat. Dit verdrag geeft de EU ook de kans om wat krachtdadiger om te gaan met de regering, want dit met dit verdrag kunnen bepaalde zaken als corruptie of mensenrechten ook aangehaald worden.

Jordi: Er is niet echt een vinger op de zere plek te leggen waarom de EU niet echt heeft doorkunnen pakken in Kosovo?

Wiersma: Nou, het gaat vooral om interne issues binnen de EU. En dat gaat over issues waar elke lidstaat een veto heeft. En om dat te voorkomen moet dat dus verwateren anders gebeurt er niks. Verwateren helpt natuurlijk niet als je de regering onder druk wilt zetten. Dat is één ding wat speelt. En dat heeft ook te maken met de verschillende gedachten van de lidstaten om Kosovo te laten integreren verschillen. De grootste blokkade is natuurlijk of Servië en Kosovo samen door een deur kunnen. Dat is mijn ogen de grootste uitdaging en dat is op dit moment nog absoluut niet het geval. Dus je ziet de verwatering maar ook dat met deze commissie de commitment verminderd. Juncker heeft aangekondigd dat er binnen 2020 geen landen meer lid worden. Nou had dit voor Kosovo toch niet veel uitgemaakt. In Kosovo wordt nu alles eigenlijk naar de lange termijn geschoven. Dit heb je ook gezien in andere landen zoals Turkije. Als de druk verminderd dan loop je de kans dat deze landen de verkeerde kant op bewegen en autoritaire trekjes gaan vertonen. Je hebt nu met president Tasci, daar zitten allemaal verhalen omheen over orgaan diefstal en corruptie. Het word ook gewoon niet goed uitgezocht terwijl we dat met EULEX gewoon hadden moeten doen. Als je alles bij elkaar optelt en aftrekt en hoe kijken ze in Pristina tegen de zaken aan dan vinden de mensen die daar aan de macht zijn dat de EU hun strategische bescherming is. Dus daar zullen ze altijd gevoelig voor blijven en zal de EU altijd druk kunnen uitoefenen. Ook de bevolking is in grote meerderheid voorstander van EU lidmaatschap. Maar omdat de druk er een beetje vanaf is, voelen de elites zich ook minder hard aangesproken om hervormingen ook echt door te zetten. Eigenlijk leven de mensen in Kosovo in zogenoemde transitocratie, dat is een land waarin de elite er belang bij heeft om eeuwig in de overgang te zitten. Eigenlijk willen ze het integratie proces niet volledig uitvoeren, maar ook niet terug draaien. Want dan kom je weer in de oude situatie terecht. EN de EU denkt als dat kan in een zekere vorm van stabiliteit dan is dat prima. Als het dan gaat over Kosovo en stabiliteit en weerbaarheid, dan gaat het over het vermogen van het land om zich zelf verder te ontwikkelen en

ook de relatie met Servië meer inhoudelijk vorm te geven. Het gaat ook vooral om stabiliteit en andere fundamentele zaken zoals mensen rechten worden eigenlijk achterwege te laten. Je ziet dat nu ook bij de nieuwe veiligheid strategie van Mogherini, waarin mensenrechten eigenlijk helemaal niet genoemd worden. Daarnaast is het eigen maken van een democratische cultuur erg lastig en ook heel erg veel tijd kost. En het is gebleken dat niet alle instrumenten die zijn gebruikt in de Balkan landen om de Balkan landen te laten integreren even goed werkten. Dit heeft ook te maken met dat het arme landen zijn met grote complexe problemen en met een enorme erfenis uit het verleden. Als je ook kijkt naar de regio en de spanningen die er nu nog zijn. Als je alleen al kijkt naar de veroordeling van die Kroaat hier in Den Haag. De Kroaten waren woest en dat de Serviërs dan weer blij zijn. Dat de Kroaten dan weer juichen bij de veroordeling van Mladic en dat de president van Servië zegt dat het tribunaal bevooroordeeld is. Dat leeft daar nog heel erg.

Jordi: Denkt u dat Servië ooit zal erkennen als onafhankelijke staat?

Wiersma: In reactie op de onafhankelijkheidsverklaring en de ontwikkelingen in Kosovo zelf hebben ze toch hun grondwet aangepast en Kosovo als integraal onderdeel van Servië zien. Ze accepteren de onafhankelijkheidsverklaring absoluut niet. Formeel is de stelling dat Kosovo onder het gezag van Belgrado zou moeten terugkeren maar wel met grote autonomie. Want in tegenstelling tot Macedonië en Montenegro had volgens de oude grondwet van Joegoslavië, Kosovo niet het recht om zich af te scheiden alle andere landen hadden dat recht wel. En dat houdt Servië dus nog steeds vol. Het koste een aantal jaar tijd om een associatie verdrag met Servië van de grond te krijgen, iets wat ze wel erg graag wilden. Het gekke is dat iedereen in Servië en Kosovo beseft dat ze geen lid kunnen worden als het probleem niet wordt opgelost tussen beide landen. Het is voor Kosovo niet zo zeer een probleem, maar vooral voor Servië. Servië met name, stuurt dat richting het einde van de onderhandelingen. Het kan zijn dat Vucic wat autoritair sturende als president ook grip te krijgen op de media dat hij misschien wel in staat kan zijn om een grote concessie te maken. Je hebt vaak sterke leiders nodig om dit soort bochten te kunnen maken. Vucic is ook degene die riep dat er maar eens een discussie over moest worden opgestart, maar dan zag je meteen dat zijn coalitie genoot meteen riep no way. Misschien dat Vucic er in slaagt om een discussie op gang te krijgen en dat dat zal uitmonden in een soort consensus die uitmond in de stap die ze echt moeten maken om de onderhandelingen met de EU af te kunnen ronden. En daar speelt de relatie met Rusland ook een hele grote rol in. Maar dan praat je over 5,6,7 jaar verder. Bij Servië speelt ook nog de complicatie dat ze geen NAVO lid willen worden. Het is geen voorwaarde om lid te worden van de EU, maar het is wel sterk aan te bevelen. Maar er zit voorlopig geen schot in de zaak, het enige wat gedaan wordt is proberen dat dialoog op gang te houden, wat overigens erg omstreden is in Servië als in Kosovo zelf.

Jordi: Als Servië Kosovo erkent, zullen dan ook andere landen zoals Spanje, Kosovo erkennen?

Wiersma: Nee, daar zie ik geen problemen in. Het is een beetje te vergelijken met Palestina, die probeerden ook lid te worden van UNESCO. En nu probeert Kosovo ook lid te worden. En Kosovo heeft natuurlijk dezelfde volkenrechtelijke problemen als Palestina. Dat het geen staat is erkend door het VN recht. EN dat zal ook niet zo snel gebeuren. Want in het geval van Kosovo zal Rusland zijn veto gebruiken en in het geval van Palestina zal de VS hun veto gebruiken. Als een land Kosovo erkent dan is dat groot nieuws, dan wordt er weer een vlag ergens gepland van dat land. En de hele buitenlandse politieke lobby is daar een beetje opgericht, om die erkenning te krijgen. Uiteindelijk zal het dus van Servië en Rusland afhangen. Dus als Servië het signaal geeft aan de Russen van joh we zijn eruit dan zullen de Russen ongetwijfeld akkoord gaan met erkenning van Kosovo net als alle andere landen en de EU zelf.

Jordi: Het lijkt dat de relatie tussen Kosovo en Servië het grootste obstakel is om lid te worden van de EU?

Wiersma: Ja, dat is een ten tweede is dat er aan een land 2 extra voorwaarden worden gesteld. De ene voorwaarde is dat het absoluut erkent moet worden door Servië. De tweede is dat onder hoofdstuk 23 en 24 van de onderhandelingshoofdstukken waar het vooral gaat over corruptie, mensen rechten en de rechtelijke staat. Daarin moet Kosovo een trackrecord van bij kunnen houden. En daarnaast zal er heel erg gelet worden op de interne verhoudingen. En dat is een wisselend beeld. Er zit nu in de regering van Kosovo een Servische minister. Maar dat zijn die enclaves die samenwerken met de overheid in Pristina. Je hebt de harde kern van de Serven, vooral in noord Kosovo. Je praat dan over 80.000 man. Daar zal de EU extra op letten.

Jordi: Kunt u de 3 grootste uitdagingen opnoemen die Kosovo nog moet overwinnen?

Wiersma: Er zijn 3 basisvoorwaarden, die opgesteld zijn in 1993 de Kopenhagen criteria. De tweede gaat over de markt economie en de derde gaat over de capaciteit om EU recht overal te kunnen toepassen. Dat zijn dus 40.000 pagina's die allemaal in wetgeving om moet worden gezet. Dat betekend dat het parlement moet overwerken, maar of ze het geld en het ambtenaren apparaat hebben om dat allemaal uit te voeren dat betwijfel ik. Als het gaat om het politieke criterium en waardoor er ook altijd de meeste nadruk op gelegd wordt door de EU. Hoe gaat het met de mensenrechten, de rechtelijke staat en dan denk ik dat 1 de onafhankelijkheid van de rechtelijke macht en dat hangt ook samen met het 2^e criterium en eigenlijk ook met het 3^e . Dus een markteconomie kan niet goed functioneren als de rechtstaat niet goed functioneert en je kan ook EU recht niet goed uitvoeren als de rechtstaat niet functioneert. Dan gaat het over de rol van de rechtelijke macht over de snelheid waarmee zaken worden behandeld. Laat Kosovo maar eens

bewijzen dat ze dat ook kunnen. Dat is denk ik heel erg belangrijk. En daaraan gekoppeld zit de corruptie. Dat blijft een groot probleem in Kosovo. En dat maakt de politiek ook onvoorspelbaar. Het heeft ook weer invloed op het democratische gehalte van het land en daaraan gekoppeld weer de aanpak van criminaliteit. Om even terug te gaan, toen Kosovo, Servië en Albanië nog een waren werden er door de EU sancties opgelegd. Daardoor is er een enorme zwarte markt ontstaan. Dat was een soort coproductie van de overheid en criminele groepen. Die werkten gewoon samen. Er kwam olie uit Bulgarije en de zwarte markt strekte zich uit naar Italië naar de maffia. Een voormalig president van Servië heeft geprobeerd de criminaliteit toen aan te pakken en die moest het met z'n leven bekopen. En Tadic, wordt nu ook levenslang beveiligd. En die structuur heb je in Kosovo ook nog en dat verbind zich met de politiek. Het is eigenlijk het ontrafelen van netwerken waar zowel politici in zitten als criminelen en waar corruptie de ruimte krijgt en er zitten zoveel politici om hun zaak alleen maar te beschermen dat is het slechtste wat je kunt hebben. Maar dit is eigenlijk niet zoveel anders dan de eisen die er aan de andere landen worden gesteld. De economie is ook volslagen onontwikkeld, de economie bestaat voor een groot deel uit Kosovaren die elders in Europa werken en geld terugsturen naar hun families in Kosovo. Ik rijd zelf altijd vanaf het vliegveld van Pristina naar Mitrovica in het noorden en dan zie je dat er wel gebouwd wordt. Gebouwen, kantoren, garages etc. Dus je ziet wel meer economische activiteit en huizen worden gebouwd. Maar formeel gezien is dat allemaal buitenlands geld. Ik heb ook veel met jongeren gesproken en met studenten ook vooral en zei gaven allemaal aan dat ze weg willen ze willen niks met de politiek te maken hebben, corrupte bende. Begrijpelijk. Dus daar zit ook nog wel een probleem, hoe die economie zich zal gaan ontwikkelen. Ook de elektriciteit voorziening is problematisch. Heel Pristina staat nog vol met generatoren. Eens in de zoveel tijd valt de elektriciteit weer uit. Politici in Kosovo hebben ook altijd het fenomenale alibi van dat ze vechten voor de onafhankelijkheid, daar ligt onze prioriteit, daar werken we aan, dat beschermen we. Dat is een beetje het gebrek aan hervorming wil. Verbergen achter nationalistische retoriek.

Jordi: Eigenlijk is het heel erg complex.

Wiersma: Het is inderdaad heel complex en we zijn ons nu ook meer bewust van die complexiteit. We zijn wat minder overtuigd van ons soft power vermogen. De transformatie processen duren allemaal langer dan we dachten. We kunnen het allemaal analyseren en beschrijven, maar je kunt ook zeggen. Wat als we het allemaal niet gedaan hadden? Als je kijkt in Kosovo, daar hebben de meeste mensen meer met de EU dan met de Turken, Russen of Chinezen. Het lidmaatschap is een instrument om die landen te moderniseren en er weerbare democratieën van maken en ook de sociale dimensie aan te pakken, want dat loopt gigantisch achter. Dat is in belang van de EU zelf en dat gaat met vallen en opstaan. En daarnaast is het ook van strategisch belang, want als je kijkt het is

nu een hele enclave. Kosovo is helemaal omcirkeld met EU landen. Ze kunnen eigenlijk geen kant op. Ja, de Russen zullen proberen om wat invloed uit te oefenen. Die waren ook zo boos over het NAVO lidmaatschap van Montenegro.

Jordi: Dus Kosovo is van strategisch belang voor de EU?

Wiersma: Nou, de hele regio is van strategisch belang. Als je ziet er zijn daar een aantal problemen en als je die niet aanpakt en oplost dan blokkeer je wel de route naar EU lidmaatschap. En dat zullen binnen de EU een aantal lidstaten niet willen accepteren zolang de problemen niet opgelost zijn. Dat is heel simpel. Je moet dus ook blijven investeren als je wilt dat de regio stappen blijft zetten richting de EU. Dan moet je wel in de onderlinge verhoudingen investeren en daar druk op zetten. En i het geval van de Westelijke Balkan is daar een 4^{de} criterium aan toegevoegd aan de drie van Kopenhagen en dat is regionale samenwerking. Dat gaat heel breed. Het gaat over het verwerken van het verleden, over verzoeningsprocessen. Maar het gaat ook over intercommunicativiteit Het is slecht geregeld. Het gaat ook over communicatienetwerken, spoorwegverbindingen en telefoonlijnen. En daar zit ook wel wat druk achter. Want een aantal lidstaten in de EU vonden het allemaal wat te langzaam gaan met de Westelijke Balkan. En door de aarzelende opstelling van Brussel en een aantal lidstaten. Die hebben zelf het initiatief genomen om die regionale samenwerkingen wat meer kracht bij te zetten. Dat was een begeleidingsproces opgezet door Angela Merkel. Daar doen zes EU lidstaten aan mee en de zes kandidaat-lidstaten in de Balkan die er nog over zijn. En dat gaat via een aantal summits waar ook de echte president van Frankrijk bij aanwezig is, en Angela Merkel en aantal Italianen, wat Oostenrijkers en Kroaten. En dan die zes landen. Dat zijn onder andere: Kosovo, Albanië en Servië. En daar gaat het heel erg om de inter communicativiteit op economisch gebied. En als je dan kijkt naar wat er allemaal bij komt kijken om EU-lid te worden. Al die voorschriften over budget, begrotingen en monetaire politiek. En al die landen moeten hun valuta koppelen aan de Euro. En dat heeft hele rare consequenties soms.

Jordi: denkt u zelf dat Kosovo ooit lid wordt van de Europese Unie?

Ik vind dat een beetje koffiedikkijken. De techniek die erachter zit heeft wat automatisch. Ik bedoel te zeggen: je meld je aan als lid, dan wordt je door de commissie gescreend, en die zegt dan tegen de raad, dat zijn de lidstaten, en zij bepalen dan of het land ver genoeg is om kandidaat lidstaat te worden. En dat is altijd op basis van het associatieakkoord. In alle associatieakkoorden staat dat al die landen lid mogen worden van de EU. Dat staat in de verdragen. Wat Oekraïne niet mag, staat nog wel in het verdrag met Kosovo. Dat verdrag is getekend op het moment dat we hier die Oekraïnediscussie voerden. Maar goed, er zit dus een soort automatisme in. Dat zie je bij Montenegro, dat trekt gewoon door en wordt van hoofdstuk naar hoofdstuk gewerkt. En dat wordt

eigenlijk gewoon afgetikt. En de raad moet daar steeds mee instemmen als het wordt afgetikt. En als ze daar dan mee ingestemd hebben, kunnen ze weer door met het volgende hoofdstuk. Maar op een gegeven moment hebben ze alle hoofdstukken afgetikt. En wat doe je dan? Zeg je dan 'nee'? Politiek gezien kan dat wel want elke lidstaat heeft een veto. Maar zo'n proces zit daar dus in. En bij Kosovo wordt niet onderhandeld. Maar als dat gaat gebeuren krijg je dezelfde bureaucratische veranderingen en elke keer weer die rapportages van 2 jaar en ook dat aftikken, afvinken. En dan zal wel voortdurend kritisch gekeken worden van: als er iets door de commissie is afgevinkt of het ook echt wel zo werkt in de praktijk. Maar het kan wel 10 tot 15 jaar duren.

Jordi: en hoe zit het dan met de stap naar kandidaat-lidstaat?

Volgens mij vergt dat ook immuniteit. Je kunt volgens het associatieakkoord maar beter zo ver mogelijk zien te komen met hervormingen. Want als je dan gaat onderhandelen, dan gaat het veel sneller en ben je beter voorbereid. Maar of de Kosovaren dat doen dat hangt af van of die elites bereid zijn zichzelf te hervormen. Je hebt dus enerzijds die techniek en technologie, maar daar is nog wel een politiek besluit voor nodig om dat proces van Kosovo op gang te brengen. En dan kom je op een gegeven moment dus bij de erkenning van Kosovo uit. Maar het gaat ook erg om de wil van Kosovo. Zijn ze bereid de extra stap te zetten en soms ook stappen te zetten die voor henzelf niet altijd even aangenaam zijn. Dat is één. Twee is de wil van de EU. Als zij bijvoorbeeld merken dat een land als Kosovo niet echt meewerkt, vraagt de EU zichzelf ook af waarom zij zich nog moet inspannen voor het lidmaatschap van zulke landen. En vervolgens vragen die landen zich dan weer af waarom ze zich zouden moeten hervormen. Maar hervormen doe je niet voor Brussel, dat doe je voor je eigen land. Dus het heeft geen zin om de EU dan de schuld te geven, maar jezelf. Want je bent niet verplicht om lid te worden van de EU. Het moet dus van beide kanten komen.

Dan zal je hier ook misschien een positieve reactie krijgen en minder ruimte krijgen voor het huidige regime. Ze beïnvloeden elkaar een beetje negatief. Dus dan denken ze van dat Brussel het niet zoveel kan schelen dus waarom zullen we hervormen en hier hebben we zoiets van ze hervormen niet en dan sturen we alles een beetje naar de lange termijn, vinden wij helemaal niet erg. Want we hebben andere problemen. Als dat zo blijft, dan kan dat alles ook weleens uit de rails lopen. En in de pessimistische kijk verruimd de EU zijn eigen problemen. Dan val je in de ene Brexit in de andere en dan houdt het ook op met de uitbreiding plannen. Je kan ook zien dat alle besluiten over uitbreiding. Allemaal zijn genomen in tijden van voorspoed. Want dan is de sfeer over de EU ook optimistischer. Het meest ingewikkelde is nog dat de meeste mensen hier bang zijn voor arbeid concurrentie. Maar in de situatie dat dat verhaal dan weer opgaat is dat we volgens mij in 2020 400.000 it'ers te kort komen en ik denk dat daar straks veel Albanezen tussen zitten, omdat we ze in Nederland gewoon

niet hebben. Hetzelfde geldt voor verplegers in de toekomst. Door dit soort demografische processen kan het hele verhaal opeens weer anders worden. Door economische motieven, dat we straks blij zijn dat er nog een Poolse aannemer is want in NL kunnen we ze niet meer vinden. Dus ik ben niet bij voorbaat pessimistisch. Kosovo is niet het grootste probleem voor de EU. Maar als de EU een goede afwikkeling vind voor de huidige interne problemen, dan zal de EU een stuk zelfverzekerder naar buiten treden. Als je ook kijkt naar het mensenrechten verhaal, dat is toch erg weg gezakt door de problemen die we intern hebben in Bulgarije en Polen met name.

Jordi: Zijn er nog alternatieven voor Kosovo?

Wiersma: In het verleden zijn er wel eens formules bedacht voor eventuele voorlopige leden. Maar dit viel destijds zeer slecht in Praag. Toen zijn deze ideeën eigenlijk een beetje achter de horizon verdwenen. Er wordt nu wel wat meer gesproken over andere scenario's. Je maakt er een soort Zwitserland van. Je integreert alles. Dat zou een formule kunnen zijn voor Kosovo. Dat zou nog een mogelijkheid kunnen zijn.

Appendix 6: Research Proposal Form

Personal details student	
Name	Jordi Lekkerkerk
Student number	13017683
Please indicate	ES3 () ES4 () Public () Private ()
Final Project only: Name and address organization: Name mentor at assignment provider: E-mail address of mentor:	Give reasons why you would like to write your Final/Dissertation in another specialisation:
Purpose of the form	This form is designed for you to create a concrete research plan for your assignment.
Give a brief description of what you want to know What is the central problem or question that you hope to address with your research? The word 'problem' here refers to any theoretical or practical issue that you believe would benefit from further research. At this stage, you have to formulate a central research	Central Research Question and Sub-questions How can Kosovo facilitate the process from currently being a potential candidate state to becoming a candidate state within the EU's enlargement process? Sub-questions: What is the history and relationship between Kosovo and the EU? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historical overview EU-Kosovo relationship - EU's involvement in Kosovo after independency - Stabilisation and Association Agreement

<p>question that indicates what you intend to find out about the problem you have identified. Further, you need to outline sub-questions related to your central research question.</p>	<p>What are the differences between a candidate state and a potential candidate state?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kosovo's candidate status at this moment - Membership criteria - Various stages of enlargement <p>What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of Kosovo joining the EU?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU's perspective - Kosovo's perspective <p>What are the current challenges that Kosovo is facing to become a candidate state?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corruption - Human Rights - Civil Society - Serbian-Kosovo relationship <p>What are possible ways of overcoming these current challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future prediction on resolutions <p>Conclusion and recommendations</p>
<p>Explain why you want to answer this question</p> <p>Use the adjacent box to reflect on key social, political or economic issues as well as any historical events or general circumstances that define the context of your research question.</p> <p>Introduce this context by reference to quality sources that you found and listed in</p>	<p>Context/Justification of the Research Question</p> <p>This bachelor thesis will be dealing with the enlargement process of the European Union in Kosovo. The thesis will not only focus on the various challenges that emerge for Kosovo. This research will partly base its answer by using a hypothesis. The hypothesis is focused on that it will be positive for Kosovo to join the EU. In addition, EU's perspectives on Kosovo's accession will be highlighted as well.</p> <p>Since 1999, the European Union provided numerous kinds of aid to help stabilize the country (European Union Office in Kosovo, 2016). Kosovo is dependent on EU for the following support: economic, financial, political, rule of law, building of public institutions and civil society (Palokaj, 2013, p. 5).</p> <p>In 1999, when the Kosovo war had come to his end, the European Union provided political support with launching The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (Palokaj, 2013, p. 7). In 2000 the EU discussed in Portugal how the perspective of Western Balkan countries would be measured (Palokaj, 2013, p. 7). By signing a</p>

<p>the 'Tentative bibliography' (see below). Use APA style.</p>	<p>Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) a European future for the Western Balkan countries would be measured (Palokaj, 2013, pp. 5-6). In 2016, Kosovo finally met the conditions to sign the SAA. In addition, The EU is active in Kosovo through its Special Representative (EUSR), and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) mission in the rule of law area (EULEX) (European Union Office in Kosovo, 2016). The EU is also present through member countries' Embassies and Liaison offices. Regarding financial support, Kosovo has received more than €2.3 billion (European Commission, 2016). While it initially focused on emergency relief actions and reconstruction, it now concentrates on promoting Kosovo's institutions, sustainable economic development and Kosovo's European future (European Commission, 2016).</p> <p>Kosovo is currently a potential candidate for EU membership. One of the biggest stumbling block for accession regarding Kosovo's case is that five European member states do not recognize Kosovo as an independent state. With the signing of the SAA, Kosovo has reached the status of potential candidate state. A definition of the two statuses will be given in order to get familiar with the differences between them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential candidate state: "A country is offered the prospect of membership (it becomes a potential candidate). This means it should be offered official candidate status when it is ready" (European Commission, 2016). - Candidate state : "A candidate member state is a country that wishes to become a member of the European Union and whose application has been officially accepted by the EU" (European Commission, 2016). <p>The EU has set up a special framework (stabilisation and association process). This process helps the countries concerned build their capacity to adopt and implement EU law, as well as European and international standards. It is based on an ever-closer partnership (European Commission, 2016).</p> <p>If the EU conclude that Kosovo has fulfilled the conditions based on the stabilisation and association process and deemed able to move to an actual candidate state, the question remains how Kosovo and the EU will benefit from each other. It is hard to predict how both the EU as Kosovo will develop in future decades, fact remains that Kosovo still is a very unstable country and fully depended on EU's support. Kosovo has a lot of challenges that seems insurmountable. The advantages of Kosovo joining the EU seem marginal from EU perspective. With corruption, human trafficking and unstable institutions, no interesting resources Kosovo does not appear to be a valuable asset. From Kosovo's perspective, joining the EU Kosovo will be assured of continued support an various manners (Nugent, 2013).</p>
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	<p>While lacking stable institutions, the EU helps Kosovo with the EULEX mission to form a stable security force in the country (European Union External Action, n.d.). At present, Kosovo is seen as harbouring major criminal problems – including human and drug trafficking – which its authorities are not seen as tackling with sufficient robustness (Nugent, 2013). The challenge regarding human rights is progressing slowly in Kosovo, though serious abuses persisted to be present. With the introduction of EULEX, the EU has a tool to improve on human rights as well. Not been recognised as an independent state is a main issue of Kosovo willing to join the EU. Therefore, Kosovo and Serbia have to normalise their relations. Only when Serbia will recognise Kosovo as an independent state, the other 4 countries eventually will recognise Kosovo as well and accession will again be a step closer for Kosovo (Human Rights Watch, 2016).</p> <p>With all used sources, the possible ways to overcome these challenges will be explained, both from EU's and Kosovo's perspective.</p> <p>The goal of this thesis is to analyse the challenges in fulfilling the conditions for a membership in the European Union, both from the EU's and Kosovo's perspective.</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, February 06). <i>European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations</i>. Retrieved May 21, 2017, from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia_en</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, December 06). <i>European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations</i>. Retrieved May 21, 2017, from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/kosovo_en</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, June 06). <i>Steps towards joining</i>. Retrieved from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/steps-towards-joining_en</p> <p>European Union Office in Kosovo. (2016, May 12). <i>Kosovo and the EU</i>. Retrieved from eeas.europa.eu: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/1387/kosovo-and-eu_en</p>
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	<p>Human Rights Watch. (2016). <i>Serbia/Kosovo</i>. Retrieved from www.hrw.or: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/serbia/kosovo</p> <p>Nugent, N. (2013). <i>The EU-Kosovo Relationship in the Context of EU Enlargement Policy</i>. Prisitina: May.</p> <p>Palokaj, A. (2013). <i>Kosovo – EU Relations: The History of Unfulfilled Aspirations?</i> Prisitina: Forum 2015.</p>
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<p>Relevance of the proposal to one or more topics that are part of the European Studies programme</p> <p>Briefly explain how your topic and research relate to the field of European Studies. Can you link your research to specific modules within the European Studies programme ?</p>	<p>With accession of more Western Balkan countries, the current situation in Europe will change. It will be interesting to analyse what the perspectives of the European Union are with their help to Kosovo in becoming a stable country.</p> <p>During my time abroad in Madrid I have followed a course called 'Conflict analysis and resolution'. This was the first time the Yugoslav Civil war was explained and it immediately caught my interest. With this research I want to experience how both the perspectives of the former Balkan as the European Member states had changed since the Yugoslav Civil war has come to its end.</p> <p>Linkage to courses of the ES program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elective: Global Development Issues. As Kosovo is still a developing country, the context of this course could help me with issues regarding the aid that Kosovo is receiving from the EU and which aid can be given to Kosovo in the future. - Legal Dimension of the EU. As the EU is helping to stabilize Kosovo's legal institutions with the EULEX mission, this course has given me an introduction to the legal dimension of the EU so it will be easier to understand certain aspects of Kosovo's current legal system.
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<p>Methodology</p> <p>What are the research methods you will use and how will they enable you to answer your research question? What (types of) information sources do you plan on using and why? In the adjacent box, describe your methods and justify their suitability for your research. Refer to literature on research methodology. Use APA style.</p>	<p>With any type of research, it is decisive to be clear in used methods and research approaches. The sources that are used, should be clear and transparent, especially when primary research is conducted. It should be clear to the audience, why the research is conducted and how the results and conclusions are achieved. The following chapter will describe what methods are used in the research and foresee clarification why used methods believed to be most suitable for this research.</p> <p>According to Crowther, secondary research implies: "Secondary research is essentially 'second hand' in as much as it is not new data collected specifically and primarily for the purpose of consultancy being conducted" (Crowther, 2012). The existing data will be used to define key terms as candidate state, enlargement process and civil society used in the research and to get a good overview to the available literature. In addition, primary research meaning: "Techniques of original data collection or research direct from the target respondents" (Oxford Reference, n.d.). will be used to gather new information using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structures interviews can be seen as an interview method that is placed in the middle of structured and unstructured interviews. As stated by Bailey: "In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer uses an interview guide with specific questions that are organized by topics but are not necessarily asked in a specified order". (Bailey, 2007, p. 100). Especially in an area whit a lot of different opinions regarding the future of Kosovo, it is crucial to get familiar with different perspectives of specialists. Using semi-structured interviews allows the interviewees to provide specific information regarding the asked topics. The interviews will be conducted preferably in person. If the interviewees are not able to meet in person, due to their busy schedule, Skype or E-mail will be used as a format to conduct the interviews.</p> <p>Firstly, it is important to determine if the research method will be a quantitative and qualitative research as well as whether an inductive or deductive method is chosen. According to Gilbert quantitative research is research that aims to measure using numbers. On the other hand, qualitative research most often describes scenes, gathers data using interviews, or analyses the meaning of documents (Gilbert, 2009, p. 35). The aim of this research will not be to focus on numerical results, but rather try to get reliable information of documents, books and academic articles. Therefore, a qualitative research method has been chosen over quantitative research.</p> <p>Secondly, an inductive research has been chosen for this research. According to Hodkinson, inductive researches attempt to take empirical social phenomena as their starting point and seek through the process of research and analysis to generate broader theories about social life (Hodkinson, 2009, pp. 82-83). Nevertheless, this does not mean that</p>
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deductive approaches will not be used in this research. “drawing on what is known about in a particular domain and on relevant theoretical ideas in order to deduce [...] hypotheses” (Bryman, 2016, p. 21). This will allow me on the basis of empiricism to use both of the research methods. If there are any specific observations (for example, during the interviews) that will occur during the research, deductive methods will be used to complement the inductive research methods that are already used.

List of potential interviewees:

Mitra Nazar. Journalist is a freelance journalist for radio and written press. From September 1, 2012 correspondent with Belgrade location. Cover the Balkans / Southeast Europe for various Dutch and English media. Since April 2017 multimedia correspondent for the NOS.

Leigh, J.W., MA: Professor of the State University of Groningen specialised in Central and Eastern Europe, especially in the Western Balkans and former Yugoslavia

Prof. Dr. Florian Bieber: Is a professor at Karl-Franzens University in Graz and his speciality is Southeast European Studies

Jan Marinus Wiersma: Senior Visiting Fellow at the Clingendael Institute. He is a specialist on East-European Studies

Judge Mappie Veldt-Foglia: is a Dutch judge at the Kosovo specialist chambers & Specialist Prosecutor's Office that focuses on the prosecution of crimes committed during the Kosovo war and immediately afterwards.

Raoul Dekkers: is a Dutch judge at the Kosovo specialist chambers & Specialist Prosecutor's Office focuses on the prosecution of crimes committed during the Kosovo war and immediately afterwards.

Dr. Michail Vagias: Specialist in Human Rights Law, Public International Law and international criminal law. Works as a lecturer international law at THUAS.

	<p>Mrike Karaqi: Is Executive Assistant to the Minister of Justice. This candidate will be able to provide specific information about the current judicial situation in Kosovo.</p> <p>Dardan Koçani: Is the Acting Director of the Department of European Integration and Policy Coordination within the ministry of internal affairs.</p>
<p>Tentative bibliography</p> <p>Use the adjacent box to provide a tentative list of academic (3) sources and non-academic reports, articles or books (3) that you plan to use in your research. Also add literature on research methodology (at least one source). Use APA style.</p>	<p>Allan Little, L. S. (1996). <i>The death of Yugoslavia</i>. London: BBC Books.</p> <p>Bailey, C. A. (2007). Semi-Strucutred Interviews. In C. A. Bailey, <i>A Guide to Qualitative Field Research</i> (p. 100). London: Pine Forge Press.</p> <p>Bajraktari, H. (2010). <i>Kosovo Challenge of Integration in the European Union</i>. Berlin: GRIN.</p> <p>Braniff, M. (2011). <i>Intergrating the Balkans</i>. New York: I.B.Tauris.</p> <p>Bryman, A. (2016). Social Research Methods . In A. Bryman, <i>Social Research Methods</i> (p. 21). London: Oxford.</p> <p>Capussela, A. L. (2015). <i>State-Building in Kosovo: Democracy, Corruption and the EU in the Balkans</i>. New York: Tauris & Co Ltd.</p> <p>Economides, S. (2015). Pre-Accession Europeanization': The Case of Serbia and Kosovo. <i>JCMS Journal of Common Market Studies</i>, 53.</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, February 06). <i>European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations</i>. Retrieved May 21, 2017, from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/serbia_en</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, December 06). <i>European Neighbourhood Policy And Enlargement Negotiations</i>. Retrieved May 21, 2017, from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/kosovo_en</p> <p>European Commission. (2016, June 06). <i>Steps towards joining</i>. Retrieved from ec.europa.eu: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/policy/steps-towards-joining_en</p> <p>European Union Office in Kosovo. (2016, May 12). <i>Kosovo and the EU</i>. Retrieved from eeas.europa.eu: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/1387/kosovo-and-eu_en</p> <p>Fouskas, V. K. (2016). One Hundred Years of the Bolshevik Revolution'. <i>Journal of Balkan and Near East Studies</i>.</p> <p>Gilbert, N. (2009). Research, Theory and Method. In N. Gilbert, <i>Researching Social Life</i> (p. 35). London: Sage.</p>

	<p>Hodkinson, P. (2009). Grounded Theory and Inductive Research. In N. Gilbert, <i>Researching Social Life</i> (pp. 82-83). London: Sega.</p> <p>Human Rights Watch. (2016). <i>Serbia/Kosovo</i>. Retrieved from www.hrw.org: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/serbia/kosovo</p> <p>MacShane, D. (2011). <i>Why Kosovo still matters</i>. London: Haus Publisher.</p> <p>Nugent, N. (2013). <i>The EU-Kosovo Relationship in the Context of EU Enlargement Policy</i>. Prishtina: May.</p> <p>Obradović-Wochnik, J. (2012). Europeanising the 'Kosovo Question': Serbia's Policies in the Context of EU Integration. <i>European Western Politics</i>, 32.</p> <p>Oxford Reference. (n.d.). <i>Primary Research</i>. Retrieved from www.oxfordreference.com: http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100345447</p> <p>Palokaj, A. (2013). <i>Kosovo – EU Relations: The History of Unfulfilled Aspirations?</i> Prishtina: Forum 2015.</p> <p>Prifti, E. (2013, June 21). <i>The European future of the Western Balkans</i>. Retrieved May 20, 2017, from http://www.iss.europa.eu: http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/the-european-future-of-the-western-balkans-thessaloniki10/</p> <p>Wijk, R. d. (2000). <i>Pyrrus in Kosovo, of Hoe het Westen de oorlog niet kon winnen en zelfs bijna verloor</i>. Amsterdam: Mets en Schilt.</p>																
<p>Timeline</p> <p>What is your timeline for completion? Describe the key steps in your progression to the successful submission of your research project. What do you plan to do, when and why?</p>	<p>Week by week overview:</p> <table> <tr> <td>10-10-17</td><td>Finished with the revised version of the research proposal</td></tr> <tr> <td>17-10-17</td><td>Start writing on the introduction, literature review and methodology</td></tr> <tr> <td>24-10-17</td><td>Start writing on results section</td></tr> <tr> <td>31-10-17</td><td>Continue writing on results</td></tr> <tr> <td>7-11-17</td><td>Continue writing on results. Conduct first interview</td></tr> <tr> <td>14-11-17</td><td>Continue writing on results. Conduct 2nd interview</td></tr> <tr> <td>21-11-17</td><td>Continue writing on results</td></tr> <tr> <td>28-11-17</td><td>Start writing on the analysis part</td></tr> </table>	10-10-17	Finished with the revised version of the research proposal	17-10-17	Start writing on the introduction, literature review and methodology	24-10-17	Start writing on results section	31-10-17	Continue writing on results	7-11-17	Continue writing on results. Conduct first interview	14-11-17	Continue writing on results. Conduct 2nd interview	21-11-17	Continue writing on results	28-11-17	Start writing on the analysis part
10-10-17	Finished with the revised version of the research proposal																
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24-10-17	Start writing on results section																
31-10-17	Continue writing on results																
7-11-17	Continue writing on results. Conduct first interview																
14-11-17	Continue writing on results. Conduct 2nd interview																
21-11-17	Continue writing on results																
28-11-17	Start writing on the analysis part																

	5-12-17	Start to draw up an conclusion, recommendations and executive summary	
	12-12-17	Finished the writing part of the dissertation process.	

Hand in a hard copy to the Placement and Projects Office (OV 2.70) before the designated deadline.

Approval:

Supervisor: by approving and completing the step in OnStage

Second marker: by approving and completing the step in OnStage

Appendix 7: Informed Consent Forms

Informed Consent Form**Informed Consent Form**

- 1) Kosovo's European Future
- 2) The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo will be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide new concrete ways for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.

If you agree to take part in this study please read the following statement and sign this form.

I am 16 years of age or older.

I can confirm that I have read and understood the description and aims of this research. The researcher has answered all the questions that I had to my satisfaction.

I agree to the audio recording of my interview with the researcher.

I understand that the researcher offers me the following guarantees:

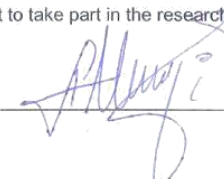
All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____



Date: 24.11.2017

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Kosovo's European Future
- 2) The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo will be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide new concrete ways for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.

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Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____



Date: 23 November 2017

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Kosovo's European Future
- 2) The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo will be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide new concrete ways for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.

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All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. My name will not be used in the study unless I give permission for it.

Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.



Signed: _____ **Date:** 20 Nov. 2017

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

- 1) Kosovo's European Future
- 2) The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo will be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide new concrete ways for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.

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Recordings will be accessible only by the researcher. Unless otherwise agreed, anonymity will be ensured at all times. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcriptions.

I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time and anything to be deleted from it.

I consent to take part in the research on the basis of the guarantees outlined above.

Signed: _____

Date: 4/12/17

Appendix 8: Student Ethics Form

Student Ethics Form

European Studies Student Ethics Form

Your name: Jordi Lekkerkerk

Supervisor: Isabel Düsterhöft

Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☐ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☐ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☐ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☐ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

(i) Title of Project: *Kosovo's European Future*

(ii) Aims of project: *The main purpose of this study is to examine how Kosovo will be able to develop from a potential candidate state to a candidate state. Examination of both EU's and Kosovo's political and operational level in assisting Kosovo to develop to a more stable state could be useful in identifying key challenges and current gaps. The optimal goal of this study, is to provide new concrete ways for Kosovo and the EU to overcome the challenges that they are currently facing.*

(iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer 'NO' to this question.)

YES

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form.

This project is not designed to include research with human subjects . I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature _____ - date _____

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure):

The participants will be interviewed by the researcher. The participants will be asked to provide answers on several interview questions that are designed by the researcher. The participants that have their residence in a foreign country are asked to participate via Skype or e-mail. Participants that have their residence in The Netherlands are preferably asked to conduct the interview in person.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited?

The participants will be recruited mostly by e-mail. Participants who live in foreign countries are contacted by e-mail. People that are living in The Netherlands are recruited by e-mail or by a phone call. The sort of participants will vary. It is most likely that some participants from various (EU) organisations in Kosovo will be contacted. In addition, journalists and professors that are specialised in the Western Balkan area will be contacted as well.

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[]; Other[].

The stimuli will be only the interview questions.

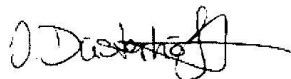
(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data? Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data. Personal data will only be accessible for the researcher. All the participants have to sign the Informed consent form and send it back to the researcher. If the participants wish to

conduct the interview anonymously, their personal data will not be mentioned in the research. Any recordings of the interviews will be kept on the computer of the researcher and will be handed in when the researcher is done with its research.

Student's signature:  date: 27-11-2017

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures):

 date: 23 November 2017