

# The Challenges to the EU integration perspectives: The Western Balkans Focus

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## *Abstract*

The Western Balkans integration into the EU is on a solid path as per the commitment drawn in the Thessaloniki Summit back in 2003. The Western Balkans faces certain challenges both in political and security perspective and the tensions are ever present with the potential of escalation to a regeneration of conflicts. The role of the EU in political and economic developments is crucial to assisting the countries of the Western Balkans towards a smooth accession into the EU. A possible accession and the incorporation of these countries in supranational structures of the EU will reduce the conflict potentials while the opposite will develop further such potentials. The facilitation of the EU in normalisation of relations after the conflicts as a consequence of the disintegration of Yugoslavia is a good example of intensive involvement of the EU in the region.

This presentation analyses the efforts of normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia and their perspectives of the integration in the EU in light of the 2013 Agreement on normalisation of relations brokered by the EU. This presentation argues that the normalisation of relations should develop to a political solution, which would require a formal or a de-facto recognition of Kosovo sovereignty by Serbia and that this process is very closely linked to the EU integration perspective. The presentation concludes that the EU, with the enlargement policy for the Western Balkans, holds the key to the normalisation of relations between these two countries and the solution to a century long political conflict.