

CEP research



CEP library has been enriched by lots of new editions this winter:

- Study [Environmental Impact Assessment in Serbia in the EU Integration Context: Current State and Recommendation](#) is a result of a thorough one-year research conducted within the project “Think-Act-Impact”.
- [TEN Background document – Human Resources for EU Membership: What Policies in the Western Balkans?](#) is researching the guidelines, policies and practices in human capacity development in the Western Balkans in order to induce a more vivid regional-level debate on the best approaches to recruiting, forming and retaining professional staff needed for achieving the EU membership.
- Mini-study [Between Discretion and Professionalism: Merit-Based Recruitment Policy in the Context of Serbia’s Accession Negotiations with the EU](#), identifies the key deficiencies of the Serbian civil system seen from the perspective of the EU accession process.
- Manuals for monitoring and evaluating public policies for [civil servants](#) and [civil society organizations](#).
- Policy paper [Civil Society and Government: Participatory Policy Formulation in Serbia](#) is considering issues of systemic involvement of civil society in policy-making processes in Serbia.
- [Introduction To Serbia’s Negotiations with the EU on Chapter 30-External Relations](#) gives the first information on the content of the Chapter 30.

Call for papers

Selected papers will be presented at a regional conference on 9-10 September in Belgrade within the project “Performance audit and policy evaluation - on the same or parallel tracks?” Apply on the [TEN Network](#) website and have a look at our [promo video!](#)

Announcement of new projects

The project [Strengthening Consumer Protection Organizations For Better Municipal Services in SEE](#) is implemented by the Network of think tanks and EU Policy Research Centers in South East Europe-Think for Europe Network (TEN), consisted of CEP, European Policy Institute (EPI) from Macedonia and Institute Alternative (IA) from Montenegro. The project is financed by GIZ with a goal of strengthening capacities of consumer organizations in advocating the rights of consumers of municipal services in South East Europe

The project [Competition Policy in Serbia-What is the Problem?](#) is striving to analyse the problems of the implementation of competition policy in Serbia, to inform interested stakeholders and to raise the awareness on potential mechanisms for improving this policy, as well as to recommend better monitoring of its implementation. The project is implemented within a regional programme for public policies *Think and Link*.

CEP monitors

State aid is any actual or potential expenditure or reduction of public revenue at both the central government level and the level of local governments. It includes all measures of state intervention, both in the form of doing (loans, preferential loans, tax relief, etc.) and in the form of omission (reduction of the base for compulsory insurance, not taking profit by the state, etc.). It is allowed under the precisely defined conditions and in exactly defined forms. Because of the importance of the steel and coal industry for the Single Market of EU, the rules on the state aid granting to companies in these two sectors are quite restrictive. In addition, state aid for rescue and restructuring of enterprises in the steel industry is not allowed.

Given the importance of this industry to the economy of Serbia, as well as the social consequences which could be caused by an automatic implementation of the rules on state aid granting, Protocol V of the SAA defines a transitional period of five years during which Serbia was allowed to grant state aid for restructuring of the companies in this industry which are in difficulties, under certain conditions. After this period, which expired on 1 February, it is not allowed to take a single dinar from the budget for subsidizing these enterprises. This includes not only allocation for starting production, procurement of materials, etc., but also the allocation for salaries, taxes and contributions, and providing guarantees for loans to commercial banks, giving cheaper loans by state institutions, taking over debts, and even the transportation of raw materials by the rail without compensation. Also, any plan of restructuring enterprises in this area must be approved by Serbian Commission for the state aid, as well as by the European Commission in order to ensure that the rules are respected.

The issue of state aid in recent months and in practice proved to be yet another proof that thorough preparation, analysis and timely action are a prerequisite for a successful process of negotiations on Serbia's membership in EU.

EP Resolution on Serbia – another example of possible risk of thwarting the accession process with bilateral issues

On 11 March, the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on Serbia's 2014 Progress Report. During the drafting process, the number of the amendments submitted was higher than ever before, which can be explained by the higher interest shown by the MEPs of the Foreign Affairs Committee to produce a resolution that would truthfully depict the current situation in Serbia. However, large number of amendments submitted by Croatian MEPs concerning unresolved bilateral issues (border dispute on the Danube, missing persons, minority rights...) was another reason for heated debates that were constantly present in the media.



The deputed of the respective committee, led by Rapporteur David McAllister and Shadow Rapporteur Tanja Fajon, managed to agree on a number of so-called “compromise amendments” in the eve of the committee vote, while rejecting the majority of Croatian amendments. In that way, the EP committee clearly signaled that bilateral issues of a member state and a candidate country should not block the accession process of the candidate country, but instead be resolved outside of that framework.

However, this process has again shed light on the fact that the EU does not possess effective mechanisms to prevent imposing bilateral issues in the accession negotiations. Every member state has a veto power in the European Council when it comes to the decisions on opening of negotiating chapters or deciding on the next steps in the accession process. Slovenia was using this mechanism beforehand to Croatia, nowadays this is the case with Greece and Macedonia and Cyprus and Turkey. Given that the Foreign Affairs Committee reflects the EP composition in plenary, the motion was adopted without any changes at the March plenary session. The resolutions’ tone is encouraging, but it raises concerns on certain issues, such as the media freedoms in Serbia.

CEP events

Meeting of NCEU Working Group 2

The purpose of the working meetings managed by CEP was to determine the framework working plan for 2015 with defined deadlines for making recommendations for NCEU’s Book of recommendations, which will be published in April. More details [→](#)

Strengthening the capacities of CSOs for policy monitoring and evaluation

A seminar within the project “**Public policies monitoring and evaluation with the support of civil society**”, was held in November 2014. Workshops were conducted by researchers of CEP, FREN and European Policy Centre, a think-tank organization from Brussels. More details [→](#)

The impact of the EU accession process on public administration in Serbia - Towards a merit-based recruitment policy

Numerous representatives of the diplomatic corps, non-governmental organizations, civil servants and representatives from France gathered at the conference, where a study with the same name was presented. The conference was opened by the newly appointed French Ambassador to Serbia Christine Moro and the head of the World Bank Office in Serbia Tony Verheijen. More details [→](#)



CEP recommends

The new TEN website!

Keep up with the activities of the Think for Europe Network.



Natasha Wunsch, Right Goals, Wrong Tools? Civil Society Empowerment in the EU Accession Process.

DGAPanalyse 2, February 18, 2015.

This article provides a critical review of EU's approach towards a civil society in the enlargement countries and explains the evolution of the approach starting with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, through Croatia to the Western Balkans. It analyses the mechanisms of support, conceptual problems and their manifestation in practice on two levels: national and EU. We warmly recommend to all researchers and colleagues who are interested in the relationship between a state and a civil society and the mediating role of the EU.

Monthly Bulletin of the Belgrade Open School (BOS) "Speak up about the negotiations," the process of negotiations on Serbia's accession to the European Union

Bulletin is the result of the Belgrade Open School research within the initiative "Speak up about the negotiations." It represents a very useful reading about the process of accession negotiations of Serbia to the EU; significant events related to this process are presented in it, in a very nice format. It is published in Serbian on a monthly basis.

Blog Rumeli Observer

This blog is edited by Gerald Knaus, director of the think-tank European Stability Initiative, one of the few in European circles that still asks very constructive questions related to the issues of EU's enlargement policy. One of the latest releases develops ideas for a new approach to candidate countries, in the context of a very low public support in the member states.

European Policy Centre

CEP is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit think-tank organisation founded by a group of experts in the field of European law, economics and public administration, with the common aim to contribute to improving the environment for public policy in Serbia, in order to make it more transparent and inclusive, based on facts and essentially oriented towards the EU. Visit us at:

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