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EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF THE WESTERN BALKANS

by Nik Smerkolj

Introduction

Balkan Peninsula, also called the Balkans, has played an important role in European history. In order to understand why this area is so significant, we have to set the geographic boundaries of the aforementioned region. There are three similar yet different terms that are used to describe the region. The Balkan Peninsula is a geographic term that describes a region with clear boundaries – three seas (Adriatic, Mediterranean and Black sea) to the west, south and east, respectively and a set of rivers (Soča, Vipava, Krka, Sava, Danube) to the north (Slukan, 2011). Term the Balkans is used in a geographical and political sense to describe the territory of the following countries (in alphabetical order): Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Bulgaria, Republic of Croatia, Hellenic Republic (Greece), Republic of Kosovo¹, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Republic of Serbia, and Republic of Slovenia (Slukan, 2011). The term Western Balkans is used in politics and social science (Ortlieb et al., 2019) (The Western Balkans, 2019). It illustrates the territory of Albania and the republics of former Yugoslavia, with Slovenia excluded and Kosovo² included (UN, 1999). In the matters of our committee, the term the Balkans will be used to describe the geographical territory and the term Western Balkans to characterize the aforementioned countries from a political perspective.

Historical events that have occurred on the Balkan Peninsula have resulted in ethnically mixed countries and many territorial disputes. Because of so many different nationalities, religions, beliefs and leaders, The Balkans got the nickname a Barrel of gunpowder. Unfortunately, anticipations and expectations were true – the barrel exploded and the Balkans was dragged in bloody wars that took place, almost

¹ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

² Ibid.

continuously, from 1914 to 2001(Horváth, 2011) (Ortlieb et al., 2019) (The Western Balkans, 2019) (UN, 1999).

The 1990s mark the beginning of the decade in which the socialist regime in Yugoslavia fell, and the Yugoslav wars began after the political and economic crisis of the previous decade was still fresh in memory. Many of the conflicts were intensified by cultural and ethnic tensions, making the estimations for the total death toll vary greatly, some even counting up to 140 000 people killed and almost 4 million others displaced (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2009, 1). The wars left many political and historical questions unanswered up to this day, especially regarding the situation in Kosovo³ and the reasoning behind several military actions that took place in the 90's (Slovak Atlantic Commission, 2017, 2-4). One such military action in the Western Balkans was the **NATO Intervention of 1999**, which aimed to force the withdrawal of the Yugoslav armed forces from Kosovo⁴ (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1999, 116, European Parliament, 2011). This military operation was openly criticised by Amnesty International for deliberately targeting civilian objects and has therefore led to a generally **negative public opinion towards NATO** and the **International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia**, especially amongst Serbians (Slovak Atlantic Commission, 2017, 2; American Society of International Law, 2016, 240-242;



Figure 1: Two graffiti with opposite messages. Left photo is from Mitrovica Bridge and it indicates standpoint of ethnic Serbs about NATO and EULEX. Right photo is from Stagovo city in Kosovo where the majority of residents are Kosovars. Source: Stars and Stripes (left) and AFP (right).

³ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

⁴ Ibid.

Amnesty International, 2000, 28-30). Because the aforementioned events happened in recent history, the accession of the Western Balkan States to the European Union (EU) is far more challenging. Two photos below clearly show the mindset and individual interpretation of history among ethnic Serbs and Kosovars.

Accession to the European Union

Any candidate state has to fulfill numerous criteria and regulations in order to join the EU, but even before the beginning of the diplomatic negotiations, candidate state has to express clear vision and willingness to enter the European Union (Church, 2002; Lejeune, 2004). Some governments used a referendum in order to determine whether its citizens were in favour of accession to the EU (Černe et al., 2002). Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union governs the accession process of new member states to the Union (Church, 2002). Prior to any negotiation, any state that wishes to apply for membership must fulfill two conditions:

- I. It has to be a European state,
- II. It must respect Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.⁵

During the pre-accession phase, adequate preparations of the applicant are considered – candidate country has to adapt its institutions, standards and infrastructure (Conditions for Membership, 2019). A crucial part in this phase is also making sure, that the candidate country complies with the accession criteria, as well as the adaptation and implementation of the *acquis* (Chapters of the *acquis*, 2019). It is also very important to note, that a treaty of accession of a new Member State is signed and ratified by all Member States and candidate state in accordance with their own constitutional rules (Grossi, 2010; Shütze, 2013; Conditions for Membership, 2019). The European Parliament has to give its consent too. The accession criteria were defined in 1993 during the summit of the European Council in Copenhagen; therefore such criteria are also referred to as the Copenhagen criteria (Shütze, 2013).

⁵ The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

These criteria are the essential conditions that all countries have to fulfill in order to become a member state. The Criteria are divided in three different subcategories:

- I. Political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities,
- II. Economic criteria: a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competition and market forces,
- III. Administrative and Institutional capacity to effectively implement the acquis and ability to take on the obligations of membership⁶.

Of course, the European Union does possess the right to decide when a candidate country has met the aforementioned criteria and when the Union itself is ready to accept new member state (De Munter, 2016; Grossi, 2010; Kathuria, 2008). Countries are only granted the accession when they show the EU that they are ready to become members, namely by fulfilling all European Union's rules and obligations, having a consent of the Member States and of their citizens through referendum or approval by their national parliament (Conditions for Membership, 2019).

The European Union's conditions regarding the accession and the procedure of the accession itself (implementation and enforcement) are written in the acquis (Chapters of the acquis, 2019). Acquis are rules that are divided in 35 subcategories (according to different fields and topics). You can see the acquis briefly explained on the next page. Apart from acquis, two other main issues are discussed; financial agreements (payment of the fee, share of EU's budget, etc.) and transitional arrangements, meaning that rules are applied gradually to give new member time to adapt to them (Grossi, 2010). The European Commission is responsible for monitoring the process of candidate country when it comes to application of the EU law and meeting all the other commitments. The Commission is also responsible for the flow of information between the candidate country, European Parliament and European Council (Grossi, 2010) (Shütze, 2013) (Lejeune, 2004).

⁶ As stated in the neighboring policy of the European Union

Process of joining and accession

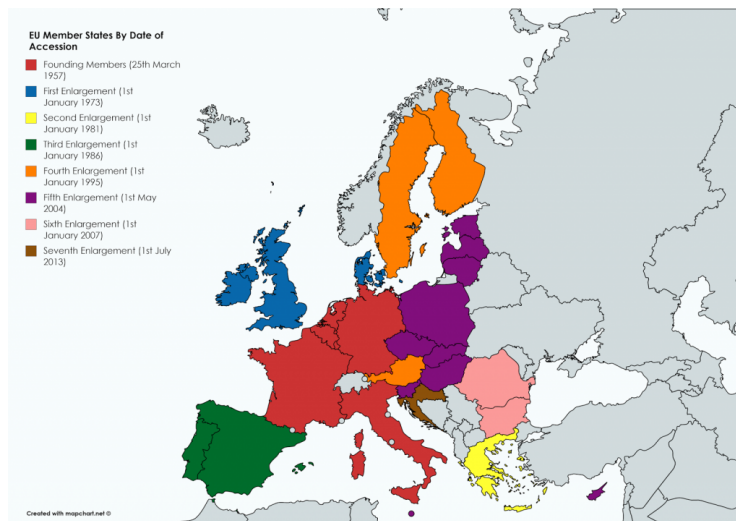


Figure 2: European Union's enlargement from 1957 to 2013. Source: VividMaps

The process of accession to the European Union can be described in three stages. Firstly, a country becomes a **candidate for membership**, however this does not mean that any negotiations are in place (Lejeune, 2004). Negotiations start during the second stage called **formal**

membership negotiations. During this phase, a country adapts its legal system to conform with EU law and applies and implements economic, administrative and other reforms that will enable it to meet the accession criteria. After the completion of requisite reforms and negotiations, the country can officially **join the EU** (Lejeune, 2004). Map of EU enlargements is pictured above.

The European Council has to unanimously agree on a framework for negotiations with the candidate country in order for the membership negotiations to start. All official negotiations are done by the ministers and ambassadors of the EU governments (Member States) and the candidate country (De Munter, 2016; Lejeune, 2004). This process is called intergovernmental conference. The process includes **screening**, where the Commission is responsible for a detailed research of all the *acquis* and the readiness of the country to fulfill them (Lejeune, 2004). The Commission is furthermore responsible for providing an official statement whether it recommends to open the negotiations directly or that certain conditions should be met first (also known as opening benchmarks). Before the negotiations can officially start, the candidate country must send its position – if the EU sets their benchmarks, the candidate country must meet them. From here on the negotiations are in place and their duration varies due to different speed of implementations of reforms and alignments with the European Union's law (Grossi, 2010).

All the chapters and acquis are negotiated separately and every Member State's government must approve the candidate's progress in that policy field in order for the negotiations to be closed (Conditions for enlargement, 2019). Every chapter has to be agreed upon in order for the negotiation process to conclude. After all the negotiations are concluded, the **accession treaty** is signed (Grossi, 2010). It contains all the terms and conditions of membership and the financial arrangements. The accession treaty is not legally binding until it is supported by the Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Council, it is signed and ratified by the candidate country and all Member States. When all this is fulfilled, the candidate becomes an **acceding country**. The official definition of an acceding country is, that such country is expected to become a full EU member on the date laid down in the treaty.

Special process for countries of Western Balkan

Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo⁷, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) have a special relation with the European Union (De Munter, 2016). The unique framework is known as the Stabilization and association process. Its aims are:

- I. Stabilizing the countries and encouraging the transition to a market economy
- II. Promoting regional cooperation between the countries and entities (as seen in Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- III. Membership in the Union

The main aim of the whole process is to ensure that countries slowly adopt the European values and way of life. Furthermore, the EU wishes for them to adapt their legislation to the standards of EU and international law (Conditions for Membership, 2019) (De Munter, 2016). Different countries have a different bundle of special rights and partnership, but the offering mixture is:

⁷ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

- I. Trade concessions,
- II. Economic, financial and fiscal assistance,
- III. Development and stabilization assistance.

With fulfilling the commitments in the Stabilization and association process every country is getting closer to the membership in the European Union.

Current status

Currently there are five candidate countries for the accession to the European Union (Republic of Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia and Republic of Turkey). Additionally, there are two potential candidates (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo⁸) and one country that has requested not to be regarded as a candidate country (Iceland in March 2015).

Albania was recognized as a potential candidate country during the Thessaloniki European Council Summit in 2003. Six years later, Albania submitted its application for the membership. In 2012, European Commission recommended granting Albania candidate status, subject to the completion of some key measures. Two years later, candidate status was finally granted. In March 2020 the European Council endorsed the General Affairs Council's decision to open accession negotiations with Albania and Member States were presented with a draft of negotiations (European Commission, 2021).

North Macedonia was the first country in the region to sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement, just one year after the Thessaloniki European Council Summit in 2003, where it was identified as a potential candidate country. North Macedonia was granted the candidate status in 2005 and ten years later the recommendation for accession negotiations was made conditional. Due to the significant progress of North

⁸ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Macedonia, the Commission again proposed accession negotiations in 2019 and a year later General Affairs Council approved accession negotiations. The decision was approved by the European Council and framework of negotiations was presented to the Member States (European Commission, 2021).

During its path towards joining NATO (in 2020) and applying for the EU membership, North Macedonia had to fulfill Greek demands concerning the name of the country. In June 2018, Greek and Macedonian prime ministers signed Prespa agreement, which covered the preconditions set by the Greek side. An erga omnes name Republic of North Macedonia is in use since then and Greece removed all veto votes towards North Macedonia's joining of NATO and the EU.

In 2019, Bulgaria stated that it would block the accession of North Macedonia to the EU unless a number of demands are met. In November 2020 Bulgaria refused to approve the EU's framework of negotiations for North Macedonia, thus blocking the official start of accession negotiations. The stated reason was that North Macedonia refused to recognize its historical Bulgarian roots (National Post, 2020).

Montenegro applied for the EU membership just two years after gaining independence from State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006. In 2010, a favourable opinion on the application was issued by the Commission and a year later Council launched the accession process. Negotiations were opened in 2012 and in 2020 all 33 chapters have been opened, three of which are provisionally closed. Currently, negotiations are open on Chapter Competition policy (European Commission, 2021).

Serbia has been recognized as a potential candidate country during Thessaloniki European Council summit in 2003. Five years later, European partnership for Serbia was adopted and in 2009 Serbia formally applied for the membership. In 2012, candidate status was granted and a year later Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force. In 2014, Serbia's accession negotiations formally started and so far eighteen chapters have been opened and two provisionally closed.

The last chapter opened was Free movement of capital in December 2019 (European Commission, 2021).

Bosnia and Herzegovina was identified as a potential candidate country during the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003. In 2015 Stabilisation and Association Agreement was ratified and a year later Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for the membership. European Commission adopted and the EU Council later endorsed the Opinion and key priorities for the accession negotiations. The EU is currently cooperating with Bosnia and Herzegovina also through framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy. Additionally around 600 personnel are present in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the EUFOR/Althea mission (European Commission, 2021).

Kosovo⁹ has received the EU's assistance in the economic and political development since 2008 and both parties agree that Kosovo¹⁰ has a clear European perspective. In 2016, Stabilisation and Association Agreement entered into force and in 2018 the European Commission confirmed that Kosovo had fulfilled visa liberalization benchmarks. Even though many countries tried facilitating the process of visa liberalization, some Member States still oppose it. The Netherlands is strongly against granting visa free travelling to Kosovars, because their country is, as Dutch officials say, deeply involved in corruption affairs. Therefore Kosovar people still need visa for travelling to the EU. There are two main stability policies present in Kosovo¹¹: EULEX rule of law mission in Kosovo¹² and Special representative in Kosovo¹³.

Kosovo¹⁴ declared independence in 2008 and has since gained diplomatic recognition as a sovereign state by 97 members of the United Nations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs

⁹ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ This designation is in line with document UNSCR 1244/1999 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Kosovo, 2021). Additionally, five EU member states do not recognize Kosovo¹⁵ – Spain, Slovakia, Cyprus, Romania and Greece. After the Belgrade-Pristina negotiations, European Union has adopted following standpoint on addressing Kosovar status of sovereign country: “This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Advisory Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence” (ICJ, 2021). It goes without saying that Serbia did not recognize Kosovo¹⁶ and is actively lobbying among some United Nations member states to revoke recognition, however, Serbia is expected to form diplomatic relations and recognize it before joining the EU.

Strategic goals and economic consequences of enlargement

Ever since the European Union was formed, existing Member States had a vision and clear goals regarding the accession of new countries to the Union. Whether it was assurance of peace in Europe or economic cooperation, Member States had to agree on a common goal they wish to fulfill with the enlargement. With more and more countries in the Union, such agreements can be difficult to achieve and some countries might be more prone to the enlargement than others. A clear set of rules and procedures ensure that Candidate country met all the requirements and is in fact ready to enter the Union. But what is the EU’s motivation for such enlargement? European Union was created to bring peace onto European continent and this still remains one of the top priorities. Fostering stability in the regions that are bordering or close to the EU is of crucial importance. Given the history of Western Balkans countries it is clear why the EU wants to ensure that common European values are respected there as well. The accession of a certain country to the EU also has macroeconomic consequences, such as the improved purchasing parity, quality of life and business cooperation with other nations. One very important aspect of potential enlargement of the EU is also elimination of other-nation’s political pressure on Western Balkans countries. There is no doubt that several powerful countries have very strong interests in this region – China, Russia, United States and Turkey are among the most present. China has increased its presence in Serbia since Aleksandar Vučić was elected as the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

president for the first time. Worth mentioning are the Budapest-Belgrade railway that was financed by the Chinese state and the private investment of Hesteel Group in one of the factories in Serbia which saved 5000 jobs. China is also one of the most important countries that do not recognize Kosovo, while Serbia is supporting the Chinese “one China policy”. Chinese presence is not worrying only in Serbia, but also in Montenegro. Chinese government has supported Montenegrin plan of building a highway with a loan of 944 million American dollars (as reported by Euroactive). Loan of such principal mean that government became too reliant on Beijing, their funds and possible postponing of instalments for political purposes. Montenegro just had to pay the first instalment – public debt has thus risen to 97% of its GDP (Euroactive), which means they do not meet the EU's criteria on this matter (which is 60%). China is not the only country that has a strong presence in the Western Balkans. For further research, investigate the United State's presence in Kosovo (through military and financial support), Russian influence on Serbia and Turkish influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Very important aspects are various economic effects that the accession has – on the candidate country, neighboring countries and on the Union itself. The biggest advantage of the accession are so-called four freedoms (Church, 2002). An obvious economic consequence of the accession is also a bigger economic market. Western Balkan countries have little more than 15 million¹⁷ inhabitants, with Serbia being the most populated country. The accession will enable the consumers and suppliers to enter the ESM without the customs and tariffs. Furthermore, all consumers will be granted the same rights. Suppliers will have to fulfill the criteria of the ESM and comply with the rules and obligations that are present on the market. With the European Single Market calling for more ethical business models, entering suppliers might face difficulties adjusting their model to the ethic, environmental and social standards. Joining the EU means that a Member State has to comply with the united foreign policies and with the common trade deals (Grossi, 2013). That means that any bilateral

¹⁷ Estimation was provided by the United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division Report 2019. The exact estimations are 3 301 000 for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 963 764 for Serbia, 1 809 280 for Kosovo, 627 987 for Montenegro, 2 083 459 for North Macedonia and 2 882 917 for Albania.

agreements between the candidate country and country that is not a member of the Union or perhaps even a country towards which the Union has negative viewpoint would have to cease

All Member States¹⁸ have to join the euro area and accept euro currency. To join, the country has to fulfill convergence criteria (Enlargement of Euro Area, 2019). Adopting euro means even closer integration with the other Euro area countries. Similarly to the accession to the Union, acceptance of euro results in transferring a part of sovereignty (monetary policy) to the European Central Bank, located in Frankfurt. Criteria for the acceptance were created in 1991 as part of the preparations for the general acceptance of euro. Their main aim is to ensure that the country is ready to integrate into the monetary regime of the Union. Another important step when accepting the euro is also adjusting national laws and regulations. There is no specific deadline for a country to join the euro area – eventually, when the country is ready, the process of acceptance begins (Enlargement of Euro Area, 2019). The acceptance of euro brings many good things, among them easier payment, no need for exchanging the currencies and general understanding of prices (direct comparability of prices in eg. France and Finland). Less known, but even more important, are the benefits of lower interest rate, more foreign investments, economies of scale and adjusted inflation rate. There are also some disadvantages, such as giving up the monetary and part of fiscal power and fixed and adjusted inflation rate. All in all the accession to the Union does not necessarily mean the accession to the Eurozone.

¹⁸ The only country that does not need to accept euro is Denmark.

Further reading and preparation for the Conference

This study guide is meant to draw your attention to the important areas regarding the integration of Western Balkans to the European Union. To be well equipped for the debate you will have to devote some time to further readings – some of which you can find below or in the references. Please pay attention to the standpoints of your individual country towards a) enlargement of the Union, b) sovereignty status of Kosovo, c) accession talks status of North Macedonia, d) EU's possibilities of addressing the influences of third countries in the region and other important foreign affairs matters.

Links for further research:

- Conditions for membership: [click here](#)
- Documents about enlargement: [click here](#)
- Current status of each country: [click here](#)

5G - OPPORTUNITY OR A CYBERSECURITY THREAT?

by Aiden Jurij Franko

Introduction

Mobile Cellular Telephony is one of the most prominent and revolutionary innovations of the twentieth century, enabling global communication through means of radiofrequency and consequently becoming an essential commodity in our everyday lives (mostly) through the usage of mobile devices.

However, the *Mobile Cellular Telephony* now provides additional services which surpass regular mobile devices. As a primary means of contemporary telecommunication, 5G or the fifth generation of mobile networks (and previous mobile services) virtually connect devices that transmit mobile data. In comparison to previous services, however, 5G now offers services which exceed previous telecommunications networks and engage in current fields from everyday life to areas regarding national security.

Besides, the 5G has the capacity to deliver higher data rates than previous networks (more services downloaded) as well as lower latency, which (if we take an example on the automotive industry) enables quicker and more efficient communication within the factory, contributing to the optimization of its production. Other assets involve progressions in the medical field where an *EMT* (*emergency medical technician*) can now access a patient's record immediately upon ordination admission to make a diagnosis.

However, as 5G opens up more opportunities in healthcare, manufacturing, and transport, it is becoming an increasingly attractive target for cybercriminals, as it increases the available threat surface and the consequences of any damage inflicted. Finally, threats to availability and integrity of networks have become a major security concern for the European Union as well as for the rest of the globe.

History

1G

1G - *the first generation of mobile networks* - was launched in 1979 by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone (NTT). By 1984, NTT initiated 1G and expanded it to cover the whole of Japan. In 1983, the USA adopted the first 1G operations, and Motorola's DynaTAC became one of the first 'mobile' phones to use stateside widely. Other countries such as Canada and the UK rolled out their own 1G networks a few years later. However, 1G technology included several drawbacks:

1. The sound quality was low, and the coverage was weak.
2. There was no roaming support between operators and, as different systems operated on different frequency ranges, there was no compatibility between systems.
3. Calls were not encrypted, so anyone with a radio scanner could drop in on a call.

Despite the shortcomings (including a \$3,995 price tag, which would today be \$9,660 adjusted for inflation), the DynaTAC still managed to acquire 20 million global subscribers by 1990.

Cultural Revolution – 2G

The second generation of mobile networks was launched in Finland, 1991. This time, the digital voice calls were considerably clearer and with less static and background crackling. Additionally, calls could now be encrypted. However, 2G was about much more than telecommunications, as it prepared the groundwork for a cultural revolution in the way people communicate. It enabled its users to send text messages (SMS), picture messages, as well as multimedia messages (MMS) on their mobile phones for the first time. Consequently, this led to mass adoption by consumers and businesses on an enormous scale. Although 2G's transfer speeds were initially relatively slow (around 9.6 kbit/s), operators rushed to invest in new infrastructure (mobile cell towers being the most prominent example). As a result, by the end of the 1990s, 2G revolutionized the business landscape, despite relatively slow velocities.

3G

In 2001 NTT DoCoMo launched the 3G and aimed to standardize the network protocol. Thus, its users could access data from any location globally, which, for the first time, made international roaming services a legitimate possibility. Moreover, the 3G's enhanced data transfer capabilities (approximately four times faster than 2G) enabled new services such as video streaming, conferencing, and voice over IP (such as Skype). In 2002, TCH launched the Blackberry, and many of its features were facilitated by the connectivity of 3G. The closing of the 3G period saw the launch of the iPhone in 2007, which indicated another significant stretch regarding the mobile phone's network capability.

4G

In 2009, the 4G or the Long Term Evolution was launched in Oslo, Norway, and Stockholm, Sweden. Soon after, it expanded throughout the globe and introduced its users to new progressive features, most notably the high-quality video streaming. In addition, 4G also offers faster mobile web access, facilitating HQ video conferencing and HD videos.

The crucial difference is that to convert from 2G to 3G, the SIM cards needed to be switched. Mobile devices need to be specifically designed to support 4G (meaning that direct transition from 3G to 4G without purchasing a new mobile device is impossible). This helped device manufacturers scale their profits by introducing 4G-ready handsets, a significant factor behind Apple's rise to become the world's first trillion-dollar company.

While 4G is the current standard globally, *"some regions are plagued by network patchiness and have low 4G LTE penetration. According to Ogury, a mobile data platform, UK residents can only access 4G networks 53 percent of the time, for example"*. (From 1G to 5G: A Brief History of the Evolution of Mobile Standards, 2021)

5G

Surprisingly, 5G has been years in the making. In 2008, NASA initiated a Machine-to-Machine Intelligence (M2Mi) Corp to develop IoT and M2M technology, and the 5G technology was supporting it. In the same year, a 5G R&D program was developed by South Korea, and New York University launched the 5G-focused NYU WIRELESS in late 2012. The connectivity offered by 5G promises to transform a wide variety of fields from banking to healthcare. In addition, 5G enables the possibility of telemedicine, remote surgeries, and even remote vital sign monitoring. **Three major South Korean carriers:** KT, LG Uplus, and SK Telecom –launched 5G services last December and promised a simultaneous March 2019 launch of 5G across the country. (From 1G to 5G: A Brief History of the Evolution of Mobile Standards, 2021)

Current Situation

As most European networks have only started to deploy 5G networks in 2020, the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea have already become major contenders for developing transmissive digital technology included in the 5G.

Initially, however, the European Commission identified 5G opportunities early, establishing a public-private partnership on 5G (5G-PPP) in 2013 to accelerate research and innovation in 5G technology. The European Commission has committed public funding of more than €700 million through the Horizon 2020 Programme to support this activity. These activities are accompanied by an international plan to ensure global consensus building on 5G. EU investment in 5G research and standards is necessary to support the traffic volume expected by 2025. EU investment will also boost networks and Internet architectures in emerging areas such as machine-to-machine (M2M) communication and the Internet of Things (IoT).

The Commission adopted a 5G action plan for Europe in 2016 to ensure the early deployment of 5G infrastructure across Europe. The objective of the action plan was to start launching 5G services in all EU Member States by the end of 2020 at the latest. Following this, it suggests a rapid build-up to ensure uninterrupted 5G coverage in

urban areas and along main transport paths by 2025. (Europe falls further behind US and Asia in 5G rollout, 2021)

It must be emphasized that the deployment of 5G networks depends closely upon access to radio spectrum, the basis of wireless technologies. As the rate of connected devices and their use increases, spectrum resources and their uses have to be adjusted across Europe to allow for "*interoperability*" of infrastructure across borders. This is the basis for a broad range of services delivered with 5G for consumers, such as new smartphone apps, and professional services for various industrial sectors. (Europe falls further behind US and Asia in 5G rollout, 2021)

Responding to Asian countries already implementing 5G, and in awareness of the network's ramifications, the European Commission launched the "5G action plan", marking the EU's initial efforts towards implementing 5G infrastructure. The plan aims to achieve the following objectives:

- coordinate/adjust national priorities and timetables for coordinated deployment across all EU member countries, aiming for early deployments by 2018,
- promote rapid and early deployment in large urban cities and along major transport routes,
- promote trials by multiple pan-European stakeholders to incite the transition from technological innovation to the mass market (5G Infrastructure – 5G Observatory, 2021).

However, according to the report released by the European Commission in July 2020, most countries have failed to implement their plans, especially regarding their dependency on high-risk suppliers, which could cause issues regarding cybersecurity. (Report on Member States' progress in implementing the EU Toolbox on 5G Cybersecurity, 2021)

Furthermore, according to new research, the number of Europeans able to connect to a 5G network was 24 percent at the end of September compared to 13 percent at the end of 2019. However, that pales in comparison with the 76 percent of Americans able

to connect to 5G and even higher rates in some parts of Asia, such as South Korea, where it is 93 percent. (Why Asia-Pacific Remains Ahead of Europe in the Race of 5G Deployment, 2021)

Europe's performance stimulates concerns about the economic impact of the slow pace of network upgrades compared to other regions. "5G networks are deemed to be critical national infrastructure by most governments and key in modernising factory floors, transport systems and healthcare. " (Why Asia-Pacific Remains Ahead of Europe in the Race of 5G Deployment, 2021)

Additionally, many concerns were raised regarding the clarity of EU roadmap for 5G as well as concerns regarding the lack of affordable spectrum and slow pace of spectrum auctions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Italy and Germany, for instance, have been criticized for their approaches to 5G spectrum auctioning. This includes reserving airwaves for industrial groups and driving up license fees for the remaining frequencies. The price per MHz per capital for the mid-band (3-5 GHz) spectrum in Italy is estimated at US \$0.50 (€0.43), which is 10 times higher than in countries such as Finland. (Why Asia-Pacific Remains Ahead of Europe in the Race of 5G Deployment, 2021)

Given the impact of COVID-19, 4G will remain the dominant technology for consumers and enterprises in the EU region going into 2021. Further reinforcing this fact is the survey finding in November 2020 that an estimated 61% of consumers in the EU do not plan to upgrade their internet services in 2021. This finding coupled with slow progress with enterprise 5G paints bleak prospects for 5G adoption in the coming year. The acceleration of the digital transformation due to COVID-19 has brought attention to why the EU will urgently need to invest in 5G rollout. The region has significant industrial strengths that can benefit from 5G deployment in the future. Therefore, there is a need for a more harmonized approach to 5G spectrum and better regulatory incentives for future investments and development in the space. The council should identify the factors preventing progress and discuss the means of reducing them for the EU to progress at the same evolutionary pace as APAC. (EU countries keep different approaches to Huawei on 5G rollout, 2021)

EU's Approach Towards Huawei

Germany's approach to Huawei and the 5G roll-out encompassed the final version of the IT-Security Law 2.0 added a political layer to the process: the German government now can veto the procurement from untrustworthy suppliers.

Germany's firm stance towards Huawei is conveyed in a (as regarded by the media) controversial statement "Companies that are under the control of authoritarian states are considered untrustworthy," the CDU parliamentarian Christoph Bernstiel told a plenary session of the Bundestag. Bernstiel referred to Huawei directly, stating that: *"If the Chinese Communist Party continues to act as it has been doing in Hong Kong, in their treatment of the Uighurs, or with their aggressive expansion in the South-China sea, then I highly doubt that we would classify a company that is under the control of the Chinese government as a trustworthy 5G supplier."* (2021)

The German approach, to the most extent, follows the guidelines the EU outlined in its **Toolbox and risk assessment report for cybersecurity of 5G networks**.¹⁹(Cybersecurity of 5G networks - EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures, 2021) Both documents were constructed to guide the selection and prioritization of measures to mitigate potential risks in the European 5G roll-out. While neither document mentioned Huawei directly, it defined the possible interference of third states as one of the leading security risks in the 5G roll-out. Such interference, the documents state, is possible if the country of origin does not apply democratic checks and balances, "if the 5G supplier has strong links to the government, or if governments are able to exercise any form of pressure on the supplier ". Given that the Chinese National Intelligence Law requires Chinese companies to cooperate with the national intelligence service, seemingly explicit references to Huawei can be applied. But while most EU countries following the EU guidelines on 5G cybersecurity, the approaches among member states differ considerably. (2021)

¹⁹ Includes direct link to website

Scandinavian countries have also taken a tough stance regarding Huawei: "Sweden has banned the Chinese suppliers from rolling out 5G altogether and gave telecom operators until 2025 to remove Chinese gear from their infrastructure. Denmark followed a similar path. While the Nordic country did not mention Huawei directly, it nonetheless made clear that it would not allow gear from countries that are not considered security allies." (2021)

Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Poland and Czechia signed bilateral agreements with the United States of America, where they pledged to exclude non-trusted suppliers (i.e. Huawei) from their 5G rollout. (2021)

Questions to Consider

- What should be the EU's approach towards corporations such as Huawei? Could a common approach be established? (acknowledge the advantages and limitations of recommended measures.
- Can cross-border collaboration benefit the deployment of 5G networks, and who will hold the right of jurisdiction in case of possible conflicts?
- Shall Europe develop the transformative digital technology itself, or should we include foreign providers?
- What would be the role of the European 5G Observatory?
- What are the possible threats to national security?

Further Reading

- European 5G observatory. Available at: <https://5gobservatory.eu/market-developments/5g-services/>
- European annual 5G journal. Available at: <https://5g-ppp.eu/annual-journal/>
- Report on Member States' progress in implementing the EU Toolbox on 5G Cybersecurity. Available at: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/report-member-states-progress-implementing-eu-toolbox-5g-cybersecurity>

- European Commission: Shaping Europe's digital future: Cybersecurity of 5G networks - EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/cybersecurity-5g-networks-eu-toolbox-risk-mitigating-measures>
- Member States publish a report on EU coordinated risk assessment of 5G networks security: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_19_6049
- The Approach of the EU and the selected member states to 5G network cybersecurity: https://www.morganlewis.com/-/media/files/publication/morgan-lewis-title/white-paper/2020/morgan-lewis-white-paper_theapproachoftheeuandselectedmemberstatestocybersecurityof5gnetworks.pdf

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