

**Jasmin Hasić, Dženeta Karabegović (eds.)  
NEW PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTH-EAST EUROPE: BOSNIA AND  
HERZEGOVINA'S FOREIGN POLICY SINCE INDEPENDENCE**

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The book represents an important contribution to understanding of development of Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) foreign policy and its strategic orientation in international relations. While demonstrating understanding of internal challenges and weaknesses of the country both during and after the war, the researchers<sup>1</sup> identified complex foreign policy endeavours over the past twenty-five years, along with social and political contexts that were backing the actions with both sense and political willingness. Emphasis is on institution of proceedings against another country before international legal mechanisms, presiding over United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and Council of Europe (CoE), participation in international peace missions and crisis management. It is important to stress that authors gathered around this edition do not have ambition



to allocate positive attributions to BiH's foreign policy at any cost, but to present facts, and empiric and historic information along with detailed analysis. Focus is placed on examining practices and factors which enable foreign policy formation and operationalisation. This approach to research has ensured an additional layer of legitimacy to this edition.

<sup>1</sup> Jasmin Hasić; Dženeta Karabegović (editors); Anida Sokol; Nedžma Džananović; Dario Čepo; Afan Kalamujić; Caterina Bonora; Tanya L. Domi; Davor Petrić; Jasmin Mujanović; Petar Marković; Mate Subašić; Neven Anđelić.

In chapter that considers systemic challenges that originate out of internal and external (des)integrating forces, Hasić and Karabegović apply qualitative analysis to develop understanding of political, legal, and institutional set-up. The forces often contribute to insufficient efficiency of institutional apparatus and strategic positioning of the country. Rightfully focusing on action and effects, not on statements and declarations, the authors clarify systemic contradictions that hinder and slow down BiH on the path to fulfilment of foreign policy goals, such as joining the European Union and NATO. Analytical span covers social and political antipodes that oppose these goals, allegedly due to unease and reluctance over denial of sovereignty or decisiveness to embrace a comfortable principle of declarative neutrality. This chapter also analyses the Dayton Peace Accord and presence of the Office of the High Representative as its ultimate interpreter, as well as impact of international presence. In a separate chapter, the authors focus on relation of the state towards its vibrant diaspora and the potential for contributing to economic development.

Anida Sokol notes and contextualises very first steps of BiH in the process of articulation of foreign policy goals through the war time platform for action of the Republic of BiH Presidency, establishment of diplomatic and consular service in extremely unfavourable conditions, as well as organisation of activities on recognition of the country's independence

and joining as many relevant fora and organisations as possible. Sokol explains how BiH, which itself has been a subject of international crisis management, ensured minimum of functionality and representation in relevant fora under conditions of own humanitarian catastrophe. Regarding bilateral relations, the author notes that BiH, primarily thanks to enthusiasts, organised diplomatic missions in some forty countries without material support.

Nedžma Džananović focuses on fulfilment of international obligations that sometimes were providing incentives for reaching internal political consensus, and sometimes were hindering internal political consensus and consolidation of foreign policy priorities and capacities for their implementation. The research is limited to cooperation of BiH with UN and CoE, and describes the context intertwined with globalisation processes and the war factors relevant for engagement of BiH in multilateral fora. Initial dynamism following declaration of independence resulted in membership of some 40 memberships in different international fora and organisations, half of which was concluded over the first five years. Occasional transmission of internal disagreements to international fora, linked to generation of daily politics scores, is noted as a negative practice. The researcher identifies constructive policy decisions and well-managed coordination of interests, appropriately, and behind the scenes. This was particularly important for diplomatic activ-

ities related to selection of BiH into non-permanent membership of the UNSC and its successful performance in 2010 and 2011. Another successfully managed activity, that seemed to be created especially for BiH, was adoption of the Election Law that enabled CoE membership. The chapter explains how these commitments influenced political trends in BiH.

The chapter on integration of BiH in EU and NATO by Dario Čepo provides a clear insight into foreign and internal forces, but also in potentials of the country to fulfil commitments. The author uses an analytical framework with three factors: regional “integration trends”, instrumentalised cost-benefit analysis of “non-integration”, and interaction of various institutions and liaisons. Čepo analyses main events related to the processes and strategic and institutional insufficiencies in BiH. He noted both well managed processes such as negotiating the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and a complicated process of answering the European Commission’s Questionnaires, marked with multiple interruptions, as an example of poor practice.

Afan Kalamujić offers an overview of recovery and transformation of BiH’s economy, continuation and development of economic foreign policy and foreign trade relations, as well as relations with international financial institutions. He reminds of important reforms in taxation, fiscal and monetary policy, privatisation and judiciary in the first decade of 21st century

through EU integration process. Emphasis on the second decade was on implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and adjustments requested by Croatia, immediately after it joined the EU. Kalamujić points out to significance of international organisations dealing with trade and finances at times when ruling elites cannot find solutions and underperform in fighting informal economy. The author emphasises importance of rather lengthy process of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO), that indicate persistence and determination regardless of power shifts in the country, concluding that the continuity encourages. This chapter also includes a clear description of institutional framework for economic diplomacy, foreign trade and attraction of foreign investments. The author emphasises that progress in attraction of good investments and adoption of prudent economic development policies does exist, after all, primarily thanks to well-coordinated network of experts, resistant to fluctuating political interests.

Caterina Bonora analyses complexities of interaction of BiH with international judicial institutions, primarily with International Criminal Court and International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Bonora contextualises relevant events and connects them with concrete EU conditionality on fulfilment of ICTY related commitments.

Tanya L. Domi and Davor Petrić focus on participation of BiH in inter-

national military and civilian peace missions in a chronical and analytical manner. They identify and deconstruct three dynamisms which challenge BiH's foreign policy: domestic elites and bureaucracies and foreign political elites and actors. It is concluded that a post-war country in transition has been successfully contributing to UN and NATO missions and training programmes. BiH troops have primarily been dealing with demining and unexploded devices. Authors also pointed out achievements in implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace, Security".

Jasmin Mujanović explains interaction of interests and aspirations of global and regional forces with developments in BiH. Mujanović's discussion is formed around three foreign policy axioms – preservation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, peace and joining EU and NATO – that are being developed and operationalised in context of international mediation and interventionism. The researcher reminds of significance of ethno-centric blocks for decision-making and analyses involvement of Germany, United Kingdom, USA, Turkey, and Russia.

Petar Marković and Mate Subašić write about relations between BiH and its neighbours, trying to identify challenges, rules, and potentials, through analysis of bilateral relations efficiency. Emphasis is on challenging relations with Croatia and Serbia that often impact mutu-

al trust. Relations between BiH and Montenegro are described as good and advancing.

Neven Anđelić offers a contextualised overview of formation and operationalisation of BiH foreign policy. The researcher questions efficiency of decision-making processes in BiH, which cause a problem to reach its optimal capacity for reaching its optimal capacity for articulation of state interests and taking appropriate actions.

This well-edited book can be considered a collection of excellently contextualised facts and arguments, which testify that foreign policy of BiH with all its weaknesses, ups and downs, moments of defeat and pride does exist. All segments of the edition do confirm, more or less explicitly, one fact – many accomplishments of BiH's foreign policy do exist because of enthusiasm, knowledge, good will, skills and determination of BiH's experts from different fields, who were not discouraged by difficulties of the moment, ever-changing interests of political elites and requirements of daily politics. The authors boldly represent a new generation of international relations experts, who are increasingly recognised and relevant internationally. They do not settle with conformism of mediocre secondary research but aspire to offer new credible views and findings. That is certainly a significant added value of this volume, which offers an entirely fresh view of BiH and its foreign policy.