

Letter from the Editor

As we enter the new publishing year this spring, change is still the dominant variable in the international relations, the main though not the only area of our research interest. It seems that *realpolitik* returned in its most brutal form. Or how one should name that 19th century war reminiscent Russian aggression on Ukraine? Discussing and explaining, not to say forecasting international affairs is an ongoingly demanding effort.

Once again, our respected authors produced an outstanding package of competitive and comprehensive contemplation, having in mind the region of the Western Balkans as their starting point. This future to be part of the EU never enjoyed much relaxed and easy-going political account, though. Hence, also its thought-over should reflect this reality.

The first paper unveils the not so much hidden influence the American First Ladies have had on their domestic and world affairs. Although this institution marks basically only the American political spectrum, it has influenced politics elsewhere as well as initiated a handful of discussions all around the globe. One would like to witness additional political influence of women politicians in the region. *Challenging*.

Our second discussion goes in the very medias res. The way of the Western Balkans towards the EU and the latter's approach should be changed, intensified as well as become result oriented. There is a strategic stalemate that makes no use neither for the region nor for the EU. Even more, third players are simultaneously intensifying their presence, influence and quasi attractiveness. *Straightforward*.

The third article discusses international development cooperation in the case of Croatia, having in mind new development actors. Therefore, the conceptualization of this means of foreign policy was significantly influenced and its understanding upgraded. It points out primarily two-way horizontal partnerships,

which is more in line with the approaches of new development actors of the Global South. *Thoroughly.*

The fourth examination focuses on legal aspects and consequences of political dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, having set an eye on the agreement-by-agreement approach. Could this practice at the end of the day be understood as the way towards the result, which for one side is a no go and for the other side exactly the opposite? After more than a decade, no clear result is in sight. *Detailed.*

The fifth contribution observes another outstanding science fiction novel, that of Clifford Simak's *Way Station*. Its scenery spans through galaxies with a growing network of way stations, providing commuting across that vastness. One station is set on a remote location on a remote planet Earth. Its main promotor, an ageless former Civil War veteran ends up as a member of the galactic diplomacy. *Imaginary.*

Our last dwelling presents a rare case of a successful pacifism in the Western Balkans. The way years long dispute between the two neighbors along the Greek-Macedonian border was dealt with, resulted in the Prespa Agreement from 2018. Both countries expressed political maturity, sense for dialogue and possessed political leaders that were up to the task. *Realistic.*

Our first book review discusses geopolitics on general and in details, while the second one its aspects in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the English version is forthcoming). Additionally, there is no enough attention paid to the Western Balkans, as our current Guest View argues.

With the departure of the 2021, we left behind the second Slovene Presidency of the EU Council and our related slogan. However, since the dynamics of international relations and the outcry breach of international law faced us with a new threat, our current slogan stems from the late 60s, with Ukraine as the 21st century Vietnam. See you in autumn.

Ljubljana, April 2022

M. J.

War, what is it good for? Absolutely nothing!